

Liberation Theology: Authentic Theology and Authentic Spirituality

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ABSTRACT

Liberation Theology: Authentic Theology and Authentic Spirituality

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In a world created good, yet afflicted by injustice and poverty which kill 24,000 children daily, liberation theology continues to be relevant. A holistic appropriation of liberation theology as authentic theology and spirituality, arising out of the dynamism of each Subject contributes to ongoing conversion, development, enduring commitment, and societal progress. The horizon of liberation theology is enlarged beyond its usual socio-economic confines to encompass people who seek to liberate self and others from the systems we devise that destroy human dignity, rooting “liberation theology” in the authenticity of the theologizing person, who is contextual, committed, dynamic and spiritual. Using the solidarity framework conceived out of the union of liberation theology/spirituality and Bernard Lonergan, conversion stories are recounted, highlighting how following the transcendental precepts led Subjects to say “God loves you” to society’s last in creative ways. Through a series of interviews, the hypothesis that immersion into real-life experiences can facilitate conversion is supported. “Mechanisms” are suggested: gritty experience able to go straight to our hearts, summoning a spontaneous reaching out and intentional loving, emptying us of biases, and replacing them with feelings of goodness and judgments of value. God’s gift of grace, reflection, spirituality, and community support play pivotal roles in the conversions. Besides recovering the authentic Subject, practical applications of this research include providing guidance to individuals and organizations desiring to engage in immersion experiences, *solidaire* living, and *being* in Love.

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*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

*I dedicate this thesis to my wife Anna Antonitti,
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INTRODUCTION

Images and Sounds, Faces and Voices

One day, in the arid region of northeastern Brazil, one of the most famine-stricken parts of the world, I (Clodovis) met a bishop going into his house; he was shaking. "Bishop, what's the matter?" I asked. He replied that he had just seen a terrible sight: in front of the cathedral was a woman with three small children and a baby clinging to her neck. He saw that they were fainting from hunger. The baby seemed to be dead. He said: "Give the baby some milk, woman!" "I can't, my lord," she answered. The bishop went on insisting that she should, and she that she could not. Finally, because of his insistence, she opened her blouse. Her breast was bleeding; the baby sucked violently at it. And sucked blood. The mother who had given it life was feeding it, like the pelican, with her own blood, her own life.¹

I often think of a young woman named Rose who came to live in a L'Arche community. Before she came to L'Arche she lived in a small institution. Even though she was 22 years old she spent most of her time in a big crib. By most people's standards she had been forgotten. She could not talk or walk or care for herself. She had no family and no community.²

What do these images and sounds say to us as human beings? What relationship do we perceive between the mother, the baby, the bishop, Rose, Jesus, and us? Emmanuel Levinas speaks beautifully of how the Divine leaves only traces, how we can catch a fleeting glimpse of God through the Face, the *other* before us, who summons us to be responsible.³ Bernard Lonergan challenges us to be attentive to the voices of people silenced by various forms of oppression, to be intelligent in understanding what is happening to them and to us,

¹ Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), 1-2.

² Nathan Ball, Executive Director of *L'Arche Canada Foundation*. Letter to *L'Arche* members and friends. (Richmond Hill, Ontario: Fondation L'Arche Canada Foundation, February 27, 2008).

³ The *other* is in relation to Emmanuel Levinas' writing of the other as the one who stands before us, calling us to responsibility, and ultimately a trace of, and a way to, the Divine. "The witness testifies to what was said by himself. For he has said 'Here I am!' before the other; and from the fact that before the other he recognizes the responsibility which is incumbent on himself, he has manifested what the face of the other signified for him. The glory of the Infinite reveals itself through what it is capable of doing in the witness." Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversation with Philippe Nemo*, trans. R. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 108-109; Graduate course given by Prof. Christine Jamieson: Theology 671, *Ethics I: The Ethical Relationship in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas*. Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Autumn 2006.

to be rational in judging its meaning and responsible in our decisions and actions, to be loving in living the life that has been given to us.

But *I* feel pulled in different directions. Called by the other in the night, keeping me awake with his hunger and her despair ... pulled back to sleep by my worldly cares and concerns, by reason which tells me to get a good night's rest so tomorrow I can go to work, to school, the gym, shop, take care of my family. I am told that I have a good life: education, career, family, house, sports car! Why do these *good things* leave me feeling empty and my heart restless? Maybe my heart has reasons which my reason does not even know.⁴

“What is good, always is concrete,” says Lonergan,⁵ and scripture says: “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good”(Genesis 1:31a).⁶ However, what we see around us today, locally and globally, does not seem good: child poverty, world hunger, environmental degradation, ongoing wars. In 2007, Gustavo Gutiérrez described the new perspective of poverty: multidimensional, diverse and complex where the poor are irrelevant and insignificant.⁷ He says we are global neighbors within an ever-widening gap

⁴ I refer to Augustine's *Confessions* (1.1.1): “You stir us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.” In Maria Boulding, O.S.B., *The Confessions. Introduction, Translation and Notes. The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. (New York: New City Press, 1997. Second printing 2002); and to Blaise Pascal's: “The heart has reasons which reason does not know,” as quoted and explained by Lonergan. “Besides the factual knowledge reached by experiencing, understanding, and verifying, there is another kind of knowledge reached through the discernment of value and the judgments of value of a person in love.” In Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 115.

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 27.

⁶ All scripture verses are from, *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version*. Catholic Edition. (Ottawa: Canadian Bible Society, 1993), unless indicated otherwise.

⁷ Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century.” In *Romero's Legacy: the Call to Peace and Justice*, ed. Pilar Hogan Closkey and John P. Hogan (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007).

between rich and poor—and all this equals early physical, economic and cultural death, contrary to the God of Life. Gutiérrez asks: “How do we say ‘God loves you’ to society’s last? This is a pastoral question out of which theology arises.”⁸ How do we say “God loves you” to the mother and baby, or to the 20 year-old woman imprisoned in a crib?

The bishop knelt down in front of the woman, placed his hand on the baby’s head, and there and then vowed that as long as such hunger existed, he would feed at least one hungry child each day.⁹

Twenty years ago Rose found a real home in a *L’Arche* community. Her life slowly began to open up. First she started to walk. After receiving much needed medical care she began to eat well, and finally she started to form relationships. Rose had such a deep sense of being at ease with herself that many people were drawn to her. She encouraged those who knew her to accept themselves fully, . . . When she died several years ago, 400 people came to her funeral.¹⁰

A twofold question linking authenticity and liberation

In the 1950s and 1960s, the daily reality of abject poverty and oppression, stirred by the winds of change of the Second Vatican Council, gave rise in Latin America to *liberation theology*. This “new way of doing theology”¹¹ attracted followers in Latin American, as well as in many other Third World countries. It also attracted followers in the First World.¹² However, while in Latin America liberation theology was associated with

⁸ Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century,” 45-50, 58-59.

⁹ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 2.

¹⁰ Ball, Letter to *L’Arche* members and friends, 2008.

¹¹ *Liberation Theology* is articulated and described by liberation theologians not as a new theology, but as a new way of *doing* theology. Examples include: Boff (1987); Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, [1973] revised edition, 1988); Neil Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies*. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), 146-147; and Harold C. Segura, “Jesus in the Face of the Needy,” *Journal of Latin American Theology* 1, No. 2 (2006): 100-103.

¹² The “Third World” or “developing countries” are increasingly referred to as “the South” in order to avoid biases inherent in the terms themselves (defining “development” by Western standards), and because the “First, Second, Third World” notions are less relevant today. Boundaries are also less relevant because of the Fourth World phenomenon where there are increasingly sectors of extreme poverty in medium and high income countries (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1987, art. 14) and people with extreme wealth in the poor countries. For this thesis, the terms First World or North, and Third World or South will generally be used.

radical value and lifestyle changes—even to the point of losing one’s life for the cause of justice—in our Northern First World context, the conversions¹³ have been, generally speaking, less radical, less profound, and less enduring in everyday life. I contend that one of the factors which can affect conversion is immersion into the reality and context of the other, be it the poor in Latin America or the mentally disabled in Montreal. Diverse expressions of faith were being lived by people in various cultures, contexts and periods in history without being identified as “liberation theology,” yet also leading to concrete societal good through solidarity and a “preferential option for the poor.”¹⁴ This thesis aims to explore their experiences from the perspective of both liberation theology and Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*.

The twofold question guiding this thesis is:

- i. Can immersion into the plight of the “poor” facilitate or promote a more profound, enduring conversion, and faith experience?
- ii. Can an *authentic* experience and understanding of one’s life or faith lead individuals and groups to “do” theology—and to “live” their faith and spirituality—in a *liberating way*, even if not referred to as “liberation theology”?¹⁵

¹³ *Conversion* refers to Lonergan’s technical definition for intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and not to a change in faith or denomination. He describes it as an about-face which repudiates our old way of being and acting, and through an increasing self-appropriation begins a new way of being, acting, and relating to others. Lonergan, *Method*, 237-244.

¹⁴ Kenneth Melchin, *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics based on Bernard Lonergan*. (Ottawa: Novalis, St. Paul University, 1998), 115-116. He describes “Preferential option for the poor” as being rooted in God’s saving grace wherever people are in need or suffering; thus *poor* is not in reference to income. It refers particularly to people who are victims of structures of sin, and God’s redemptive act of delivering us from such sin is God’s highest and most important activity.

¹⁵ *Authentic* refers to Lonergan’s use as indicating the person who journeys towards self-transcendence by striving to follow the transcendental precepts of being attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible, loving. Lonergan, *Method*, 104-105. By *liberating way*, I mean “to give life”, and includes liberation from injustice

Development of the question

Though the general question of “*How am I to live in a suffering world?*” has animated my life since childhood, since reading Lonergan’s *Method in Theology*, that question has been gaining clarity. I have become increasingly aware of connections and parallels between my experience and understanding of liberation theology and Lonergan’s *Method*.

My original question was whether Lonergan’s transcendental method might be a practical “tool” for exploring how Latin American liberation theology can be transposed and lived in the Canadian context, in our own struggle for peace, justice, and the truly good.¹⁶ In exploring the literature, and reflecting on the experiences of people and non-governmental organizations involved in solidarity work, as well as personal experiences, I understood that liberation theology in fact was present in Canada and around the world well before the term “liberation theology” even arose out of the Latin American experience.

Circa 700 B.C.E. the prophet Isaiah brought good news to the poor and proclaimed liberty to the captives (Isaiah 61:1-2), and we can think of the Social Gospel Movement in Canada and the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. These examples also suggest that

and oppression, from the power of fate, and from sin. In Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, [1973] revised edition, 1988), xxxvii-xl.

¹⁶ *Truly Good* refers to Lonergan’s notion of there being three levels of good: (i) that which is good for me and my satisfaction; (ii) the good of social order which keeps societies running smoothly; (iii) the truly good which leads to societal progress through scrutiny of social structures and self-transcendence, leading to terminal value. Melchin, *Introduction to Christian Ethics*, 43-47; Lonergan, *Method*, 47-52. Byrne speaks of the third level in terms of human dignity and caring personal relations. Patrick H. Byrne, “Universal Rights or Personal Relations?” Paper presented at the *Lonergan Centenary Symposium*, entitled *Being Human in a Postmodern Context: The Contribution of Bernard Lonergan*, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, January 29, 2005.

perhaps the *preferential option for the poor* should not be limited to the socio-economic sphere, but applied to all situations where human dignity is diminished. A common element in these movements is that they found their genesis in the authentic faith experiences of a person or a small group of people immersed in the reality at hand, in their particular context. Suddenly, the idea of wanting to study Latin American liberation theology to see how it could be transposed to the Canadian reality seemed to contradict the very spirit of both Lonergan's work and liberation theology which do not see culture as normative, but rather emphasize its context.¹⁷

Another insight gained from my reading was that during the last 30-40 years, perhaps when Latin American liberation theology was carried over from Latin America to North America, liberation *spirituality* somehow got neglected or sacrificed along the way. And this, I believe, has had an impact on both the conversion of those immersed in solidarity work and the extent of their enduring commitment. In *Spirituality and Liberation: Overcoming the Great Fallacy*, McAfee Brown explains how society still tries to compartmentalize the two realities and practices of spirituality and liberation, roughly as the "sacred" (good) and the "secular" (evil) respectively. Those involved in each are talking about the same thing!¹⁸ Therefore I am positing that conversion is facilitated by immersion,

¹⁷ The transcendental model espoused by Lonergan and the praxis model espoused by Gutiérrez, Boff and other liberation theologians are two of the six that Stephen B. Bevans discusses in *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

¹⁸ Robert McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation: Overcoming the Great Fallacy* (Louisville, Kentucky: The Westminster Press, 1988), 16, 18.

but that the conversion is also affected by the spirituality of the person—the Subject—engaged in solidarity work.¹⁹

An overview of the thesis

In order to explore whether immersion of the Subject into the reality of the poor can facilitate conversion, and whether such faith experiences can lead individuals to “do” theology in a liberating way, three routes of inquiry and research are taken:

1. a review of the literature (major route);
2. qualitative interview-conversations with individuals involved in solidarity work (Appendix I lists the individuals and Appendix II the interview protocol and questions); and
3. a description of my own journey of *faith seeking understanding* by way of working through a theology and spirituality of liberation and Lonergan’s *Method*.

To avoid misunderstandings about my intentions, some of the Subjects of liberation theology and spirituality have already been introduced, such as Rose and the mother and children; others will manifest themselves later in this thesis. They are the Faces, the Voices, and the concrete life stories of liberation theology’s, Lonergan’s, and this author’s deepest desires.

Chapter One will review selected literature on liberation theology showing how spirituality is integral to it, followed by literature on Lonergan showing how liberative praxis is integral to his thought. The theme of immersion facilitating conversion will be introduced

¹⁹ As we capitalize *I* in writing, I capitalize Subject when referring to the person who lives in solidarity, the individual who is at the heart of ethical deliberations, the unique person “created to the image of God.” God indeed animates the Subject’s conscience, that “most secret core and sanctuary” where together alone they conceive that which is just and good and loving for all our brothers and sisters. This therefore is not to highlight the Subject’s importance—quite the contrary: for as Levinas might say, the *I* or the Subject is the passive slave of the other, the master. It is the sacredness of the Subject-Other encounter and relationship which is being capitalized and given importance to. Quotations from: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965): art. 12 and 16.

with examples, and these will be added to in Chapter Two which will extend the horizon of liberation theology beyond the socio-economic plight of Latin Americans to include Subjects who lived both the key descriptors of liberation theology and spirituality, and also *authentic lives* of faith and solidarity.

Chapter Three deepens our inquiry into how liberation theology and spirituality is rooted in the authenticity of the theologizing Subject who is contextual and committed, dynamic and spiritual. Out of this concrete immersion into our wounded world and lives, with healing from above emerges the courageous, compassionate and humble man and woman—so radically responsible and yet so radically free.

Chapter Four presents case studies of men and women who through their faithfulness to their inner dynamism said “I love you” to society’s last. I also strive to explain my own journey toward self-appropriation. The solidarity framework, conceived out of praxis and reflection, is used to analyze how these diverse expressions of faith and solidarity relate to Lonergan’s theological method, liberation theology, and even other disciplines.

Chapter Five demonstrates how the synergistic relationship between Lonergan and liberation theology and spirituality helps to recover the authentic Subject who is at the heart of solidarity and progress. A more holistic approach to liberation theology may contribute to people’s ongoing development and conversion. The solidarity framework is not to categorize people, but rather to explore, compare and contrast their experiences and expressions of solidarity. The data garnered could be used for the guidance of others who are involved in solidarity work or open to living immersion experiences. By exploring how

authentic faith experiences lead to liberation theology, I am also exploring its corollary: whether liberation theology's sometimes limited and non-sustainable impact in the North is due to our having reduced it to economics and ethics, to the detriment of a more foundational spirituality anchored in praxis. Entering the world of the poor is a foundational experience, says Gutiérrez, quoting from the Puebla document of CELAM (Latin American Bishops Conference):

Commitment to the poor and oppressed and the rise of grassroots communities have helped the church to discover the evangelizing potential of the poor. For the poor challenge the church at all times, summoning it to conversion; and many of the poor incarnate in their lives the evangelical values of solidarity, service, simplicity, and openness to accepting the gift of God.²⁰

²⁰ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xli-xlii. Gutiérrez is quoting *Puebla Document*, DP art. 1147, CELAM, Puebla, Mexico, 1979.

CHAPTER ONE

Review of the Literature

In his endeavour to deconstruct *the great fallacy*, that chronic dualistic deception which categorizes things of the flesh as bad and things of the spirit as good, Robert McAfee

Brown quotes Romero:

(I have been learning) a beautiful and harsh truth, that the Christian faith does not separate us from the world, but immerses us in it; that the church therefore is not a fortress set apart from the city, but a follower of the Jesus who loved, worked, struggled, and died in the midst of the city.

‘—Archbishop Oscar Romero, shortly before he was shot for interfering with life ‘in the midst of the city’²¹

The first part of this chapter will briefly sketch the state of our cities, countries, world. It is a more quantitative presentation of the qualitative stories of the mother, baby, and young woman with whom we began. It is the experiences of these local and global realities and contexts that lead to questions that we will try to understand and judge, with the help of liberation theology and spirituality, Lonergan, and other theologians.

The second part of this chapter explores the literature dealing with liberation theology and spirituality, particularly focusing on the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff. This is followed in part three by a review of some of the literature in Lonergan studies in relation to the transcendental method and liberation theology, and in part four by the theme of conversion.

²¹ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 13.

1.1 Taking stock: global and local statistics

Gutiérrez states that in the last analysis socio-economic poverty means death, and that the poor speak with such familiarity about the death of children and others because it is so frequent. “Certainly death is one aspect of human life, but I am speaking of early and unjust death . . . physical death due to hunger, diseases and other factors. . . . The deprivation of human rights is another form of death. When we fail to grant women full human rights, we are giving them over to another form of death.”²² To this list we can add the elderly, the disabled, and other modern day outcasts.

1.1.1 Health and environment

The UNICEF report, *State of the World’s Children 2009* states that “over 24,000 children under the age of five—about one every three seconds—die every day, mainly from preventable causes.” These include diarrhea, malaria, neonatal infection, pneumonia, preterm delivery, and lack of oxygen at birth. It explains that since the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted twenty years ago, the *total* number of deaths has fallen; however, in recent years sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia “have made little or no progress in reducing the number of child deaths.” Overall, children under the age of one in developing countries are ten times more likely to die than in industrialized countries.²³ In many poor countries though, even when children do eat, the effects can be disastrous. In 2003, the World Health Organization estimated that 5,500 children died each day from diseases linked to ingesting food and water, and breathing air, which are polluted.²⁴

²² Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor.” In *The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh Annual Convention*, Pittsburgh, June 11-14, 1992, ed. Paul Crowley, 47 (1992): 29.

²³ UNICEF, *The State of the World’s Children 2009*, online at www.unicef.org, accessed 7/22/2010.

²⁴ Linda Starke, ed., *State of the World 2003: A Worldwatch Institute Report on Progress Toward a Sustainable Society* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), xxii.

Poverty also affects our “developed world” with rates varying widely depending on who one is and where one lives. In Canada for example, 1 in 4 First Nations children lives in poverty compared to 1 in 9 Canadian children. In contrast to the national infant mortality rate of 5 deaths per 1000 live births, it is 8 per 1000 for First Nations, and 16 per 1000 in Nunavut (85% Inuit population). And if the First Nations and Inuit do not die in infancy from poverty and sub-standard health care, they go on to die disproportionately from suicide; the First Nations rate is 2.1 times higher than the national rate, and the Inuit rate is 11 times higher! “In 2009, twenty years after the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted with the promise of providing the best we have to give as a nation for all our children, the health conditions of Canada’s Aboriginal children are not what we would expect in one of the most affluent countries in the world.”²⁵

In the general Canadian population, statistics indicate that from 1989 to 2007 the child and family poverty decreased from 11.9% to 9.5%. While “poverty” awaits better definition, *Food Banks Canada* reports that between 1989 and 2008 the number of children in Canada relying on food banks *actually grew* from 151,000 to 260,000. It is also noteworthy that *National Council on Welfare* and *Statistics Canada* data indicate that low-income families are not primarily “single moms” or “broken homes” but rather two-parent families moving in and out of poverty due to unemployment and underemployment.²⁶ In

²⁵ UNICEF, *Canadian Supplement to The State of the World’s Children 2009*, online at www.unicef.ca accessed 7/22/2010.

²⁶ Campaign 2000, *Keep the Promise: Make Canada Poverty Free* (Toronto: Campaign 2000 Publication, 2009). Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada coalition of over 120 national, provincial and community organizations, committed to working together to end child and family poverty in Canada. “Two decades after the House of Commons’ unanimous resolution ‘to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000,’ 1 in 10 children in Canada still lives in poverty.” Available online at www.campaign2000.ca.

addition, Chandra Pasma's trend analysis indicates that the recent recession is redirecting the poverty rates back up, from approximately 9.2% in 2007 to 11.7% in 2009.²⁷

1.1.2 Technology - Energy

In the developed world, we are continually obliged to upgrade our computers and gadgets so we can multitask our way to progress, and we are led to believe that technology benefits the global community. While the potential is great, approximately half of the world's population has still never used a telephone. In 2003, 1.6 *billion* people worldwide lacked access to electricity, and it is estimated that in 2033, 1.4 *billion* will still have no electricity.²⁸

There are various indicators of health, social and economic development and they do not always tell the same story. While a country's economic indicators may be positive, for example because it is obliged to increase export, such revenues are used to repay debts. They do not benefit the local population that typically incurs cuts to healthcare and education. The population is also prevented from engaging in subsistence farming or their choice of micro-enterprises which are crucial to the local economy. The mother and baby's story we began with is told only in part by statistics and health indicators which suggest the grim impact of inequitable distribution of our world's resources.²⁹

²⁷ Chandra Pasma, *Bearing the Brunt: How the 2008-2009 Recession Created Poverty for Canadian Families* (Ottawa: Citizens for Public Justice Publication, 2010). Available online at www.cpj.ca.

²⁸ Starke, *State of the World 2003*, xxiii.

²⁹ Have our hearts hardened when: "The death of one child is it is a tragedy; but the death of 24,000 per day is a statistic"? (Adapted from a quote often attributed to Stalin). It is the suffering and death of so many human beings that I am trying to recover by "seeing" and "hearing" them, and those who struggle with them, from a new horizon so that we can understand and judge their stories more correctly. While not belittling tragedies such as the Haiti earthquake which took 200,000 lives and mobilized the world, or the horror of "9-11" which took almost 3000 lives and remains very sensitive, troubling theological questions arise regarding

But despite the state of our city slums and two-thirds of our world where people live and die in conditions that do not reflect a world *created good*, “the limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave,” — “death is not the final word of history.”³⁰

1.2 Liberation spirituality and liberation theology

I wonder to what extent the statistics which serve to camouflage the faces of suffering and death reflect our separation of the presence of God from the mundane beauty around us. The fruits of the earth are for all children to enjoy, the waters are for all men and women to be immersed in, and the horizons are for all elders to behold. Unfortunately, dualism still makes suspect those who embrace *both* spirituality *and* liberation, says McAfee Brown. He adds that Jesus was unwilling to separate the human being into two parts, the physical and the spiritual—He fed the 5000 rather than invite them to fast for their spiritual

a global *daily* catastrophe caused by the inequitable distribution of the world’s resources to victims who remain faceless and anonymous in the eyes of the North/developed peoples. While Haiti now has 2,000,000 homeless, the U.N. estimates the *daily* global homeless rates at 100,000,000. *The New Internationalist* has compared the daily 24,000 deaths to the one-time tragedy of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attack: each and every day at least *8 times more* innocent people die from preventable banal causes: starvation, diarrhea, childbirth, easily treatable infections: “Twin Terrors: The World Holds its Breath,” *The New Internationalist*, issue No. 340 , November 2001. Gutiérrez says: “Poverty as it is known to us today hurls a radical and all-encompassing question at the human conscience and at the way we perceive Christian faith. It constitutes a hermeneutical field which leads us to a rereading of the biblical message and of the path we should take as disciples of Jesus.” In “The Situation and Tasks of Liberation Theology Today,” *Opting for the Margins*, ed. Joerg Rieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 95.

³⁰ “(T)he limit of human expectation ceases to be the grave,” Lonergan, *Method*, 116; and “(D)earth is not the final word of history,” McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 120, drawing from the writings of Gutiérrez.

well-being!³¹ This section expresses how *liberation spirituality and liberation theology* are in essence one, and how the former sustains the latter. On a similar note, Tad Dunne speaks about our split soul, our attempting to live a life of two minds and two languages, secular and religious. But how does the spiritual care-giver speak relevantly to the terminally ill mom, or to the jobless dad? And how can the social activist live the life of interiority he tries to achieve for everyone else when he relies solely on external socio-economic solutions? In the long run, burnout is inevitable.³²

In both written and spoken form, one commonly reads and hears the term “liberation theology”; it is unclear if the term or label includes spirituality. Neil Ormerod says it is difficult to speak of liberation theology as a single expression of faith or doctrine or movement in history. Although it had its geographic origins in the turbulent social and political upheavals of South America, its theologians and practitioners are as diverse as the many cultures of Latin America.³³ Ormerod provides a succinct description and analysis of liberation theology, drawing primarily from the works of Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff,³⁴ summarized here. Unlike the traditional church, and perhaps much of the Western or

³¹ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 16-18, 83-89. In order to show how our “spiritual” experiences may not be so far removed from everyday experiences, he gives the example of how a mystical moment of musical beauty would not be possible without a bow made of horsehair and strings made of catgut.

³² Tad Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), 3-9.

³³ Neil Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies: The What and the Who of Theology Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 144-163.

³⁴ Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies*, Chapter 13 entitled “Gustavo Gutiérrez, Liberation Theology I” analyses Gutiérrez’s book *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988. Chapter 14, entitled “Leonardo Boff, Liberation Theology II” analyses Boff’s book *Ecclesiogenesis*, (Maryknoll/London: Orbis/Collins, 1986). Stephen B. Bevans says liberation theology follows the praxis model and does a local, contextual theology. In, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 70-87.

Northern World, liberation theology does not view culture normatively, and it is in fact one of the first major attempts to do a local theology, i.e., one which draws on the concrete experience and situation of a local people. That situation can be characterized by a huge and increasing disparity between rich and poor, as well as military governments and uneven economic development. Most important, however, are the questions which liberation theology raises about the very nature of Christianity and of theology; therefore, its implications extend beyond the boundaries of South America to the whole Church. In *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez defines theology as a critical reflection on praxis, with praxis being committed action in the social political sphere, in light of the Gospel.³⁵ Liberation theology takes a stance which identifies with, and is in solidarity with, the poor. The phrase “preferential option for the poor” while not coined by Gutiérrez, has become the hallmark of liberation theology which inverts the traditional view of orthodoxy leading to orthopraxis. Liberation theology places the emphasis, rather, on orthopraxis: committed action to transform the world in the light of the Gospel, and it is the experience of this action and struggle which leads to a better knowledge of God, to orthodoxy. Theology therefore is a reflection on pastoral activity, and that reflection in turn will inform future pastoral activity. Making use of theories from the social sciences, Gutiérrez opposes developmentalism, which time and time again has failed, and proposes liberation—a radical new social and economic system to counter poverty and oppression. While envisioning a new social order or utopia, he cautions that every such attempt must be judged by the “eschatological proviso” that the Kingdom is always “not yet.”

³⁵ With respect to liberation theology and *praxis*, Gutiérrez clearly stresses its faith base: “One of the first statements of my way of understanding the theological task was that liberation theology is ‘a critical reflection on *Christian praxis in light of the word of God.*’” (emphasis mine) Revised introduction to *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxix.

The work of Leonardo Boff comes out of Brazil, where central to the pastoral activity of the Church has been the development of “new structures” known as base (or basic) Christian communities which renounce allegiances with the rich and powerful of society, but rather live out the radical, evangelical call of the Gospel. This “option for the poor” was unwelcome and criticized by those who wanted to maintain the Church’s visible structures and intimate Church-state ties, accusing liberation theology of “politicizing” the Church. Ormerod points out, however, that the history of Latin America makes it clear that the Church has always been politicized, and liberation theology is simply a shift in the political stance of the church to the poor and marginalised.³⁶ An important point which *appears* missing from Ormerod’s analysis is its intrinsic and concrete spirituality.³⁷ In his seminal *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez explains how our movements toward God and humankind need each other dialectically and move toward a synthesis which is found in Christ:

In the God-Man we encounter God and humankind. In Christ humankind gives God a human countenance and God gives it a divine countenance. Only in this perspective will we be able to understand that the “union with the Lord,” which all spirituality proclaims, is not a separation from others; to attain this union, I must go through others, and the union, in turn, enables me to encounter others more fully.³⁸

³⁶ Michael L. Cook, “Jesus from the Other Side of History: Christology in Latin America,” *Theological Studies* 44, no. 2, Je (1983), 264. Cook quotes Hennelly: “the real, though unexpressed, major thesis of *The Liberation of Theology* is that the entire millenium and a half of Constantinian Christianity has involved a gradual and massive ideolization of the gospel in favor of powerful and privileged interests in Western society,” *Theologies in Conflict: The challenge of Juan Luis Segundo* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), 135.

³⁷ I say “appears” because while the intrinsic spirituality would be evident to a reader familiar with the work of Leonardo Boff and Gutiérrez, it probably would not be to a novice, nor to an activist coming to Liberation theology from a more humanistic perspective.

³⁸ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, 119.

1.2.1 Gustavo Gutiérrez

Experience, immersion, and conversion

In a 1992 presentation to the *Catholic Theological Society of America*, whose theme was “experience and theology,” Gutiérrez elaborated on why the experience of the poor is important to our understanding of faith. First, it ensures that there is a coherence between orthopraxis and orthodoxy: “Theology, liberation theology included, requires these two aspects for the acquisition of truth. But theology is concerned with putting the truth into practice, living the truth of the Gospel.”³⁹ And he says, referring to the challenge given by Pope John XXIII before the Second Vatican Council, we must be very concrete: the Church must be very clear about the universality of the love of God announced in the Gospel—a love which not only includes the poor but places them first and while Christians must be open to all persons, our commitment must be first to the poor—the little ones in history.⁴⁰

Second, Gutiérrez says the experience of the poor is our theological method, and that people who have a very sharp sense of God are always very sensitive to the poor. We in the North, as well as those from the higher socio-economic strata of the South, lack sensitivity to the poor, the disabled, and others on the fringes because we do not share their perspective or horizon.⁴¹ He adds how even bishops and theologians coming from poor countries misunderstood the pope’s challenge and considered poverty only a socio-economic issue. A parallel can be made to international development. Public health professionals and representatives of organizations such as the *International Monetary Fund* and the *World Bank* often implement ineffective development programs because though they may be from

³⁹ Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 1992, 26.

⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 1992, 27.

⁴¹ Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 1992, 28-31.

the “Third World,” they are from social strata far removed from the everyday lives of the poor.⁴² Their knowledge and conversion, like that of the bishops and theologians, is hampered by their inadequate immersion into the plight of their own people, as they visit communities and merely *take a look* at their situation.

About conversion, Gutiérrez says we must change perspective—no longer see from our Western perspective Black, poor, Hispanics, and even women as “minorities” but rather as the majority of humanity.

A spirituality of liberation will center on a *conversion* to the neighbor. . . . Our conversion to the Lord implies this conversion to the neighbor. Evangelical conversion is indeed the touchstone of all spirituality. Conversion means a radical transformation of ourselves; it means thinking, feeling, and living as Christ—present in exploited and alienated persons.⁴³

This depends on our ability to be authentic and open to a radical experience of the poor today as was Matthew 2000 years ago to the hungry, the sick, the stranger (Matthew 25:31-46), in his preferential option for the poor. Gutiérrez states that this challenge to conversion is a general one for all the Christian churches, and if poverty is not relevant for the Church and Christian life, then it is not relevant for theology. Why do we do theology, he asks, if not to help Christians be good Christians, to help people? He adds that in the beginning theology was an integrated spiritual theology, and suggests that we need to rediscover and restore that

⁴² I had this insight while taking an epidemiology graduate courses on health in developing countries and maternal-child health in the South. Imagine the synergy which could be created between public health professionals, human rights activists, and pastoral/spiritual care workers all engaged in defending and promoting the dignity of the human person in our world. Ultimately, I believe we all share the same terminal values. *Health in Developing Countries* course, Summer Institute in Public Health, McGill University, Montreal, Prof. Joyce Pickering, M.D., Summer 1995.

⁴³ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, 118.

beautiful intuition. This is a choice and a commitment through which we can find how to say to the world: “Your kingdom come,” and to the poor “God loves you.”⁴⁴

Spirituality

Unjust and early death due to poverty is a blatant contradiction to the God of life, resurrection and love which as Church we are called to announce. The preferential option for the poor therefore is not simply a pastoral strategy, but rather a way of affirming an essential element of Christian identity, not only in Latin America or poor countries but for the universal Church. Only the concrete way of living this option will vary, depending on one’s country, context, and situation in life. This is the impression Gutiérrez gives when he says that the experience of, and commitment to, the poor is a way to go to the God of Jesus Christ.⁴⁵ This rings with Levinas’ notion of the Face of the other being a Trace of, and our way to, the Divine. In relation with Levinas’ notion of the other, Gutiérrez has written:

There is no greater challenge to our language about God than the suffering of the innocent. How can we understand a God of love in a world that bears the stamp of poverty, genocide,... The question is surely broader than any answer theology can give. But it is an inescapable question. After the Holocaust Emmanuel Lévinas insightfully developed an ethic of the other, holding up the face of someone who says ‘don’t kill me!’ and thinking of God as otherness.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ The spirituality Gutiérrez speaks of is *not* a refuge from the sufferings of daily life, but instead, is a life of solidarity connected to the experience of the poor and oppressed. “That was the intention of the first centuries. The study of the *sacrapagina* was for this reason exactly, to help persons. At the beginning, theology was only a spiritual theology. It was a very beautiful intuition to link theology and spirituality. Above all, a spiritual theology is a theology helping persons to be faithful to the message of Jesus Christ.” In Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 32-33. Also see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells – The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 35-38, and Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxxii-xxxiii.

⁴⁵ Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 31-32.

⁴⁶ Gutiérrez, *The Density of the Present – Selected Writings* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 193.

McAfee Brown draws on *We Drink from our own Wells* by Gutiérrez to redefine spirituality so that—when radically understood—it includes what is meant by liberation. The new spirituality of liberation has five interconnected marks which are true for both Gutiérrez’ context and ours.⁴⁷ These are:

1. **Conversion** as a requirement for solidarity, which recognizes both individual sins as well as the sinful situations we are in which contain structural causes of injustice.
2. **Grace**, or God’s gratuitous love as the basis for action and for our loving the other, rather than a “duty” to practice love. Prayer expresses our faith and trust in the gracious God and there is always a twofold movement between God-us-neighbour.
3. **Joy** as the conviction that suffering will be overcome. The only joy that can ultimately sustain us is “Easter joy” which springs from the hope that death is not the final word in history.
4. **Spiritual childhood** is the attitude of opening up to God. This involves being with the poor and against poverty, where commitment means making their world one’s place of residence and not merely of work.
5. **Community** as arising out of solitude, because being with the poor will mean to go through the “dark night of injustice” as Gutiérrez says. But this will move us out of the solitude and into community, into a foretaste of the promised land. And the mood is celebration!

In a complementary way, McAfee Brown details how liberation—when radically understood—includes what is meant by spirituality. Again he draws from Gutiérrez, from his contention in *A Theology of Liberation* that liberation has three levels or dimensions of meaning “but that no one of them is properly understood unless all three are simultaneously affirmed.” These three levels are:⁴⁸

⁴⁷ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 116-120. And, Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 95-135.

⁴⁸ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 121-124. And, Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxxviii-xxxix.

1. **Liberation from unjust social structures** that destroy people. These may be political, economic, or cultural arising out of distorted attitudes about race, class, gender, etc. and they may also be embodied into church structures. This level is where the work of liberation theologians has been most focused because it is the most immediate barrier to the full personhood of their constituencies.
2. **Liberation from the power of fate**, the sense that one's station in life is foreordained. "For hundreds of years, the church played a major role in supporting this position, by the simple device of substituting 'providence' or 'the will of God' for the pagan concept of 'fate.' Accept your lot without complaint, the sermons went, and God will reward you in the afterlife."
3. **Liberation from personal sin and guilt**. This is the central if not exclusive message of the institutional Church states McAfee Brown, and equally vital in Gutiérrez's life—albeit in harmony with the previous two. This third dimension of liberation is necessary because sin impedes conversion.⁴⁹

McAfee Brown places this harmonious interrelationship side by side with Micah 6:8's single exhortation expressed in three interrelated notes: "This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God." The three elements—physical, relational, and spiritual are one and the same—one assertion said in three different ways!

To act justly	= to be liberated to participate in creating a just society
To love tenderly	= to be liberated to take responsible action and to love
To walk humbly with your God	= to be liberated to live a grace-filled life. ⁵⁰

"Blessed are you who are poor" can so easily be spiritualized so that we avoid reading further down: "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation."(Luke 6:20-26) In an article looking at liberation theology in the twenty-first

⁴⁹ Catherine Frances Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion: A Psychological and Theological Assessment*. M.A. Thesis, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, June 2007, 117.

⁵⁰ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 67-72; 124.

century, Gutiérrez emphasized that the preferential option for the poor means *materially poor*, and that in His universal love God *prefers* the least in a free and unlimited way.⁵¹ This is not a source of “contradiction,” but it will be a source of tension! The *option* means we are invited and free to make a decision, and to convert toward a new way of being Christian, whereby the poor *and* the non-poor enter the world of the poor. This describes an immersion where we are sharing our time and our lives with the poor, thus committing as much as possible of ourselves to them in their concrete reality. Gutiérrez clarifies that this allows us to *understand the poor*, and *not to imitate* their lives, because poverty is a scandal.⁵²

Poverty is not only a socio-economic and/or ethical-moral issue—it is a profound spiritual and theological issue of idolatry. Dennis Stimpson says that Catholic Social Teachings must consider neo-liberalism or laissez-faire capitalism from the perspective of idolatry and not only social ethics so that the struggle for social justice is presented as, and becomes, an issue of Christian faith.⁵³ One can embrace a preferential option for the poor either socially or theologically. For Christians however, says Gutiérrez, it is who we are; and liberation theology and spirituality is a lens through which we can announce the Good News of God’s free love. “We are committed not because the poor are good, but because God is good. This commitment is a theocentric option.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century.” In *Romero’s Legacy: the Call to Peace and Justice*, ed. Pilar Hogan Closkey and John P. Hogan (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 51.

⁵² Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century,” 51-56.

⁵³ Dennis Stimpson, *Beyond Ethical Reflections: Neo-liberalism, Idolatry and Canadian Catholic Social Teaching*. M.A. Thesis, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, 2000.

⁵⁴ Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century,” 52-53; 57. Also, Gutiérrez, “Theology from the Experience of the Poor,” 31.

1.2.2 Leonardo Boff

For Leonardo Boff, liberation spirituality grounds liberation theology and a life of solidarity: “What sustains this liberating theory (theology) and practice is a spiritual encounter with the Lord amidst the poor . . . All spiritual experience means an encounter with a new and challenging face of God.”⁵⁵ He makes a concrete connection between practice and salvation using as his source *Matthew 25*, and asserts that prayer’s truthfulness is measured in relation to concrete ethical practice/work for justice/washing of the feet. Boff speaks of achieving a synthesis, as all great saints did, of authentic prayer-work, faith-life, but adding the distinctive tone for Latin America of prayer-*action*, faith-*liberation*.⁵⁶ Our prayer and faith must be such that they love and liberate others. This unity must be witnessed to—communicated in our circles, and we must back it up with concrete data, offered for reflection and discussion to nourish future praxis, i.e., commitment and prayer.

McAfee Brown has documented that Boff’s work is rich in spirituality and tradition, but with an “. . . unyielding insistence on a theology with two eyes—relating the gospel to the contemporary scene”; he adds that this latter trait “finally overstepped the presumably appropriate boundaries,” leading to Boff being silenced in the mid 1980s.⁵⁷ No wonder perhaps; the contemporary scene of extreme poverty, oppression, and early death is not very attractive, it may even be *Where God Weeps*.⁵⁸ Such is the title of Werenfried van

⁵⁵ Leonardo Boff, “The Need for Political Saints: From a Spirituality of Liberation to the Practice of Liberation,” *Cross Currents*, 30 no. 4 Winter (1980-1981): 369.

⁵⁶ Boff, “The Need for Political Saints,” 371-374.

⁵⁷ Robert McAfee Brown, “Leonardo Boff: Theologian for all Christians.” *Christian Century*, July 2-9, 1986, 615. Boff’s books on spirituality and devotions show how these cannot be separated from solidarity in the *concrete* world. For example: “Way of the Cross - Way of Justice”; “The Lord’s Prayer: The Prayer of Integral Liberation”; “Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation.”

⁵⁸ Werenfried van Straaten, *Where God Weeps* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, [1969] revised American edition, 1989), 60. “(A)ll our comfortable acts of homage to a God who is so infinitely remote must

Straaten's book, in which he says how our solemn liturgies are an insult to God when our brothers die in filth. Leonardo Boff sees a remedy to this by envisioning people as living a web of relationships because we are created in the image of the relational Trinity. He explains that capitalism and socialism cannot lead to this. While democracy is better, only a Trinitarian community can truly lead to "fellowship, equality or opportunity, generosity in a space for personal and group expression."⁵⁹ Boff also criticizes the hierarchical Church for not reflecting Trinitarian Communion. In the same vein, Stimpson says the Church needs to favor God as communal relationship over our still present privatized notions of faith. This would be "an act of spiritual defiance for it de-legitimizes the neo-liberal idols of individualism and competition, as well as, all other false God concepts embedded in neo-liberalism which are used to destroy human community and solidarity."⁶⁰

1.2.3 Expressions of liberation theology: theology in movement

While some liberation theologians restrict liberation theology to the materially poor, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff present a broader definition. "Liberation theology is about liberation of the oppressed—in their totality as persons, body and soul—and in their totality as a class: the poor, the subjected, the discriminated against. We cannot confine ourselves to the purely socio-economic aspect of oppression, however basic and 'determinant' this may

sound like a curse in the ears of his Divine Son if we do not honor him in the poorest of his children, in whose shape he is so challengingly close to us. The Saviour, once born in the city of David, is disgusted with our piety ... if we refuse to those who are helplessly trodden down ... and to all the outcasts of the world the love for which the Child in the crib has been waiting for two thousand years."

⁵⁹ Leonardo Boff, "Trinitarian Community and Social Liberation," *Cross Currents*, 38, No. 3, Fall (1988): 304; 306.

⁶⁰ Stimpson, *Beyond Ethical Reflections*, 134-135. He proposes this as a strategy for the Social Affairs Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

be.”⁶¹ However, while the Boffs say we have to go beyond an exclusively “classist” concept of the oppressed, they also add that the materially poor do not simply exist alongside other groups. They say the “class-oppressed” poor are the infrastructural expression of the process of oppression, while the other groups are the superstructural expressions. All of the groups who are oppressed and/or discriminated against generally share material poverty in common.

Liberation theology, contextual theology, theology

Besides variations of liberation theology in Latin America, the Boffs note variations in the First World as well, such as Black liberation theology in the U.S. In Europe, liberation theology combines concerns of the First World for the Third World, as well as for the First World’s “new poor.” These new poor generally suffer both socio-economic poverty and the hurt of being literally kept on the fringes: migrant workers and refugees, institutionalized elderly or disabled, drug addicts, etc.⁶² A similar situation is evident in Canada, with the addition of our First Nations People. The Boff brothers have said how the different expressions of liberation theology in different contexts have raised the question of what these “theologies” share in common, and they clarify that liberation theology is not a *theological movement*, but rather *theology in movement*. At one point, they suggest, we will be able to remove the “liberation” from “liberation theology” because all theologies will be liberation theology in their own ways, or else they will not be Christian theologies.⁶³

⁶¹ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 29.

⁶² Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 78-89.

⁶³ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 90-92.

The phenomenon of liberation theology as dynamic, in contexts other than only socio-economic poverty and oppression points to the vital necessity of being in tune with one's local context. Lonergan's functional definition of theology captures this well: "A theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."⁶⁴ The Boffs' *theology in movement* and Lonergan's definition come to life in *Acts 6:1-7*.⁶⁵ The apostles were moved by the criterion of love modelled to them by Jesus when they appointed and sent forth the first seven deacons to care for the neglected widows and orphans, creatively adapting the "structures" of the first Judeo-Christian communities. This points to a contextual, dynamic and living model of Church, such as is expressed by today's base Christian communities. Stephen B. Bevans, in *Models of Contextual Theology*,⁶⁶ is unambiguous in stating:

There is no such thing as "theology"; there is only *contextual* theology: *feminist* theology, *black* theology, *liberation* theology, *Filipino* theology . . . The contextualization of theology—the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context—is really a theological imperative.

Dávila, however, expresses concerns about contextual theology because it may give the impression of referring to minorities.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, xi. Lonergan's functional definition of theology: first line of *Method*.

⁶⁵ These verses speak to me very personally as a deacon. In *The Acts of the Apostles* (6:1-7), immersed in the reality of poverty and injustice that (Greek) widows were facing in their community, the apostles creatively adapted the structure and functioning of the early Church in order to meet concrete needs, to ensure that each person received that day his or her daily bread; it was a *Church in movement*. Adapted from Prof. Charles Kannengiesser, "The Church in the Making." Lectures and Coursepack (p.123) for *Theology 604 - Graduate Seminar in Ecclesiology*, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, 2006.

⁶⁶ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 3.

⁶⁷ Maria Teresa Dávila, "Catholic Hispanic Theology in the U.S.: Dimensiones de la Opción Preferencial por los Pobres en el Norte," *The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention*, (2008): 38-40. Her point comes from the U.S. context, and more particularly Latino Theology. While her concern may be valid, it requires more in-depth exploration, understanding and analysis so that biased impressions are corrected. If approximately two-thirds of our planet's population suffers from some form of poverty or oppression, then liberation theology or contextual theology cannot be considered a fringe minority "movement".

Liberation theology movements in Quebec and Canada

In Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has been influenced by Latin American liberation theology, adopting some of its language such as the “preferential option for the poor.” However, faith-motivated liberation movements existed in both Quebec and Canada before the term “liberation theology” was coined in Latin America. Canadian social teachings have roots in the Social Gospel Movement which emerged in the late nineteenth century, and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation of the 1930s.⁶⁸ In a comprehensive study of liberation in Canada, Oscar Cole-Arnal explains how in the 1920s the Student Christian Movement rose out of the Social Gospel. They “had combined camp and factory experience which brought middle-class youth into a base Christian community that radicalized them profoundly,”⁶⁹ thus supporting my question about whether immersion facilitates conversion. He supports it also through his presentation of the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice that “interprets its vocation according to the ‘prophetic tradition which understands that people come to know God by participating in the struggles for justice for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed.’”⁷⁰ And of the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, Cole-Arnal states:

Biblical scholar R.B.Y. Scott and philosophy professor Gregory Vlastos, edited a trailblazing book called *Towards the Christian Revolution*. These men and their cowriters created a veritable theology of liberation for the Depression-ridden 1930s in Canada. Vlastos underscored Jesus’ complete identity ‘with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the prisoner.’⁷¹

⁶⁸ Gregory Baum, “Toward a Canadian Catholic Social Theory.” *Cross Currents* 35, 203 (Summer/Fall 1985): 256. Oscar Cole-Arnal dates the emergence of the SCM in the late nineteenth century. In *Liberation Theology in Canada: To Set the Captives Free* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998), 132.

⁶⁹ Oscar Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada: To Set the Captives Free* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998), 134-135.

⁷⁰ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 139-140.

⁷¹ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 135-136.

Closer to the present, Cole-Arnal describes several “reseaux” and movements specific to Quebec, including those he calls “Christ’s Little Flocks,” much akin to base Christian communities, and including radical monasticism such as *Les Petites Soeurs de Jésus*, the *Mission Saints Pierre et Paul* based on the worker-priest model, House Churches, and communities different from the traditional liberation theology, such as *L’Arche*.⁷² Sabrina Di Matteo has recently described several Quebec base Christian communities having long local histories; *Des Chemins* for example, began in 1971.⁷³ She quotes Guy Paiement who says that the ultimate goal of the base Christian community *Des Chemins* is not recruitment of new members but the salvation or resuscitation of the city—being Church is not seen as the end result or the goal of their journey, but the method. Paiement says they differ from other church or social groups because base Christian communities share four axes or criteria: (a) fraternity; (b) liturgical celebration; (c) education; and (d) transformation of their reality through action so that there is less suffering due to injustice.⁷⁴ This is their authentic, dynamic, and contextual way of being in their everyday lives. The people are united through a common call rather than a common need, helping them to transcend self for others.⁷⁵

⁷² Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 136-150.

⁷³ Sabrina Di Matteo, ed., “Des Églises Invisibles – Invisible Churches?” *Haute Fidélité* 126, No. 2 (2008). This issue describes several small or basic Christian communities with strong laity involvement.

⁷⁴ Guy Paiement, *Témoins d’un parcours: La communauté de base Des Chemins*, (Montreal: Paiement et Des Chemins, 2007), 3-24; Sabrina Di Matteo, ed., and Guy Paiement, “Les Communautés de base et l’Église: des interpellations essentielles,” *Haute Fidélité* 126, no. 2 (2008): 19-22.

⁷⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen says community, “(I)s the fruit of the intimate knowledge that we are together, not because of a common need—such as to learn a language—but because we are called together to help make God’s presence visible in the world. Only to the degree that we have this knowledge of God’s call can we transcend our own immediate needs and point together to him that is greater than these needs.” *Gracias! A Latin American Journal* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1983), 66.

Despite this rich history, it is not uncommon to hear that liberation theology is “dead” or that it is ineffective or unrealistic for our times and context, that it was a passing fad; even Gutiérrez notes that it risked stirring facile enthusiasm.⁷⁶ While liberation theology is not dead in Canada where it is discreetly lived by many people and groups, it does seem to lack presence and dynamism in the “institutional” life of the Church and mainstream society, be it for local issues or global concerns. U.S. data indicates that there is an increasing conservative trend among Catholics which seems to parallel their becoming increasingly middle-class.⁷⁷ A similar shift is possible in Canada, explaining in part the decreasing enduring interest in, and commitment to, liberation theology.

Regarding the various forms of basic Christian communities in Quebec, Di Matteo says they may be somewhat “invisible” to the institutional Church, particularly for the Francophone sector. While the movements or communities are indeed small and discreet, the descriptive articles do suggest that a form of “liberation theology” is being lived out as authentic theology and authentic spirituality.⁷⁸ We have to *be attentive, be intelligent, be rational, and be responsible* to the movement of the Spirit in our midst who does not primarily manifest itself via the triumphalist metaphors which the Church has led us to see and expect. Ivan Petrella presents arguments for reconstructing liberation theology in North

⁷⁶ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xviii.

⁷⁷ James D. Davidson, “Generations of American Catholics,” *The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention*, (2008): 1-17.

⁷⁸ Di Matteo, “Des Églises Invisibles – Invisible Churches?” 3, 30. Di Matteo also presents examples and stories of how the Catholic Social Teachings are lived and promoted through the work of Social Pastoral Agents (Agents de pastorale sociale) in various districts of the Diocese of Montreal, as well as through groups such as the Christian Workers Movement (Mouvement des travailleurs et des travailleuses chrétiens). Entire issue of *Haute Fidélité*, 125, no. 2 (2007).

America where he says it now exists only in words and where it is not liberating those living in poverty, or otherwise oppressed. He says that liberation theology must not be hesitant to jump in with other disciplines, otherwise it will become more middle-class theory talk; he also refers to the “stranglehold of Church and academy.”⁷⁹ Petrella may be on the fringes for his position, but this he says, will be the case for those persons *authentic* to the task of liberation!

Gutiérrez affirms that the preferential option for the poor involves a global option, going beyond peace and justice commissions as part of the mission of the Church, to the total reformation or conversion of the Church in terms of the option for the poor, as the only way for all to the truth and to salvation. While many Christians have led struggles for justice and peace in the U.S. and Canada with significant impact, there has also been a tendency to see these issues as pertaining primarily to specialized groups or Catholic Social Teachings.⁸⁰ Baum refers to liberation theology and to the preferential option for the poor in Canada as an explosion of solidarity that shakes Church foundations and divides people of good will. He explains that tension resulted from Vatican II, from the Catholic Social Teachings and from Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops statements critical of the socio-economic system because the Christian Church, media and public remain uncomfortable with this.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ivan Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology: An Argument and Manifesto* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 146-149.

⁸⁰ Lee Cormie, “Vantage Points of the Historically Marginalized in North America: A Response to Gustavo Gutiérrez,” *The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Forty-Seventh Annual Convention*, Pittsburgh, June 11-14, 1992, Paul Crowley, ed., 47 (1992): 34-35.

⁸¹ Baum, Gregory. *Compassion and Solidarity – The Church for Others*. CBC Massey Lecture series, 1987 (Concord: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1992).

He adds that there remains until today within the Church a logic of mission versus a logic of maintenance, and a decentralizing versus a centralizing tendency; in this struggle, maintenance and centralization still prevail. Dennis Stimpson explains that so many faithful simply ignore Catholic Social Teachings and “serve systems of oppression with a clear conscience” because our bishops have not included idolatry in their criticism of neo-liberalism. Canadian bishops’ reliance on ethical arguments has been unable to move the Catholic community to work for economic justice and to consider economic policy as an issue of religious faith.⁸²

While liberation theology, solidarity movements, and non-governmental organizations have certain shared meanings and goals as they confront the above tensions within society, they are composed of individuals. The individual who strives to be in solidarity with fellow brothers and sisters faces two types of forces:

1. internal forces within him which can bias his following the transcendental precepts —his ability to be an attentive, intelligent, rational, responsible, and loving Subject; and
2. external social forces, and these come from both the Church and society at large, from a global neo-liberal market which defines human beings by their level of “consumer confidence.” This will also maim his ability to be faithful to his transcendental precepts.

Let us now turn to Lonergan who, Robert M. Doran states, provides the transcendental theological justification of the key insights of *the theology of liberation*.⁸³

⁸² Stimpson, *Beyond Ethical Reflections*, 119, 123-124.

⁸³ Robert M. Doran, “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” *Grail* 10, Issue 3 (S 1994): 75-87.

1.3 Bernard Lonergan, the transcendental method, and liberation theology

Lonergan's insight into each person's potential for being a *responsible Subject* is a valuable bridge in helping individuals and communities in their journeys toward more authentic and liberating theology and lives—lives of solidarity. Catherine Cherry says, “As a Catholic, and as a Jesuit, Lonergan views faith as personal and social, in which one's relationship with God needs to be lived in the world, and celebrated in community.”⁸⁴

1.3.1 Lonergan's transcendental method and spirituality

Beginning with Lonergan's introduction in *Method in Theology*, I was readily drawn to his work, initially as a support for liberation theology, and later, increasingly as a dialogue partner. “Method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dolt,” but is a framework for creativity and collaboration, as each person can discover in him or herself the dynamic structure of his or her own cognitional and moral being—this is the process that liberation theologians have engaged themselves in. It is what Lonergan refers to as our inner dynamism or our transcendental precepts: being attentive to one's experiences, being intelligent in understanding them, being rational in evaluating them and judging their meaning, and being responsible by deciding to follow through in a loving way.⁸⁵ Liberation theologians articulated this through their lives and their words: a new way of *doing* theology—of God-talk—in the reality of their culture and context, discerning and

⁸⁴ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 51.

⁸⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, xi, 6-20. Tad Dunne explains: “these precepts apply to thinking about all reality whatsoever. It is because they are not restricted to any particular realities, and because they operate in clear thinkers whether or not they are formulated as such.” In *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 31-32. However, there are critiques that the very universality that is one of the transcendental method's advantages is not universal, and that all peoples do not come to understand and know in the same way. For a brief review, see Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 108, 171-172.

questioning the significance and role of their religion within it, echoing Lonergan’s functional definition of theology (footnote 64). Following the transcendental precepts will help us to truly know others and their needs—others who are hungry, oppressed, sick, lonely—shattering our cognitional myth that we can know by simply “taking a look.”⁸⁶ Dunne emphasizes how Lonergan helps guide the betterment of the social order through an integrating spirituality which draws from our own foundation, our own presence or absence of conversion. “There are norms built into the soul that we can discover, and these norms have the power to put order not only into our communities but also to put order into the soul itself.”⁸⁷ Now while Dunne addresses the betterment of the social order and thus “liberation” generally, some Lonergan scholars have written about Lonergan’s insights with respect to “liberation theology” specifically.

1.3.2 Frederick Crowe

We begin with Frederick Crowe because he refers to Lonergan’s own writings on liberation theology. This may surprise some, such as certain participants at the 1975 congress on *method of theology in Latin America* who accused Lonergan’s thought not only of remoteness from real life, but even suspected that it was “made to order for the ideology of the military regimes!”⁸⁸ Referring to Lonergan’s earliest writings, Crowe demonstrates the opposite—Lonergan’s lifelong interest in the very questions of liberation theology. Two

⁸⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 213-214.

⁸⁷ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 1-2.

⁸⁸ Frederick E. Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology,” in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 116, 118. The quotations are from *The Montreal Beacon* (2 May 1941), which in 1942 became *The Canadian Register: Quebec Edition*.

decades *before* Latin American liberation theology, Lonergan was asking “Why is the control of industry in the hands of fewer and fewer?” and saying “Unless the masses achieve economic independence, then (democracy) will be a noble experiment that failed.” Of particular significance to my question of immersion is Crowe’s comment that Lonergan’s analysis of the economic situation arose out of his own immersion. It “was not an ivory-tower project, due to an academic interest in a *quid est?* Rather, it rose directly out of the searing experience of the thirties, the long decade of ruinous economic depression.”⁸⁹

Then turning to *Insight*, Crowe explains that Chapter 7 could easily have been named *Liberation Philosophy* for it deals with technology, capital, economic and political systems, culture, the emergence of classes and their conflicts, the demand for a creative human role in the making of history, and other topics of great relevance to liberation theology. In *Method*, Lonergan takes these topics and carries them forward with the added themes of religion, individuals and community, group formation and group bias, progress and decline, and a developed notion of value. Following the publication of *Method*, Lonergan chose to dedicate his remaining years at Boston College to economics and the questions which concerned liberation theology, referring to liberation theologians as one of his sources, thus indicating his judgment on the needs of the time. Lonergan had already affirmed in 1971 what we still hear and witness in our time: “Groups exaggerate the magnitude and importance of their contribution to society . . . richer become even richer, while the poor sink into misery and squalor.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology,” 118.

⁹⁰ Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology,” 122-123, 129, quoting from *Method*, 360.

But why had Lonergan been so misunderstood? Crowe tries to answer via the parable of the two people who went to Calcutta. One Subject must feed the hungry, another must ask why they are hungry. And another must consider the Subjects within the bigger picture, to systematize what is being experienced, understood, judged, and done in the name of Love. Lonergan was able to appreciate those called to establish soup-kitchens, as well as the call within himself to strive to achieve a fundamental understanding of the economic reality. He had to get to the bottom of things!⁹¹ This can be viewed in light of McAfee Brown's theme of withdrawal and return.⁹² Withdrawal into spirituality and return to liberation are not the synthesis of two different worlds, but really an integrated whole, as the Sabbath day is to the weekdays—the Sabbath renews us for the week just as the desert prayer renewed Jesus for the needy and hungry crowds. Lonergan himself says: “The withdrawal into interiority is not an end in itself.” His ends, argues Crowe, are very pastoral.⁹³ Maybe becoming aware of our own weaknesses and biases, Lonergan needed a long Sabbath to get to the foundations of the issues so that today's oppressed do not become tomorrow's oppressors. He knew that solutions were not to be found in some new *objectively* good socio-economic system, test, or control. “(T)hat meaning of the ‘objective’ is mere delusion. Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity.”⁹⁴

1.3.3 Doran, Tracy, and Lamb

Doran builds his synthesis on the overall structure of Lonergan's achievement, which is complemented by his own notion of *psychic conversion*. Doran affirms: “Nobody

⁹¹ Frederick E. Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan as Pastoral Theologian,” in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 129-132.

⁹² McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 43-49.

⁹³ Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology,” 124; and Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan as Pastoral Theologian,” 127-144.

⁹⁴ Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology,” 125-126, quoting from *Method*, 292.

has really heard the gospel unless it has opened them to an awareness of their radical and inescapable solidarity with the poor.” He goes on to say: “There are resources in Lonergan for a theology constructed out of such solidarity, and that kind of theology brings those resources to their richest fulfilment as historically catalytic elements of meaning.”⁹⁵ His comment which follows is particularly significant because it shows the importance that both Lonergan and liberation theology place on the notion of *praxis*. “Without that fulfilment the resources can be left hanging, as it were, in a never-never land of heuristic possibilities for an *intellectual* but not a reasonable and responsible, that is, *factual* constitution of the human world. Lonergan means and intends primarily praxis, and by forcing the meaning of his scale of values we can begin to satisfy his profound practical intentions.”⁹⁶ According to David Tracy, many contemporary theologians insist that any theory or argument in theology must yield to the demands of praxis.⁹⁷

Matthew L. Lamb shows how the functional specialty of dialectics can be used to analyse and effectively support the insights of liberation theology. He details the shift among contemporary philosophers of science and theology, from hermeneutics and interpretive concerns of historical consciousness, to dialectics and primarily social and emancipatory concerns of dialectical consciousness. He aims at understanding the increasing concern with praxis and the critique of ideology, which call into question the fundamental self-understanding of modernity with its illusory dichotomy between science and ideology,

⁹⁵ Doran, “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” 85-86.

⁹⁶ Doran, “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” 86.

⁹⁷ David Tracy, “Theologies of Praxis.” In *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honour of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), 35. Praxis, for Tracy, means human action as what we actually do or probably or possibly can do.

including the dichotomy between the conservative and liberal orientations. Lamb asserts that the very relevant questions which liberation and political theology pose to both the Christian traditions and forms of contemporary human experience involve them in what might be called a “double dialectic.” In radical ways, these theologians recognize how any symbol-, idea-, or social-system may become ideological.⁹⁸ On this theme, Doran’s position is that liberation theology needs Lonergan to ground a differentiation of praxis from technique, saying that some liberation theology is not *Gospel* but *Law*, and some of it could substitute one set of alienations for another.⁹⁹

1.3.4 Fred Lawrence

The work of Fred Lawrence is particularly pertinent to the themes of immersion and conversion because he makes an in-depth analysis of basic Christian communities. Let us see the “critical point” in a person’s transition from object to Subject.

For those familiar with Lonergan, that transition will probably call to mind that striking passage from ‘*Existenz and Aggiornamento*’ in which he discusses the ‘critical point in the increasing autonomy of the subject’ that is reached when the self-constitution of the subject becomes ‘open-eyed, deliberate’ because he ‘finds out for himself that it is up to him to decide what he is to make of himself.’¹⁰⁰

This transition is fostered by the community; not a community as some social phenomenon, but rather a community grounded in “the threefold personal self-communication of divinity to humanity: ... It is the experience of a new community, in which faith and hope and charity dissolve rationalizations, break determinisms, and reconcile the estranged and the alienated, and there is reaped the harvest of the Spirit that is ‘ . . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

⁹⁸ Matthew L. Lamb, “The Dialectics of Theory and Praxis within Paradigm Analysis,” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 5 (Chico, California: Scholars Pr, 1985): 91.

⁹⁹ Doran, “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” 86-87.

¹⁰⁰ Fred Lawrence, “Basic Christian Community - An issue of the ‘Mind and the Mystery of Christ,’” *Lonergan Workshop*, vol. 4 (Chico, California: Scholars Pr, 1985): 266-267.

goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control’ (Gal 5:22).”¹⁰¹ Kenneth Melchin also supports the idea of community fostering the transition from object to Subject, saying that we can find ourselves experiencing and caring about things which we previously “screened out.” Though this “conversion process” may be infrequent, he says that it can in fact be cultivated so that we come to live in anticipation of ever new encounters with the “unknown-unknown.”¹⁰²

A second quote by Lawrence shows the similarity between the *raison d’être* of basic Christian communities and of Lonergan’s *Method*:

Surely I do not need to elaborate here upon how the question of basic Christian communities to, in Haughton’s words, ‘understand and share the experience of what God was doing in Christ, in their midst’ can only be truly serious in the measure that it is also trying to answer that question about how to live. In a world so gravely affected by the existence of differentiations of consciousness, this is the question of *Method* . . . For those in Christ Jesus as subject, . . . there is an elective affinity for a type of reflection ‘that embraces in their complementarity both man as attentive, as intelligent, as reasonable, as responsible, as loving, and the human world as given and as structured by intelligence, by reasonable judgement, by decision and action’.¹⁰³

A concrete application

Through his work as a community development consultant for a mega-development project in a region of the Philippines where poverty and oppression are daily struggles, John Boyd Turner concretely shows: “how manifestly what Lonergan says in *Insight* and *Method in Theology* actually does occur among peoples.” He says: “...in order to speak about the human good we need chunks of data, actual occurrences of women and men acting, to give

¹⁰¹ Lawrence, “Basic Christian Community,” 270-271.

¹⁰² Melchin, *Living with Other People*, 11-35. Drawing upon Lonergan, Melchin describes three realms of value in relation to our moral horizons: 1) the *Known* —the facts and acts we understand and are concerned about as values and disvalues; 2) the *Known Unknown* —the things we know as important but may not personally understand or appropriate, like international ethics and law; 3) the *Unknown Unknown* —the region totally beyond our horizon of knowing and caring, so that we cannot even ask any questions related to moral analysis and action. Coming to care about an issue or person outside our horizon requires conversion (footnote 13), or a re-ordering of our moral landscape.

¹⁰³ Lawrence, “Basic Christian Community,” 279; he is referring to *Method*, 305-319.

flesh to whatever heuristic structures we may know about. . . . This note is simply a report . . . this occurred, this is the link to Lonergan . . . Again, all that I say is just at the level of possibly relevant understanding. It awaits judgement.”¹⁰⁴ An area requiring exploration is the mutual biases, alienations, and ideologies which can exist between the rich and poor, the oppressed and the oppressors; there can be a mutual need for liberation. He states that in concrete situations of exploitation, Lonergan’s work cannot be used to set up a conflict or class model of development. This is something that Gutiérrez was in fact criticized for.¹⁰⁵ Turner proposes that besides conflict, there are challenge and dialectic. Challenge is not synonymous with conflict, for one can move from good to higher good, as well as through dialectic and conversion, from bad to good. He exemplifies Lonergan’s integrative and collaborative approach, pointing to similarities between the Latin American and Philippine experience.¹⁰⁶

1.4 Conversion through immersion into the concrete

It is in the heart of social struggle that we can effectively seek the peace of the Lord.¹⁰⁷ Paradoxically, the responsible and autonomous Subject is the person who can allow him or herself to be immersed into the plight of the other so as to be converted and transformed—“a 180° turn toward the Other without losing the self.”¹⁰⁸ Is this “about-face”

¹⁰⁴ John Boyd Turner, “Lonergan’s Practical Political Transformative Understanding: The Example of Development in the Philippine Province of Northern Samar,” in *Communicating a Dangerous Memory - Lonergan Workshop*, ed. Fred Lawrence, Vol. 6 (Atlanta: Scholars Pr, 1987), 109.

¹⁰⁵ Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, xxiv, 156-161; Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies*, 144-152.

¹⁰⁶ Turner, “Lonergan’s Practical Political Transformative Understanding,” 109.

¹⁰⁷ Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 118.

¹⁰⁸ Roger Burggraeve, *Emmanuel Levinas: The Ethical Basis for a Humane Society according to Emmanuel Levinas* (Leuven: Center for Metaphysics and Philosophy of God, Institute of Philosophy, 1981).

what was happening to Boff's unnamed bishop with which this thesis was introduced? Undoubtedly he had "seen" the poverty around him before, so what was different with this encounter? The two examples which follow, of two persons who, at first, appear quite different, will begin to shed some light on these questions.

1.4.1 Two examples of conversion: Romero and Nouwen

Oscar Romero

Leonardo and Clodovis Boff provide a poignant example of how total immersion into the plight of the oppressed can immerse one, with God's grace, into a new horizon.

Many have been led by liberation theology's insights and the practice of solidarity at its origins to a process of true conversion. Archbishop Romero of San Salvador, who had been a conservative in his views, became a great advocate and defender of the poor when he stood over the dead body of Fr. Rutilio Grande, assassinated for his liberating commitment to the poor. The spilt blood of the martyr acted like a salve on his eyes, opening them to the urgency of the task of liberation.¹⁰⁹

This example brings us back to my two-fold thesis question on page 4, the two parts of which are more spiral than sequential. The first part asks: Does immersion into the plight of our brothers and sisters facilitate or promote a more profound, radical, and enduring conversion? While Boff in the above quote affirms that for Romero it did, interestingly, Romero seems to have minimized the "conversion," preferring to refer to it rather as an "evolution!"¹¹⁰ John P. Hogan too, however, seems more inclined to see a transformation or conversion. Hogan's own writings support the idea that immersion leads to conversion; he describes the annual gathering in Camden, U.S. where liberation theology is lived out through housing projects,

¹⁰⁹ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 8.

¹¹⁰ Joseph A. Galante, *Romero's Legacy: the Call to Peace and Justice*, ed. Pilar Hogan Closkey and John P. Hogan (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 4.

and these he says, provide life-changing experiences for participants.¹¹¹ The question of “conversion” or “evolution” may be a simple case of semantics because our Church (hierarchy and People) may be uncomfortable with the idea of clergy, let alone bishops, not being fully “converted.”

Henri Nouwen

In the early 1980s, Henri J.M. Nouwen, greatly appreciated for his spiritual writings, participated in a course given by Gutiérrez in Lima, Peru, for 2000 Latin American pastoral agents. It was here that Gutiérrez first presented the main themes of his liberation spirituality, which would ten years later come together in *We Drink From Our Own Wells*.¹¹² Nouwen says this turned out to be one of the most significant experiences of his six-month stay, not only because of the animator but because of the participants.

Most of these students were born and raised in poor barrios and had become active pastoral agents in the process of liberation. They knew their own people and had learned to think with one eye on the gospel and one eye on the painful reality they shared with these people . . . Gustavo explained that the journey would not be a journey from nothing to something . . . The way in which these young Christians spoke about their Lord was so direct and fearless that it became clear that their pastoral work among the poor was not based on any mere idea or theory but on a deep, personal experience of the presence of a loving God in the midst of the struggle for justice and peace.¹¹³

This quote supports the notion of the participants’ conversions and a deep faith rooted in their own immersion in both the people’s concrete lives, and in the Gospel: a theology with

¹¹¹ John P. Hogan, “The Eucharist and Social Justice,” *Romero’s Legacy: the Call to Peace and Justice*, ed. Pilar Hogan Closkey and John P. Hogan (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007).

¹¹² Henri J.M. Nouwen, in his Forward to Gustavo Gutiérrez’ *We Drink from Our Own Wells – The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), xiii-xix.

¹¹³ Nouwen, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, xiv-xv. Rev. Nouwen shares his experiences of his time in Latin America in his book, *Gracias!*

two eyes. This relates more to second part of my question; for now however, we focus on Nouwen—on how the immersion changed him. He writes:

Talking with those pastoral workers during that summer course, I became aware of how individualistic and elitist my own spirituality had been. It was hard to confess, but true, that in many respects my thinking about the spiritual life had been deeply influenced by my North American milieu with its emphasis upon the “interior life” and the methods and techniques for developing that life. Only when I confronted what Gustavo calls the “irruption of the poor in history” did I become aware of how “spiritualized” my spirituality had become. It had been, in fact, a spirituality for introspective persons who have the luxury of the time and space needed to develop inner harmony and quietitude.¹¹⁴

It is startling how we have reduced the Face of the suffering Servant (Isaiah 49-53) to a metaphor for our own contemplation or salvation. Nouwen explains how his experience with the poor of Latin America helped him realize to what extent we First World people are reductionists, seeing the children in the New Testament as innocent, harmless beings that help us think of humility, faithfulness, obedience and purity as personal forms of piety. The poor and oppressed helped to change his horizon so that he “saw” and understood the children Jesus blesses as the forgotten ones; immersion helps us recover the social dimension of humility, faithfulness, obedience and purity.¹¹⁵ But how, when, and why do such immersions lead to or facilitate a conversion, for it is neither easy nor “automatic?”

1.4.2 Possible “mechanisms” for conversion from immersion

There are interesting parallels between certain notions presented by Gutiérrez and Lonergan. Gutiérrez suggests “immersion” as only “*taking a look*” is not enough for a preferential option for the poor. One has to *understand* God’s free love! He stresses the importance of *option* as a free decision and as a conversion, and seems to propose that

¹¹⁴ Nouwen, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, xvi.

¹¹⁵ Nouwen, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, xvi-xvii.

“entering the poor’s world,” or immersion, is related to a preferential option for the poor.¹¹⁶ Intellectual conversion normally (not normatively) follows moral conversion, which follows religious conversion, God’s love flooding our hearts. In *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, Gutiérrez avoids any suggestion that the world’s salvation depends on our efforts. “It is precisely the gratuitous quality of God’s love, revealed in Jesus, that sets us free to work in the service of God’s kingdom.” Discipleship he says, is first and foremost a response to an invitation to “Come and see.”¹¹⁷ Yet the invitation follows a question: “Rabbi, where are you staying?” (John 1:38-39). And this question follows some mysterious encounter with the love of God—and that can take an infinite number of forms. As human beings we have an infinite number of questions because the one we desire to know is infinite says Cherry, who explored the salient factors that assist or impede conversion. She asks why so many people seem to avoid the big questions in life which can lead to a change of mind, heart, behaviour and relationship with God. Cherry explains that to reflect is more than to merely think; rather, it is to “bend back,” to think back on a thought, and this is a necessary prerequisite to conversion.¹¹⁸ Let us now consider three interrelated “mechanisms” which explain how immersion may help facilitate conversion.

1. Gritty reality

The work of Clare M. Strockbine supports the idea that immersion into the lives of the poor provides us with a new perspective, opening us up to a new horizon of the

¹¹⁶ Gutiérrez, “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century,” 54-55.

¹¹⁷ Nouwen, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, xviii.

¹¹⁸ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 1-3, 15. Cherry explains that while fear and dread are impediments, the love of others (family of origin, reflective friends of integrity, supportive community) and of God are salient assists to reflection and thus conversion.

known-unknown or even the unknown-unknown (footnote 102), and assisting us in asking the important questions in life by making us come face to Face with them and their Source. She has recently presented findings from her research on the effects of immersion experiences on conversion in university students visiting Cameroon and three factors seem critical: gritty experience, reflection, and community support.¹¹⁹ Strockbine quotes Kolvenbach:

Students in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed . . . and become adults of solidarity.¹²⁰

This echoes Lonergan’s transcendental precepts, liberation theology’s preferential option for the poor, and Gregory Baum’s *être solidaire*. Strockbine explains that conversion and transformation may happen through community service, and that this can lead one to change and to develop in his or her spirituality. She says in African culture there is a greater sense of “our” over “I” and of the importance of community and relationships, and that these are in fact promoted by immersion.¹²¹ This communal sense may seem foreign to Western competitive individualistic attitudes, often proudly saying—if not boasting—how we are created in the image and likeness of God, instead of in the image and likeness of the relational Trinity (discussed in 1.2.2). Only in this way can we consider ourselves called, by our very nature, to be “solidaire” with our brothers and sisters, transcending self for others.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Clare M. Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, M.A. Practicum in Pastoral Ministry, Department of Religious Studies, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio, 2009.

¹²⁰ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 1, quoting Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.: *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education*. Available online http://www.scu.edu/news/attachments/kolvenbach_speech.html; accessed 3 March 2008; 15 June 2010.

¹²¹ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 5-7, 11.

¹²² Gregory Baum, *Amazing Grace: A Catholic Theologian Remembers a Half-Century of Change* (Ottawa: Novalis, Saint Paul University, 2005), 10-13. The term “solidaire” derives from Baum and *le catholicisme solidaire*, which he says aptly describes the new form of Catholicism envisioned in the first line

Lonergan helps us explain how immersion experiences can facilitate embracing a new horizon and lead to a *solidaire* life for others via the four levels of intentional consciousness. Immersion most certainly impacts the first level of consciousness and intentionality, the *empirical level*, which accompanies acts of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Immersion coupled with the opportunity to think and talk about the experience with a mentor and others helps one along the second level, the *intellectual level*, which accompanies acts of inquiry, insight, formulating, and speaking. Good support and reflection then help one toward the third level, the *rational level*, which accompanies acts of reflecting, marshalling and weighing the evidence, and making judgments of fact or possibility, and of truth or falsity. And finally, I believe immersion has the potential for facilitating the movement and conversion to the fourth level of consciousness and intentionality, the *responsible level*, where one deliberates, makes judgments of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely. At this level, Grace and the other summon the Subject to be responsible, and mysteriously, to *be in love*.¹²³ Immersion allows for an authentic and pastoral encounter, where we can engage all our transcendental precepts by asking: “What are you going through?” and thus begin to grasp the profound suffering of our fellow human beings. This, says Christine Jamieson, “is the starting point of all ethical deliberation, the concrete situation. This is the arena where the good is worked out, in the concrete lives of men and women in the world.”¹²⁴ It is also where we expose our vulnerabilities and fears.

of *Gaudium et spes*: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ.” *Solidaire* will be used as an adjective because “solidary” is not used in English and other forms of the word “solidarity” are lacking.

¹²³ Adapted from Lonergan, *Method*, 6-13, 106-107.

¹²⁴ Christine Jamieson, “The Ethical Challenges of Medicine Today: Drawing on the Wisdom of Vatican II,” 6-7. Unpublished paper presented at the University of Victoria on March 26, 2010, as part of series

2. Intentional loving

While the Subject's decision or movement toward conversion may be individual, support is important, as noted earlier by Lawrence and Strockbine. With fear and dread being the main impediments to conversion, the assists thus need to be those aspects in life that counter fear, and Cherry affirms that "the salient factors include a loving family, reflective friends of integrity, and the ongoing presence of a supportive community." Ideally then, an immersion experience would be within the context of a supportive community which provides opportunity for reflection individually, one on one, and within a group such as a basic Christian community. "Given these supports, one opens to reflections that underlie conversion of the mind and the heart. One opens to love."¹²⁵ Cherry claims that:

reflection is a prerequisite for conversion, and so it is, for it prepares one for the transformation to the fourth level of intentional consciousness in which one can choose to concretely incarnate the value that I term "intentional loving." The fourth level comprises a "consciousness that deliberates, makes judgements of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely." A consciousness that deliberates is reflective consciousness. In intentional loving one freely and responsibly considers the needs of another, and makes a judgement of value on how best to respond to those needs. At its core, intentional loving is a self-transcending act; and at its best, it is an act of one person acting from within their interior place of authenticity, or affirming the other in their authentic being. This is the task of intentional loving.¹²⁶

This consciously chosen *act* of "intentional loving" is different from Lonergan's *state* of "being-in-love with God" which he compares to consolations *without* a previous cause, which are rare. More common are consolations *with* a previous cause by which God gently

in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Vatican II Council, entitled *A Church for the 21st Century: The Spirit of Vatican II in our Time*. Jamieson draws the question from Simone Weil's essay "Reflection on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to the Love of God." While Jamieson's arena is that of hospital bioethics, the primacy of *encounter* extends to the person living in poverty, the refugee, the outcast, the human being. It was Jesus' *modus operandi* for healings, even though his word and intention would have sufficed!

¹²⁵ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 106, 119-120.

¹²⁶ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 115-116.

continues to invite us to grow in relationship. But “to live and respond in love in each present moment requires reflection and a conscious choice to love with intentionality” says Cherry.

The key point is that intentional loving can assist conversion in the mundane situations of daily living as well as in the face of overwhelming situations of poverty, injustice, and oppression. Cherry explains that we fluctuate between consolations and desolations, and that the latter generally

can be overcome through intentional loving, for intentional loving changes the direction of movement. It assists conversion. Intentional loving is practical and concrete. It involves reflecting on the needs of others in the context of their lives, pondering what one can contribute, and reflecting on how one can love them on their journey of holiness, on the mutual journey to union with God. Intentional loving is the human action that is the key assist to conversion.¹²⁷

Intentional loving is akin to charity as the transcendent love for the Divine and as the interpersonal love of neighbor. In this falling in love we come to sense a value in others which we can never explain rationally; and as we grow in love, we learn “to be touched by even the most grotesque human beings and to let ourselves be enveloped by Mystery there.”¹²⁸ The stories shared in Chapter Four strive, in a practical way, to give us a glimpse of the Divine through Subjects who surrendered themselves and risked entering new horizons.

3. Self-emptying

The idea of conversions arising out of self-emptying in the context of immersions comes from Strockbine’s work, echoing Jesus’ words that if one is to gain his life, he must

¹²⁷ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 117. Cherry adds that, “This is solid theologically, but practically, the process may be much more complicated.

¹²⁸ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 118.

lose it (Mark 8:35). She quotes students' experiences of the despair they often feel at a certain phase of their immersions: "Pain is so unmasked here . . . all around you and constantly in your face. We can't ignore it. The babies' cries never go away." Strockbine says, "We must experience this pain in order to fully embrace and grow from these experiences. We must enter into a state of complete self-emptying in order to be built up in faith, hope and love."¹²⁹ These virtues, she adds, are built up by the Subject and God's grace, not mandated by the hierarchy. Witnessing faith, hope and love by those who face daily suffering allows the participants to see past the pain to realize God's hand in all that surrounds them.

The process of conversion, which can be extremely long and difficult, can only take place when we allow ourselves to be completely broken. We must bring ourselves into a state of complete and utter vulnerability and helplessness, paying great witness to both the pain and the joy that surrounds us. We must recognize that we are vessels, not captains of the ship.¹³⁰

This purging, transforming, and rebuilding renders very concrete Lonergan's warning that working through our transcendental precepts is a *bloody process*¹³¹ because "religious self-loss is not just the loss of something we love or possess. It is the loss of the very mechanism by which we decide what is worth loving and possessing. We trust divine Mystery with the movements of the soul—faith, charity, and hope—which have the power to detach us from absolutely anything in this world and to attach us to anything else."¹³² We must go beyond the aesthetic metaphor of being "gold *refined* by fire" (Rev 3:18) to accept instead to be *consumed* and fashioned anew in the crucible of wretchedness, suffering and

¹²⁹ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 29-32.

¹³⁰ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 30, 35, 38.

¹³¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980, The Robert Mollot Collection*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2004), 431. "New ideas take time, just as knowledge makes a bloody entrance."

¹³² Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 129.

death which is the context of our brothers and sisters in two thirds of our world, and out of which a new spirituality is emerging.¹³³ Mystic philosopher Simone Weil lived this in the 1940s in France. Her seeking authenticity and stressing of radical *attention* to the other were expressed through a selfless life of faith involving radical congruence of thought and action. It was in some ways akin to basic Christian communities, living and working with the proletariat. For Weil, attention to the other involves self-emptying.¹³⁴

1.4.3 A different perspective regarding immersions and short-term mission trips

A critical yet complementary perspective comes from Jo Ann Van Engen who emphasizes that the emotional excitement of brief mission trips will typically have only short-term impact on the life of the participants, not leading to conversion or transformation.¹³⁵ She adds that such trips are also very costly, and can even negatively impact the host community by increasing dependency. There is some agreement with Strockbine that combined with ongoing support and reflection the benefit to participants could be positive with repercussions extending to the First World upon their return home, otherwise it remains a case of short-lived emotional excitement, and bilaterally unfruitful.

¹³³ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells – The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1984), 25-26. While he refers to Latin America, I am extending the image of being *consumed* to the radical conversion required of all “solidaire” people around the world. Tens of thousands of human beings dying every day from our neglect or indifference is their testimony that we are still very far from being gold to be *merely refined*!

¹³⁴ John Hellman, *Simone Weil: An Introduction to her Thought* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 83-89. Weil’s emphasis on attention is congruent with Lonergan’s *Be Attentive*; lack of attention, she says, leads to evil & sin. Her life supports my immersion hypothesis and also liberation theology’s affirmation of orthopraxis leading to orthodoxy in that it is her experiences that helped her recognize the truth of Jesus’ teachings.

¹³⁵ Jo Ann Van Engen, “The Cost of Short Term Missions,” *The Other Side*, 36, no. 1, January & February 2000, 20-23.

The theme of a recent *Scarboro Missions* journal was short and medium-term volunteer experiences overseas. Kathy Gillis' editorial highlights the life-changing impact these experiences have on the participants, rather than the benefits to the host communities. "In a way this issue is about having the courage to set out on an unknown path and discovering that it becomes a lifetime journey."¹³⁶ The stories note the need for reflection and support, and also vividly echo Lonergan's descriptions of immersing oneself into known-unknown and unknown-unknown horizons, of conversion, and of the three levels of the good (personal satisfaction, social order, and what is truly worthwhile [footnote 16]). Says Meghan Regier, "Community. Faith. Justice. After a week in the Dominican Republic, these are no longer simply words—these are ropes tied around my heart that tug each time I hear them." She shares how her encounters with poor yet welcoming Dominicans and with an exploited yet faithful Haitian migrant worker led her to God.

God helps us to overcome the sorrows of this world through love . . . I entered into a community of people who have been denied their rights. I learned about the source of their poverty. I witnessed their pain and now I can take action to help change this situation. This is more than charity, because doing justice calls us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to ensure that people have their basic human rights and the tools they need to build their own lives. True fellowship, and faith in God's presence within us, calls us to see the poor as friends.¹³⁷

Albert Van Santvoort says of his experience: "It's about 19 individuals who went to make a difference in the lives of the materially less fortunate, and found that the experience made a difference in their own lives and in the lives of their peers back home."¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Kathy Gillis, ed., "An Experience of a Lifetime," Editorial, *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 2, March/April 2010, p. 3. Participants were primarily late teens and young adults engaging in short and medium-term volunteer experiences overseas.

¹³⁷ Meghan Regier, in "Salt of the Earth," article by Dean Riley, *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 2, March/April 2010, p. 13. Reflections shared by students who participated in the *Dominican Encounter with Faith and Hospitality* project, coordinated by Riley. It provides Canadian high school students and parish groups with the opportunity to see the world from the perspective of the poor.

¹³⁸ Albert Van Santvoort, in "Dreams are Made of This," ed. Kathy Gillis, *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 2, p. 5. (See footnote 280).

As I realize that real “concrete mechanisms” elude me, a tension inhabits me: in my quest to understand how immersion facilitates conversion, am I placing too much emphasis on reason? Is what I am seeking even reasonable? Is it a Mystery that I am trying to pierce which is so beyond me that I am guilty of arrogance? Will it remain a mystery, for the heart has reasons which reason does not know? And yet, is not theology also *Faith Seeking Understanding*! But why this desire, a desire which I am afraid even understanding would not quench? Alfred T. Hennelly says, “Theology must go beyond faith seeking understanding—it must lead to the Christian practice of love,” and raising the theme of conversion, he refers to liberation theologians being “immersed” in the present and visioning the future,¹³⁹ like the apostles did. But perhaps theology should not only lead to greater love, but should admit to arise out of love. Gutiérrez captures this in his descriptive notion of theology as being the second act.¹⁴⁰ *Act One* is praxis, where faith is not some abstract theoretical faith, but rather a committed lived faith which loves others concretely. *Act Two* is theology, where the individual and the community reflect on, and seek to understand, the praxis. And this notion does not even seem to be exclusive to liberation theology and spirituality, but is in fact common to contextual theologies in general, and to all individuals who are authentic in their faith in particular.

¹³⁹ Alfred T. Hennelly, *Liberation Theologies – The Global Pursuit of Justice* (Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995), 4.

¹⁴⁰ Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxxiii-xxxiv.

CHAPTER TWO

Expanding our Horizons of Liberation Theology

Proposing that *L'Arche*, Nouwen, Lonergan and the apostles practiced liberation theology and spirituality suggests we need to expand our horizon beyond the Latin American socio-economic context of the second half of the twentieth century. In this chapter, we will consider *L'Arche* and three other examples in more detail to explore how they concretely express and live liberation theology and spirituality. They are examples of *theology in movement*, as the Boffs have described, but animated by men and women attentive to their inner dynamism. They are building both self and social progress, even if not labelled “liberation theology and spirituality.” Through their concrete work of solidarity, we will explore their “unity through their diversity.”¹⁴¹ Seven liberation theology and spirituality descriptors have been gleaned from the literature, introduced below and elaborated on in Chapter Four:

1. A personal living commitment to the praxis of love and liberating action being *at the root* of liberation theology and spirituality. Hands-on solidarity gives theologians a “new spirit” for doing theology;
2. Contextual or local theology drawing from the experience and situation of the people;
3. Individual and communal critical reflection on praxis, with praxis being committed action in the socio-political sphere but in harmony with prayer;
4. The committed action, reflection and preferential option for the poor aim to transform the world in the light of the scriptures. History and scriptures are read from the perspective of the poor and oppressed;
5. Exercising a preferential option for the poor involves identifying with and being in solidarity with them;

¹⁴¹ Hennelly, *Liberation Theologies – The Global Pursuit of Justice*, 1995.

6. The praxis, reflected upon, becomes the orthopraxis which leads to orthodoxy, and to renewed praxis-action, but mingled with contemplation and thanksgiving;
7. A communal living commitment, such as basic Christian communities, showing:
 - (a) fraternity; (b) celebration and joy; (c) education; (d) action to decrease suffering due to injustice.

2.1 A glimpse across the horizon to witness the breadth and timelessness of liberation theology

There is evidence of solidarity movements practicing liberation theology and liberation spirituality well before “liberation theology” became known as such in Latin America. One of the earliest recorded events, and perhaps the key hermeneutic for liberation theology’s interpretation of scriptures, is that of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt (Exodus). The writings of the prophets are very rich in social justice teachings. Later, the New Testament recounts how the Judeo-Christian communities put their authentic faith into just actions (Acts 6:1-7), inspired by Jesus who began his public ministry (Luke 4:16-30) by quoting the prophet Isaiah (61:1-2):

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.

Examples of liberation theology and spirituality which predate or differ from Latin American liberation theology are found in *The Catholic Worker Movement* which began in 1933 in the U.S., and the *Antigonish Movement* in Canada following the Great Depression.¹⁴²

The following examples, however, try to stretch the horizon to less conspicuous expressions.

¹⁴² *The Catholic Worker Movement* was founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in the 1933 in the U.S. Her spirituality was intimately woven into her liberating theology and social action. Quoting Dom Helder Camara, she said: “I feed the hungry, they call me a saint; I ask why they are hungry and they call me a communist!” *The Antigonish Movement* was begun by Frs. Moses Michael Coady and Jim Thompson in Nova Scotia, Canada following the Great Depression. Also, the liberation of Blacks from slavery in North America and the *Civil Rights Movement* by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in the U.S. from 1955-1968.

2.1.1 Roman Catholic Social Teachings

Catholic Social Teachings on *solidaire* living span the horizon in time and breadth. Less recently, there was *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, which is a foundational document for many later encyclicals.¹⁴³ It “addresses the plight of workers in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, touching on issues that include socialism, unbridled capitalism, a living wage, workers’ rights, support for unions, and a rejection of class struggle. Almost 120 years ago, Pope Leo XIII first articulated the principles that underlie the *preferential option for the poor*.”¹⁴⁴ And very recently, there is the encyclical letter on June 29, 2009, by Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, in which he says that: “Love—*caritas*—is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace (art.1). And he says that the dynamic of *charity received*, poured by the Holy Spirit into our hearts, and of *charity given*, “is what gives rise to the Church’s social teaching, which is *caritas in veritate in re sociali*: the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society” (art. 5) —in the midst of the city. And God’s love calls us beyond the ephemeral, for the benefit of all, to work alongside our counterparts in politics and economics (art. 78). “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum: Acta Leonis XIII*, 11(1891). *Rerum Novarum*, meaning of *new things*.

¹⁴⁴ Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, “Highlights of Catholic Social Thought,” *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 1, January-February 2010, 9. Emphasis mine. Their source is the “Social Encyclical Primer” of the *U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*.

¹⁴⁵ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate*, June 29, 2009, art. 7.

I concur with Baum's assessment in *Amazing Church* that an amazing development in ethical and social teachings has occurred through papal letters, bishops' conferences, and Vatican Council II.¹⁴⁶ However, in the mainstream, they continue to be the Church's *best kept secrets!*¹⁴⁷ While Baum, for example, celebrates the new "radical" *talk* of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops for a preferential option for the poor, he also notes that their *walk* lags behind.¹⁴⁸ And there are the mixed messages of reprimanding liberation theology through Vatican Instructions, followed not long afterwards by Pope John Paul II's affirmation of liberation theology.¹⁴⁹

Liberation theology principles are integral to our human development and to an authentic life of faith—authentic theology and spirituality have no choice but to be liberating. Between liberation theology and the Catholic Social Teachings, the Boffs see not contradiction but complementarity, and they state that:

Cardinal Ratzinger himself, in his instruction on liberation theology (chap. 5) considers the social teaching of the church as a sort of preliberation theology, or "pastoral theology of liberation," insofar as it tries to "respond to the challenge posed to our time by oppression and hunger" (no. 1).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Gregory Baum, *Amazing Church – A Catholic Theologian Remembers a Half-Century of Change* (Saint Paul University, Ottawa: Novalis, 2005): 9.

¹⁴⁷ Peter J. Henriot, Edward P. De Berri, Michael J. Schultheis, *Catholic Social Thought. Our Best Kept Secret* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988).

¹⁴⁸ Baum, *Amazing Church*, 12.

¹⁴⁹ Allan Figueroa Deck, "A Response to MT Dávila," *The Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings of the Sixty-Third Annual Convention*, (2008), 50-51. Deck notes how "Pope John Paul II after pointing out some criticisms and concerns about liberation theology in his 1986 letter to the Brazilian bishops went on to say, ' we are convinced, we and you, that the theology of liberation is not only timely but useful and necessary. It should constitute a new state—in close connection with former ones—of the theological reflection initiated with the Apostolic Tradition and continued by the great Fathers and Doctors, by the Ordinary and Extraordinary Magisterium and, in more recent times, by the rich patrimony of the Church's Social Doctrine....'"

¹⁵⁰ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 37-38.

Therefore, most key descriptors of liberation theology and spirituality (pp. 53-54) have been expressed through official Church teachings both before and after its manifestation in Latin America, but the walk lags behind the talk. I suggest that a reason for this lag is that the teachings still strive for an ephemeral eternal truth, missing somewhat, the concrete, suffering Face and Voice in the here and now.¹⁵¹ What is needed, Pope Benedict XVI says, “is an effective *shift in mentality* which can lead to the adoption of new lifestyles ‘in which the *quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion* with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments.’”¹⁵² More concretely, what is needed is our *conversion* so thousands of children will have today *a little daily bread, clean water, a refuge, time to play and learn—a little communion*—to protect them from painful starvation, preventable diseases, and unjust early death.

2.1.2 Giovanni Battista Scalabrini

At his recent beatification, Scalabrini was named “Father to the Migrants” for his radical conversion and mission which *began standing immersed* in the train station of Milano, Italy. He wrote in 1887:

In Milan, several years ago, I witnessed a scene that left a sad impression in my heart. There were three or four hundred poor peasants . . . they were emigrants . . . Some of those had been called by relatives who preceded them into voluntary exile, while others were leaving without knowing exactly where they were headed . . . They were going to America. . . I felt deeply moved, and a wave of melancholy thoughts swept over my heart. Who knows how many misfortunes and privations have made such a painful step seem pleasant to them? . . . Faced with this lamentable situation . . . I blush with shame. I feel humiliated as a priest and as an Italian; and I ask myself, what can I do to help them?¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Harold Segura, “Jesus in the Face of the Needy,” *Latin American Theology* 1, No. 2 (2006), 121. Noting society’s great concern in life *after* death, he says: “In a continent stricken with poverty and misery, where injustice runs rampant, and where hopelessness engulfs everyone, we must shout out that in Jesus there is life, and that life is here and now, life before death.”

¹⁵² Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, art. 51, (italics mine).

¹⁵³ Silvano Tomasi, ed., *For the Love of Immigrants: Migration Writings and letters of Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini 1839-1905* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2000), 2.

Francesconi comments that in their tears and on their lined faces drawn by hunger, Scalabrini saw the countenance of Christ, who said: “I was a stranger, and you did not take me in.” Shortly thereafter, Scalabrini founded the Missionaries of St. Charles, for the pastoral care of migrants.¹⁵⁴ His was a contextual, critical and political praxis which liberated people,¹⁵⁵ because it was authentic theology and spirituality.

Blessed Scalabrini, bishop of Piacenza, Italy, is a person who was prophetic in his actions and teachings. On April 14, 1899, more than half a century before “liberation theology” would arise in Latin America, Scalabrini published his pastoral letter *Socialism and Action of the Clergy*. A few of the provocative, challenging, and still relevant questions he raised are:

- If labour adds value to capital, why can't labour have a larger share of the profit?
- If work is a law of physics and a moral duty, shouldn't it be also a legal right to be protected, and in some cases, even through strikes?
- Why is no insurance provided for workers against accidents in the place of employment and no provisions are made for a dignified old-age retirement?¹⁵⁶

How much more authentic and prophetic were Scalabrini's teachings, pastoral care, and promotion of committed laity when considering that he practiced all seven of the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors (pp. 53-54) over a century ago. In his effort to feed the poor of his diocese, he sold a chalice he had received as a gift from the pope in order to keep

¹⁵⁴ Mario Francesconi, *Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini: Father to the Migrants* (Staten Island, New York: Published by St. Charles Mission Center-Scalabrinian Missionaries, 1999), 51-54.

¹⁵⁵ Michael Di Girolamo, “Walking Together,” Research Paper for *Ethics II* course, *Nationalism and Foreignness: Ethical and Theological Reflections*, Theo 673/2.51, Prof. Christine Jamieson, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Fall 2003.

¹⁵⁶ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, Pastoral letter entitled “Il socialismo e l'azione del clero,” (*Socialism and Action of the Clergy*), promulgated April 14, 1899. My translation.

his soup kitchen running! Perhaps not a sacrilege in light of John Paul II's challenging us to discern our "hierarchy of values," choosing *being* over *having*.

Faced by cases of need, one cannot ignore them in favor of superfluous church ornaments and costly furnishings for divine worship; on the contrary it could be obligatory to sell these goods in order to provide food, drink, clothing and shelter for those who lack these things.¹⁵⁷

2.1.3 Jean Vanier and *L'Arche*

While *L'Arche* was started in France in 1964, Jean Vanier is Canadian and much inspired by other Quebec solidarity movements such as *Benedict Labre House*, itself inspired by Dorothy Day's *Catholic Worker Movement*.¹⁵⁸ I believe that Vanier's "Arcs for the Poor" where people with various handicaps and assistants live together in community are good examples of a liberating theology and spirituality, and would go even further and compare them to basic Christian communities. This agrees with Cole-Arnal's study of liberation theology in Canada. He says of *L'Arche*: "These 'little flocks' are based rigorously on the gospel solidarity of radical, transforming love."¹⁵⁹

My endeavour is to break away from categorizations and focus rather on the spirit guiding the people and the movement. It is interesting that Vanier approaches various subjects and issues from the perspective or theme of "transformation" rather than chronologically. These "conversions" seem to be more his own as his horizons are expanded

¹⁵⁷ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, December 30, 1987, art. 31. *Sollicitudo rei socialis* meaning *on social concern*.

¹⁵⁸ Jean Vanier, *An Arc for the Poor: The Story of L'Arche*. L'Arche Collection (Toronto, Ontario: Novalis, 1995), 22-23.

¹⁵⁹ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 144-146.

through both the face to face encounters and through the work itself, rather than those of the persons he is called to rescue from the storms of life with his “arc.”

During those first months, I learned a great deal. I was beginning to discover the immense amount of pain hidden in the hearts of Raphaël, Philippe and so many of their brothers and sisters. I sensed how their hearts had been broken by rejection, abandonment and lack of respect. At the same time, I was beginning to discover some of the beauty and gentleness of their hearts, their capacity for communion and tenderness. I was beginning to sense how *living with them could transform me*, not through awakening and developing my qualities of leadership and intelligence, but *by awakening the qualities of my heart, the child within me*.¹⁶⁰

Despite its multi-faith character and presence also of non-practicing assistants, *L’Arche* is not simply a group home because it is also a faith community. While varying a little from country to country, *L’Arche* homes express a preferential option for the poor and generally have the form of basic Christian communities, yet connected to the state-context-culture.¹⁶¹ Vanier’s *L’Arche* also exemplifies nicely Lonergan’s functional definition of theology and his multidisciplinary approach. All the descriptors of liberation theology and spirituality on pages 53-54 are evident in Vanier’s story of *L’Arche*.

2.1.4 Liberation and health

There are authors who broaden liberation theology to apply to other areas of life where people are enslaved or “diminished” as human beings through societal values, norms, and eventually social systems and structures. There is for example an interesting connection between Vanier’s work which goes crosscurrent to our societal obsession with the intelligent, strong, beautiful and productive, and the work of Alastair Campbell who applies liberation

¹⁶⁰ Vanier, *An Arc for the Poor*, 20, (emphasis mine).

¹⁶¹ Vanier, *An Arc for the Poor*, 104-108. For example, the homes include the four axes of basic Christian communities, adapted to the particular context: i. fraternity; ii. celebration and joy; iii. education; iv. action to decrease suffering due to injustice.

theology and spirituality to health.¹⁶² Campbell sees the sick as the “poor” on the margins and calling for our preferential option because Jesus refused to divorce salvation from physical and mental well-being. Campbell points to “freedom to be . . . disabled, frail” etc. in a society that values strength. However, at the same time he also points to the “scandal of the cross,” saying that we must recognize preventable suffering as unjust, rather than transforming the cross into some romantic notion—a tool for our salvation.¹⁶³ Jesus liberated people, even on the Sabbath, from suffering and possibly early and unjust death. Moreover, this itinerant preacher and healer did not merely cure people from physical ailments, but even more important, he restored and liberated them wholly from the social stigma attached with diseases such as hemorrhaging, leprosy, or being born disabled, and socio-economic situations such as being a tax-collector or prostitute.

2.2 Commonalities

While most of the examples of individuals and cases presented thus far are in harmony with the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors on pages 53-54, there is a more fundamental characteristic which unites them all. It is their authentic, dynamic, and contextual way of *being* in their everyday lives. These examples describe a liberation theology or theology which is liberating because it arises from authentic Subjects. In the diversity of liberation theologies is their unity says Hennelly; but alas its very openness and

¹⁶² Alistair V. Campbell, *Health as Liberation – Medicine, Theology, and the Quest for Justice* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995).

¹⁶³ Campbell, *Health as Liberation*, 1-21, 40-44.

future-orientation also invites academic disdain because it deals with the concrete present-future-hope.¹⁶⁴ He says we must go beyond systems and classical theologies of the past, applied inappropriately to all contexts. Authenticity requires being contextual and immersed in different ways and degrees and this leads to sustainable conversion and enduring commitment. This is what our eclectic community witnessed to—Vanier, Scalabrini, Dorothy Day, Nouwen, Romero—each in his or her unique way.

¹⁶⁴ Hennelly, *Liberation Theologies – The Global Pursuit of Justice*, 2-5. Hennelly tests the hypothesis of unity from diversity of liberation theologies and gives examples of the major liberation theologians who pass the “Gamaliel test”. His work demonstrates the adaptability of liberation theology to diverse cultures, contexts (North/South), and issues (women’s right, ecology), and it resonates with Lonergan’s functional definition of theology.

CHAPTER THREE

The Subject of Liberation Theology: Authentic, Dynamic, Contextual, and Spiritual

A methodology proposed by Leonardo and Clodovis Boff¹⁶⁵ follows three stages: social-analytical mediation, hermeneutic mediation, and practical mediation, for the *transformation of society* according to the Gospel values. In light of my thesis question, which addresses the authentic Subject and his or her conversion, I contend that an additional critical stage which must be consciously and explicitly identified and included in liberation theology and spirituality is the *transformation of self* by being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and loving. This is so for the immersed “fathers” and practitioners of liberation theology who also speak of personal conversion, but it is less common in our First World context.¹⁶⁶

Many Lonergan scholars have written about liberation theology in light of Lonergan’s insights, as was presented in section 1.3. This chapter will deepen this dialogue in order to explore how Lonergan can contribute to liberation theology being lived as authentic theology and spirituality, able to move society onto a vector of progress, by focussing more on the Subjects of liberation theology than on its objects.

¹⁶⁵ Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 22-42.

¹⁶⁶ During my involvement with *Developement and Peace*, the *Scalabrini Centre for Migrants and Refugees*, and the *Social Justice Committee*, all of which do great work of solidarity, spirituality and personal conversion were seldom the focus. When spirituality is, it tends to be for self-development rather than self-transformation—to be consumed and emptied for the other.

3.1 Lonergan, liberation theology, and the functional specialties of dialectic and foundations

Dialectic deals with conflicts, overt and religious in the case of liberation theology in the Latin American context, considering that it was colonized primarily by Roman Catholics who in large part imposed the Christian faith and culture on the Indigenous Peoples. Some conflicts are merely due to missing data or are perspectival as Lonergan says, but those that concern us here are “fundamental conflicts stemming from an explicit or implicit cognitional theory, an ethical stance, a religious outlook. They profoundly modify one’s mentality,”¹⁶⁷ and contribute to the suffering and premature death of countless people. These conflicts, says Lonergan, can be overcome only through an intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Dialectic can help to identify such conflicts and provide a technique that objectifies subjective differences and promotes conversion. Lonergan explains that the natural sciences are less prone to these difficulties because its models do not include value judgments, and if a theology aspires to be methodological, it must meet the issues head on. Dialectic’s judgment of horizons gives rise to positions and counter-positions, accomplished by operating on materials such as texts, histories, etc. This is progressive and cumulative, and in fact a movement toward authenticity for the theologian, for just as the cognitive and moral self-transcendence allows better judgment of others, knowledge, appreciation and just judgement of others will lead to better self-knowledge, through a deeper reflection on what I am doing when I am doing and knowing.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, 235.

¹⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 249, 252-253.

Horizon analysis is a concrete way of getting people in opposed horizons to come to clearer understandings of their differences and to work together.¹⁶⁹ With respect to my question about whether immersion into the life experience of another can facilitate conversion, the notion of horizons is critical because I believe it transcends the metaphorical meaning. The suggestion is that such an immersion will literally change one's field of vision, thus opening up the possibility of altering one's scope of knowledge, and *perhaps* even broadening one's range of interests. I say *perhaps* because this will depend on my authenticity in the face of my transcendental precepts, and of the other. Face to face with a malnourished child, who reminds me of my children, and coming to understand the hard labours of parents who do not earn enough to feed their family may lead me to know and to care, and to follow through with responsible actions of solidarity and love. Such horizons "are the fertile source of further knowledge and care, but they also are the boundaries that limit our capacities for assimilating more than we already have attained," for while some horizons are complimentary and some developmental, there are others that are opposed dialectically¹⁷⁰—"objects of interest that concern other men, but about them I could not care less."¹⁷¹ Conversion therefore, is neither easy nor automatic.

¹⁶⁹ Cynthia S.W. Crysdale, "Horizons that Differ: Women and Men and the Flight from Understanding," *Cross Currents* 44, No. 3 (Fall 1994): 346-358. One contribution of her work involves the naming of radical differences in horizons; a second contribution is her suggestion to strive to eliminate biases (even two-way biases) through asking the right questions, through attempts to be authentic, to strive for truth in facts, to strive for value, for the good, and for self-transcendence.

¹⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 235-237.

¹⁷¹ Lonergan, *The Subject* (Wisconsin: Wisconsin-Alpha Chapter of the Phi Sigma Tau, Marquette University, 1968), 1.

Still we are here today because throughout time conversion has happened to authentic men and women, redirecting the course of history, be it for the oppressed people of El Salvador or for Maria-Luisa, a Canadian mother and her adopted Chinese daughters.¹⁷² Romero and Maria-Luisa's vertical exercises of freedom into new horizons were radical about-faces!¹⁷³ Such conversions led Romero to repudiate the socio-economic oppression he had earlier been blind to, and led Maria-Luisa to begin a new sequence of freedom, revealing ever-greater depth and breadth and wealth as she opened her life to Sabrina and Lily.

In *Method*, Lonergan describes three related yet different types of conversions. There is intellectual conversion, which is the radical clarification and elimination of the cognitional myth: that knowing is like taking a look. It goes beyond the world of sensory immediacy and enters into the world mediated by meaning, where "the reality known is not just looked at; it is given in experience, organized and extrapolated by understanding, posited by judgment and belief." In this conversion, one discovers the self-transcendence proper to the human process of truly coming to know ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and God.¹⁷⁴ Ironically, in Jesus' ministry the people who look with their eyes do not see Him¹⁷⁵ while the blind man, the Roman centurion, and the foreigners recognized Him.

¹⁷² Maria-Luisa Scrabbi is a lay Scalabrinian involved with the Scalabrini Centre for Migrants and Refugees in Montreal. She adopted Sabrina and Lily from China, and as a single woman was told she was unreasonable. Levinas might have responded: "With the appearance of the human—and this is my entire philosophy—there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other. That is unreasonable. Man is an unreasonable animal." In, Emmanuel Levinas, *The Paradox of Morality*, and graduate course lectures given by Prof. Christine Jamieson, Theology 671, *Ethics I: The Ethical Relationship in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas*. Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Fall 2006.

¹⁷³ Lonergan, *Method*, 237-238.

¹⁷⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 238-239.

¹⁷⁵ Michael L. Cook, "Jesus from the Other Side of History: Christology in Latin America," *Theological Studies* 44, No. 2, Je (1983), 280.

There is moral conversion which “changes the criterion for our decisions and choices from satisfaction to values.” As we mature, we no longer need to be cajoled and compelled to do what is truly good: our knowledge of human values is refined and our mentors allow us more and more to grow in our authenticity—until “we move to the existential moment when we discover for ourselves that our choosing affects ourselves no less than the chosen or rejected objects, and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make of himself.”¹⁷⁶ Such exercise of vertical freedom or conversion means that one chooses the truly good over personal satisfaction and over the good of social order—Romero chose justice over his own life and over Church and government hierarchy who were upset by his assuming his prophetic responsibilities. Conn explains how moral conversion must be understood in the concrete context of personal development, and that for Lonergan, “personal development is to an important degree a process of self-creation, which when authentic is a personal realization of the radical dynamism of the human spirit for self-transcendence.”¹⁷⁷ How beautifully Romero and Maria-Luisa witness to their ongoing self-creation and to the co-creation of God’s Kingdom!

There is religious conversion: “being grasped by ultimate concern. It is other-worldly falling in love,” total and permanent self-surrender without conditions, not as an act but as a dynamic state that is prior to and principle of subsequent acts. It is interpreted differently by different faiths, and for Christians it is the gift of grace—“God’s love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 240.

¹⁷⁷ Walter E. Conn, “Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?” *Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1981), 314.

¹⁷⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 240-241.

All three conversions involve a self-transcendence which brings the Subject beyond her present achievements. Normally God's gift of love comes first, making the way for values and truth; but the normal is not normative and so conversions can be partial. There can also be decline. Lonergan shows how from some moral precepts and truths being judged illusory, an individual can spiral downwards in a vicious circle of dissolution, self-deception, mistrust, hostility, and divisions. People become incapable of reasonable convictions and commitments.¹⁷⁹ Melchin discusses how both progress and decline are circular so that while one can spiral downwards, one can also accept to return to an upwards vector whereby doing good facilitates doing greater good and increases virtue; there is a double thrust.¹⁸⁰ Immersion into occasions for doing good can engage the person onto that vector of progress.

3.2 The authentic Subject of liberation theology

3.2.1 The Subject of liberation theology: committed and immersed

For an enduring commitment and "solidaire" living, one cannot simply be swept away by a liberation theology movement. Cook, Gutiérrez, and the Boffs say commitment is the first act; theology comes second. "Without a prior political commitment in very concrete and specific terms, one cannot even recognize Jesus or the Gospel he proclaimed." Cook concludes that Gutiérrez and other theologians involved with liberation theology would: "...agree in principle that commitment is the first step. The only way to actualize the liberation of Jesus is to follow him on the way."¹⁸¹ To "go and see" means becoming

¹⁷⁹ Lonergan, *Method*, 243-244.

¹⁸⁰ Melchin, *Living with Other People*, 55, 66-68. Also Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 92-94.

¹⁸¹ Cook, "Jesus from the Other Side of History," 264, 271. Cook refers to Juan Luis Segundo, Beatriz Melano Couch, and others. Also Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 22-24, and Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxxiii-xxxiv.

immersed so that one can experience, understand, judge what is good, and do it. The Lord's invitation therefore transcends the cognitional myth. Baum also speaks of praxis beginning with commitment, which affects perception and leads to further action.¹⁸² But the question remains: what sparks that commitment, and how is it related to conversion?

Part of the answer can be found in the experience of immersion. Entering into the other's horizon should be an ongoing development; we progress from concrete experience to higher levels of consciousness as we deepen our encounter with the other. I visualize this as a self-emptying—of my interests, preconceived notions, likes, dislikes—in order to let the other in. Cole says this process of transformation occurred in Nouwen when he immersed himself into a *L'Arche* community. Nouwen writes:

Most of my life I have tried to show the world that I could do it on my own . . . But as I sit beside the slow and heavy-breathing Adam, I start seeing how that journey was marked by rivalry and competition, and spotted with moments of suspicion, jealousy, resentment and revenge. The great paradox is that in his complete emptiness of all human pride, Adam is giving me a whole new understanding of God's love.¹⁸³

I need to spend time living with the materially poor if I want to begin to understand what it means to not eat my fill day after day, not to have warm water, and not to earn enough money to buy medicine for my family. I need to live with the handicapped to better understand what Nouwen did, to feel the rejection of society, be it blatant ridicule, indifference or discrimination by refusing their admission to a movie theatre. In all these situations, a person's human dignity is diminished. Referring to Thomas' need to immerse himself into Christ's wounds (his friend Jesus whom he had abandoned a few days earlier!) Roberto

¹⁸² Gregory Baum, "Toward a Canadian Catholic Social Theory," *Cross Currents* 35.203 (Summer/Fall 1985): 243.

¹⁸³ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 146.

Goizueta quotes Weil: “Human beings are so made that the ones who do the crushing feel nothing; it is the person crushed who feels what is happening. Unless one has placed oneself on the side of the oppressed, to feel with them, one cannot understand.”¹⁸⁴

While I clearly contend that a physical immersion can play a pivotal role in facilitating conversion, I am not limiting it to immersion for that would limit us to the world of immediacy, to analogy of sight, rather than meaning. Says Lonergan, “The analogy of sight yields the cognitional myth. But fidelity to the word engages the whole man.”¹⁸⁵ Lonergan provides a cautionary note which places my notion of immersion in better perspective:

While Christians accord to God’s grace the principal role in touching men’s hearts and enlightening their minds, it would seem that the true believer in the gospel according to Marx must be immersed in proletarian living conditions, on the ground that only such material living conditions can confer upon him the right thinking and righteous feeling proper to proletarian class consciousness.¹⁸⁶

Rather than serve as an antidote for tension, authenticity and faithful engagement give rise to it. Yet, I believe that fundamentally Lonergan and Weil are both encouraging us to be touched personally. Lonergan reflected profoundly on our world’s wounds; Weil put her hand into them. One must risk the encounter and allow himself to be touched by both Grace and the gritty reality of the other’s life in order to avoid falling victim to the cognitional myth. This synergy is summed up by the shortest biblical verse: “Jesus

¹⁸⁴ Roberto S. Goizueta, “The Crucified and Risen Christ: From Calvary to Galilee,” Presidential address, *The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Sixtieth Annual Convention*, St. Louis, Missouri, June 9-12, 2005, Vol. 60 (2005): 61.

¹⁸⁵ Lonergan, *Method*, 243.

¹⁸⁶ Bernard J.F. Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” *A Third Collection: Papers* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 107.

wept.”(John 11:35)¹⁸⁷ Conversion into the others’ horizon affects our lives so that we will want to enter theirs in a spirit of solidarity so as to better understand, judge, decide and act—not to merely join in the suffering, but rather in the creation and the healing. And so the unnamed bishop with whom we began perhaps captured the meaning—the Truth—of the woman standing before him. No longer able to deal with and control this sight using his preconceived categories, he had to allow spiritual healing from above to mingle with his own earthy creating from below.¹⁸⁸

But why did the bishop not reach his decision on previous occasions when he had seen poverty? At least in part it is because conversion is a change in concrete horizons which involves changes to our concrete daily living, and this, says Conn, stirs in us experiences of anxiety and dread. This time his senses were more fully engaged. He asked questions to try and understand what was and was not happening; he tried to deliberate on this based on everything else he felt and knew. But Conn allows us to speculate how on this occasion the bishop leapt into a new horizon:

And the spontaneous and resourceful resistance that this dread releases not only attempts to defend the given horizon that is being challenged, but necessarily does so from within it, employing a logic of common sense based on its own meanings and values that is unimpeachable on its own grounds. From the viewpoint of logic, then, conversion to a radically new horizon is a leap, and such a leap is necessarily effected not by logical argument, but by more concrete and symbolic means that do not attack logical defenses but reach immediately to the core of horizon, tunneling directly to its imaginative and affective ground, the “heart” of the subject.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Jesus allowed himself to be touched by the grief and pain of Martha and Mary, and possibly his own, when Lazarus his friend, and their brother, died—and this despite the fact that He could and would bring him back to life.

¹⁸⁸ Lonergan, *Healing and Creating in History*, 106. “There is development from below upwards, from experience to growing understanding, from growing understanding to balanced judgement, and from balanced judgement to fruitful courses of action....But there is also development from above downwards. There is the transformation of falling in love: the domestic love of the family; ... At once it commands commitment and joyfully carries it out, no matter what the sacrifice involved....”

¹⁸⁹ Conn, “Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?” 318.

“The heart has reasons which reason does not know” says Pascal. Immersed into the concrete despair of the poor bleeding woman and face to face with her children who cried out “I thirst,”(John 19:28) the bishop maybe came to share in a reality which far transcended what he had previously seen. In the same mysterious moment, his heart was touched by the woman and by Grace. Any dualism was dissolved as for a fleeting moment he was blessed with a trace of the Divine.

Immersion experiences can touch the Subject’s heart and facilitate conversion, but “the heart has to be trained by Christ.”¹⁹⁰ Immersions which include guidance and reflection can provide the setting for moral conversion, potentially leading the Subject to become open-eyed and deliberate, exclaiming: “I am the originator of value!” This contrasts with the drifter who jumps onto the latest popular bandwagon, be it a hedonistic cruise ship or a social cause, content to simply go with the flow.¹⁹¹ Conn quotes Lonergan: “by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what is truly good and worthwhile.” At this topmost level of consciousness, the developing Subject is both practical and existential—existential to the extent that he can exercise self-control so that his living is a response to true value, and so that he can effect real self-transcendence.

But, as Lonergan is quick to add, it is one thing to transcend oneself in response to value “occasionally, by fits and starts. It is another to do it regularly, easily, spontaneously.” For only from a long process of development involving every facet of the conscious human subject does there emerge the sustained self-transcendence of the virtuous person. The crucial factor in this long process of self-creation or personal, moral development, of course, is the transformation of horizon, the shift in criterion of choice that Lonergan names moral conversion.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Interview with Rev. Rob Brennan, S.J. regarding immersion trips and conversion. Fr. Brennan has been a missionary in many parts of the world and is past president of Loyola High School, Montreal, which in 2010 had two short-term missionary trips for students: Dominican Republic and Mexico. Interviewed April 23, 2010.

¹⁹¹ Conn, “Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?” 317-318.

¹⁹² Conn, “Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?” 314-315.

And so, our leap of conversion is the beginning of a move toward authenticity, and not an end; it is always precarious, says Conn. This thrust must be developed and nurtured in a Subject that wants more and more to do his own becoming. It is a development which opens us up to new and greater challenges. Now while moral conversion is not moral perfection,

still, meeting the challenge of moral conversion not only brings the meaning of personal responsibility into sharp focus, but also highlights in an intensely personal fashion the ideal of authentic human living, as well as the distance between it and one's present achievement. Thus moral conversion is not so much an achievement as a call to commitment. For insofar as through conversion a person realizes how drastically one's effective freedom is limited, and one must commit oneself to the seemingly endless task of conquering the jungle of one's personal prejudices and biases, of developing one's knowledge of concrete human realities and possibilities, of scrutinizing one's intentional responses to values and their implicit scale of preferences, of listening to criticism and protest, and of learning from others.¹⁹³

Immersion experiences into contexts and processes of liberation theology and spirituality and basic Christian communities are effective and valuable in this journey because we are speaking *not* of an achievement which is static, but of a commitment which is active and dynamic. Understanding moral conversion as a call to commitment by an authentic yet vulnerable Subject is critical because it can assist us in understanding how and why some people convert and others do not, why some convert sustainably and others transiently, and why some oppressed go on to become oppressors.

3.2.2 The Subject of liberation theology: committed to authenticity

Faced with the physical suffering and anxiety which permeate our world, where religions, sciences and politics cannot seem to heal the chasm between rich and poor, Lonergan offers hope. If, as Lonergan explains, genuine faith "is knowledge born of religious

¹⁹³ Conn, "Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?" 318, 319.

love,” then liberation theologians are facing the post-modern tasks of dialectically discerning the latent and manifest value-conflicts and power-complexes which historically and personally thwart that love and distort the knowledge it can generate.¹⁹⁴ Lonergan refers to Popper who says that society’s troubles are due to our misguided moral enthusiasm because we are “a little too good and a little stupid,” trying to apply over-simple moral principles to complex situations. When seeing that they do not work, be they related to sexuality or to the trickle-down theory in economics, we should be humble enough to let them go. “When survival requires a system that does not exist, then the need for creating is manifest.”¹⁹⁵ Fresh insights are needed—not slogans or abstract concepts.¹⁹⁶ These come from a creative minority that creates systems that must remain dynamic and values people that are open-minded; otherwise, the *creative minority* will with time become the *dominant minority*. Their biased minds close to new insights and stop producing the truly good and even the good of social order. The various forms such as neuroses, individual egoism, group egoism, and general bias, distort growth and progress leading instead into a cycle of decline.¹⁹⁷

Therefore, we must stay alert to ensure that liberation theology does not substitute one set of distortions and ideologies for another, as both Lamb and Doran have cautioned. Cook and other liberation theologians stress the important role to be played by the exploited

¹⁹⁴ Lamb, “The Dialectics of Theory and Praxis within Paradigm Analysis,” 98-100.

¹⁹⁵ Lonergan, “Healing and Creating in History,” 101, 103.

¹⁹⁶ “There are numerous sources of modern thoughtlessness to be contended with: a reliance on clichés and slogans as a substitute for independent reflection; an habitual inattention to what we are actually doing and saying; a dependence on shopworn ideologies whose automatic thought patterns serve as a buffer against the revelatory power of experience; the loss of individual candor and courage under the leveling pressure of mass society; the continued appeal to traditions of political thought that no longer address the most important concerns of our age.” Michael McCarthy, “The Political Humanism of Hannah Arendt,” in *Lonergan Review: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Special Theme, *Hannah Arendt: A Philosopher of Politics for our Time*, No. 5, 1997, 7.

¹⁹⁷ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 92-100; Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 93-96.

sectors,¹⁹⁸ but how do we ensure that they remain authentic? Doran states that there is a need for a procedure that would cut to the heart of all alienation, and that Lonergan's method provides precisely that.¹⁹⁹ The oppressed will avoid becoming tomorrow's oppressors when they strive for objectivity through the hard work of authentic subjectivity. "The fundamental enemy is not any group whatever, but the built-in possibilities, as widely disseminated as humanity, of inattention, misuse of intelligence, betrayal of reason, and irresponsibility,"²⁰⁰ and so the nature of our human susceptibility to individual and group bias for example, makes the oppressions and atrocities of the past possible in ever-new and creative forms. Theology can help in understanding these vectors of decline so that we learn from our past and work creatively together to bring forward what is just and good, through dialogue, round tables, and horizon analysis.²⁰¹

3.2.3 The Subject of liberation theology: contextual, dynamic, and spiritual

In our Canadian context, Baum believes that Catholic social theory is incomplete because bishops typically do not share the same horizon as the "poor," and as those directly committed to the poor, and thus they write so that several readings are possible.²⁰² It is worth

¹⁹⁸ Cook, "Jesus from the Other Side of History," 260.

¹⁹⁹ Doran, "Prolegomenon for a New Systematics," 86-87. Doran adds "at least when it is joined with psychic conversion and the further but completely continuous disengagement of the scale of values," referring to his own work in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*.

²⁰⁰ Crowe, "Bernard Lonergan and Liberation Theology," 120-121.

²⁰¹ For horizon analysis, see Crysdale, footnote #169. Peter Maurin, co-founder with Dorothy Day of the *Catholic Worker Movement*, in his "easy essay" speaks of round-table discussions for the clarification of thought, discussions which bring different people together in encounter, to experience each other. In Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 22.

"We need round-table discussions to keep trained minds from becoming academic;

We need round-table discussions to keep untrained minds from being superficial;

We need round-table discussions to learn from scholars how things would be, if they were as they should be;...

We need houses of hospitality to give the rich the opportunity to serve the poor;

We need houses of hospitality to bring the Bishops to the people and the people to the Bishops..."

²⁰² Baum, *Toward a Canadian Catholic Social Theory*, 254.

recalling two of the conclusions from the Medellin and Puebla Bishops' conferences which were: a change in lifestyle for the clergy, and that the Church must look to reform its own structures where these have become a block to preaching the Gospel.²⁰³ These changes became necessary because bias had come to affect the understanding and expression of faith of the leaders who were called to care for the spiritual and pastoral needs of the people. If those addressing the congregations do not share in the horizons of the poor, then to what extent can the people in the pews become part of the journey—cognitively, spiritually, and physically—of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed? There may be short-term impacts such as making a donation, but it will not generally lead to an enduring commitment—if it is not nurtured and open to grace. If parishioners would be guided and encouraged to enter a new horizon through immersion experiences, have the opportunity to process them intellectually, evaluate, discern and decide what actions to take, then more parishioners might have a deeper conversion with life-changing impacts.²⁰⁴ This is supported by the research of Lind and Mihevc who note how members of various Canadian coalitions are truly committed and converted to a preferential option for the poor, drinking from their own spiritual wells, and doing a contextual theology. In contrast to their enduring commitment, the Church hierarchy and the people in the pews are less enduringly committed.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies*, 148-149.

²⁰⁴ This is supported by my volunteer involvement with Development & Peace for fifteen years working on the Fall educational campaign and the Winter fundraising campaign in parishes, as well as being on their Montreal Diocesan Council from 1997-2001. Soliciting money was much easier than soliciting minds and hearts to engage in reflection on the state of our world. To what extent then is the praxis essential, or at least important to a better understanding of reality because it can allow it to be based on a deeper and broader experience? A difference could also be seen in the enduring commitment of volunteers who had concrete experience, understanding and judgment of the issues (especially those who went on immersion trips) versus the short-term volunteers or those less familiar with the cause.

²⁰⁵ Christopher Lind and Joe Mihevc, ed., *Coalitions for Justice: The Story of Canada's Interchurch Coalitions* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1994).

Where sporadic or short-term enthusiasm is seen, it might be a case of psychic contagion as spoken of by Lonergan. The Subject gets excited by a cause, but the focus or source is not the theologizing Subject in response to his or her inner dynamism. Rather, the Subject is swept away by external forces, like the seed that falls on shallow earth, it grows fast and passionately, but it is not enduring. When the cares of the world or other issues arise, they detract me from my concern for refugees, for example, because suddenly I've been moved by the plight of victims of drunk drivers. Both causes require strong advocates—advocates who are faithful and enduring to the cause that stirs their own inner dynamism!

In addressing some of the difficulties faced by Catholic social theory, Baum says that a problem is that the *solidarity movement* is the agent of social change.²⁰⁶ He also notes that according to recent Catholic social teachings, we are all called to be “subjects” or “responsible agents.”²⁰⁷ Lonergan’s important contribution is that he helps identify how conversion, or a call to enduring commitment, can better arise when the *Subject* is the ethical and responsible agent of social change, instead of the *movement*. A parallel argument has been made, but on a much larger scale—the United Nations. The transcendental method addresses one of the *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights*’ major weaknesses. While being one of humanity’s greatest collaborative achievements, there remains a vacuum as to who is ultimately responsible for the rights of the other.²⁰⁸ Who is ultimately

²⁰⁶ Baum, *Toward a Canadian Catholic Social Theory*, 255.

²⁰⁷ Gregory Baum, *Compassion and Solidarity – The Church for Others* (Concorde, Ontario: House of Anansi Press Limited, [1987] 1992), 46.

²⁰⁸ John C. Haughey, “Responsibility for Human Rights: Contributions from Bernard Lonergan,” *Theological Studies*, 63 (2002): 765.

responsible for the orphan in China, deprived of a nurturing family? Who is ultimately responsible for the father in Mexico who does not earn enough to feed his family? On a much smaller scale, Maria-Luisa decided that, “yes we *all* are responsible—but, *I* the most!”²⁰⁹ A much smaller scale indeed, but of quasi-infinite goodness for the two little girls because Maria-Luisa rendered true and concrete the scripture verse, “I will not leave you orphaned,”(Isaiah 49:14-16). Through her saying “I love you,” her daughters can enjoy a foretaste of our Creator’s infinite goodness when He says: “Let Sabrina and Lily come to me” and takes them into his loving arms.

3.3 Shifting from liberation theology as a movement to liberation theology and spirituality as the inner dynamism of the self-creating *Subject on the move*

In Bevans’ analysis of six models of contextual theology, the transcendental model espoused by Lonergan is in fact distinct from the five others because of its radical shift toward focusing on the theologizing Subject instead of on the content of theology. Bevans even asks whether “non-participants” can do authentic theology, going on to say that the real theologians are the authentic “Subjects.”²¹⁰ Tracy agrees, noting that in theologies of liberation one often finds the insistence that *only* personal involvement in and commitment to the struggle for liberating transformation of some particular societal evil (economic exploitation, sexism, racism, etc.) will free the theologian to see and speak the truth by doing the truth in solidarity with all those in the cause. Making the link with Lonergan, Tracy states: “The position will emphasize the constant need for personal transformation or

²⁰⁹ Levinas also quotes Dostoyevsky who said: “We are all responsible for all men before all, and I more than all the others.” In, Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity, Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, Translated by R. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985.

²¹⁰ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 17-21.

‘conversion’ in all theoreticians . . . In that sense, Lonergan joins quite different theologians of praxis as Edward Schillebeeckx and Johann Baptist Metz to insist that orthopraxis must ground orthodoxy,”²¹¹ supporting my hypothesis that immersion into particular contexts facilitates conversion and authenticity in the practitioner, be he lay person or theologian. In relation to theory, praxis is not its goal or application, but rather its originating and self-correcting foundation since all theory is dependent, at the very least, on the authentic praxis of the theorist’s personally appropriated value of intellectual integrity and self-transcending commitment to the imperatives of critical rationality.²¹² Cook says theology must be liberated and given back to the people, the conscientized poor who are a *minority* because few can bear their cross.²¹³ And, “The poor have the right to describe and interpret their own experience and their faith, to be fully incorporated into the political processes and into the Church as active subjects of history and of theology, active doers rather than mere passive receivers . . . involved in the future of Church and world . . .”²¹⁴ Nouwen’s experience in Peru with the pastoral agents shows that those who have had “no voice,” or rather, whose voices have been muted are also the authentic theologians.

In fact, the transcendental method makes the presupposition that God’s revelation is not “out there,” but rather made known through the faith experience of the Subject, and that the Subject is the starting point to theologizing *contextually*, because he or she starts not

²¹¹ Tracy, “Theologies of Praxis,” 37-38.

²¹² Tracy, “Theologies of Praxis,” 36.

²¹³ Cook, “Jesus from the Other Side of History,” 260, 266.

²¹⁴ Cormie, “Vantage Points of the Historically Marginalized,” 34.

in a vacuum but within a context.²¹⁵ This paradoxical notion might seem even more contradictory in liberation theology because it would appear, due to its social concerns and actions, to be so social, political, or “external.” The idea that theology begins in the individual experiencing something very personal and intimate is an uncommon notion, even revolutionary, for theology in general, despite it having been the way going back to the Fathers of the Church—even Mary pondered these things in her heart! And yet, still today we often try to pass on the faith by force-feeding it to adults and children rather than facilitating ways for them to experience it dynamically, authentically, and personally.²¹⁶ All the focus on the Subject, however, is far from being the promotion of individualism or relativism. It is, instead, the promotion of the self-appropriated and self-creating responsible Subject, able to transcend him or herself in order to reach out to those in need, in collaboration and in communion. “It is not interiority as a purely private possession that is our guide, but interiority expressed in community and tested by community dialogue.”²¹⁷ To do contextual theology is therefore to integrate our external context and our internal context as well—our spirituality, our dignity, our very being. Dissociating them splits our soul leading to the decline of the individual, of theology, and of society.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 104-105.

²¹⁶ Sophie Tremblay, *Le Dialogue Pastoral*, Pédagogie pastorale no. 5 (Université Saint-Paul, Ottawa: Novalis/Lumen Vitae, 2007).

²¹⁷ Crowe, “Bernard Lonergan as Pastoral Theologian,” 140.

²¹⁸ The fallacy of dualism McAfee Brown spoke of twenty years ago is still alive, as explained and experienced at a recent gathering of Montreal faith-based non-governmental organizations (*Commission Emmaüs*, Initiative des *Journées sociales de Québec*, 28 Nov. 2009) whose goal was to discern where we are and where we are going on our journeys of solidarity in relation to spirituality. While many participants concretely live and breathe socio-economic analysis and are actively engaged in correcting unjust social structures locally and globally, spiritual discernment and contemplation of such matters is uncommon, especially if in relation to individual sin. Stimpson quotes Himes and Himes who describe the experience of activists invited to reflect on the theological foundation of their activism as being “so theologically inarticulate that they can’t persuade anybody in the churches who doesn’t already agree with them, and even then they come across as political partisans and not as reflective Christians.” *Beyond Ethical Reflections*, 123.

Our new “global village” does increasingly create a Subject who exclaims: “What, am I my brother’s keeper?!”—directly through the promotion of individualism and materialism, and indirectly through its structuring of the processes of production, consumption, investing, and so forth.²¹⁹ This problem enters the arena of social sin spoken of by Richard M. Gula,²²⁰ and of surplus of evil discussed by Kenneth Melchin²²¹ who explains how emergent structures that maintain and exacerbate oppression of marginalized groups can attain incredible power. Melchin adds, however, that: “This does not mean that there is no blame for social evil, but it does mean that there remains a surplus of evil beyond what can be ascribed to individuals.” Social sin and surplus of evil may explain in part the limited success of Churches, non-governmental organizations, and governments in addressing poverty and injustice locally and globally. While accepting the notion of social sin, Pope John Paul II has also cautioned that: “social sin can never be separated from personal moral responsibility.”²²² Stimpson gives idolatry as an example of sin and notes how a deficiency of our bishops’ social teachings is that when they adopted pastoral methods along the lines of Latin American liberation theology they privileged the social and ethical aspects, and not the theological.²²³

²¹⁹ Through mundane activities of daily living such as where we shop, what we wear and eat, what companies our pension plans are invested in, and so forth, we indirectly oppress our brothers and sisters, as explained by John Dillon in *Turning the Tide: Confronting the Money Traders* (Ottawa: Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1997).

²²⁰ Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith – Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 116-121.

²²¹ Melchin, *Living with Other People*, 93-95.

²²² Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith*, 119. John Paul II in *Sollicitudo rei socialis* says: “structures of sin’ ...are rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove. And thus they grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people’s behaviour.”(art. 36).

²²³ Stimpson, *Beyond Ethical Reflections*, 101-103.

Dealing with today's social problems requires an integrating spirituality—the authentic Subject able to navigate his levels of consciousness and to use his head and heart to know the outer world, as well as his own head and heart. Among the views of history we can espouse, Dunne proposes the dialectical view, where authenticity and inauthenticity are the normative dialectic going on in all human relations, and leads to progress or decline. This attitude begins by recognizing that bias belongs to the very structure of our consciousness, and from that recognition follow several strategic precepts.²²⁴

1. Be suspicious of situations because all have histories which include insights and oversights.
2. Be suspicious of reports of situations because the reporter can be biased.
3. Accept that an incoherence or difference in position may be due to *my* bias which I do not even see.
4. The differences between people are of different kinds and require different strategies: respect, dialogue, education, and for critical dialectical differences, conversion.
5. For dialectical differences, there is no logical argument for talking the other person into conversion. The most effective strategy is to uncover one's own basic position and hope that the transcendental precepts at work in the unconverted will be attracted to the basic position of the converted.

Dunne explains that ways of attracting someone into a new horizon can vary widely but religious conversion is best revealed by sharing one's own story of conversion; moral conversion is shown better in deeds than in words, while intellectual conversion needs words to explain what knowing, deciding, and loving involve. Uncovering one's basic position is very effective because it is both attractive to the person who is searching, and it also might uncover an incomplete conversion in the person who is sharing, "so both parties stand equally indictable under the finger of conversion."²²⁵

²²⁴ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 175, 183, 187.

²²⁵ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 187-189.

Living this dialectical attitude will be difficult for someone lacking three characteristics:

1. humility, because no one enjoys undressing his errors in public;
2. courage, instead of defensiveness. Education should inspire our creative and expansive consciousness to dare to improve the world rather than bury our talent; and
3. compassion, and concern about the suffering of every human person.²²⁶

Living these features of the dialectical attitude leads to a preferential option for the poor, and it also leads to recovering what Gutiérrez refers to as “the fundamental Christian attitude of ongoing conversion,” and this new chosen way will have deeper dimensions of the personal and social, material and spiritual, kind, along with the call to stubbornness and commitment.²²⁷ Lonergan and Dunne can help to concretize and clarify this new way through the transcendental precepts and the five dialectical strategic precepts given above, and which ultimately each Subject has to undertake on his and her new journey of solidarity, even if it is communal.

3.4 The Subject of liberation theology and spirituality: on the move with our Nomadic God of the Tent

In a recent conference on the future of parishes in Quebec, Guy Paiement spoke of our Nomadic God, a god who seems to be more at home in small dynamic Church groups

²²⁶ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 189-191.

²²⁷ Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 106. I believe this dialectical attitude, and particularly the feature of humility is encompassed by Gutiérrez’ notion of *spiritual childhood*, which makes possible an authentic commitment to the poor, whereas previously the need to also live with the poor was considered necessary. In *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 126-127.

than in large static temples and cathedrals,²²⁸ echoing the Boffs' statement that liberation theology is *theology in movement*. This is very much in harmony with the writings of Gioacchino Campese who spoke of Yahweh as “The God of the Tent” who pitched his tent among us, who journeys with His people, and of Jesus as the itinerant preacher who has nowhere to lay his head.²²⁹ His understanding of *their* Scalabrinian charism for migrants is relevant to different degrees to *all* Christians—all pilgrims called to live in the world, but not be of the world.

In fact, this is also in harmony with the reflections expressed at the *Journée Biblique 2009*, organized by the *Centre Biblique du Diocèse de Montréal*.²³⁰ The central theme was that throughout history, the scriptures show us that whenever people became too comfortable—too static—God leads us to realize that He is a *pilgrim God* who carries a backpack and lives in a tent. This notion of a nomadic “God of the Tent” is useful because contextual theologizing and pastoral care-giving calls for theology in movement, and this requires a pilgrim Church that can evolve and journey with the people. And we are dynamic peoples imbued with humility, courage and compassion; moved not by extrinsic codes of conduct, but by God's Law inscribed in our hearts calling us to be attentive, intelligent,

²²⁸ Guy Paiement, S.J., “L'Église du Québec au Carrefour : De la paroisse d'aujourd'hui... vers quoi?” Conference organized by the *Réseau Culture et Foi*. Montreal, Quebec: April 25, 2009.

²²⁹ Gioacchino Campese, C.S., *Yahweh, the God of the Tent – A Theological Reflection on the Scalabrinian Mission*, Paper presented at the Scalabrinian Conference and part of the Lay Missionary Formation Program (New York: Missionaries of Saint Charles, 1998), 1. Campese interprets 2 Samuel 7:1-7 as God's desire to journey with His People and His objection to the building of a temple and fundamental refusal of a static religion. Br. Campese's article was somewhat controversial within his Scalabrinian congregation because it raised questions about traditional parish-based ministry by missionaries whose charism is for migrants and refugees.

²³⁰ Centre Biblique du Diocèse de Montréal, *Journée de ressourcement biblique*, November 7, 2009.

rational, and responsible. Interestingly, Cole-Arnal speaks about liberation spirituality also as a “walking with” people, a “spirituality of the feet” and a “conversion of the feet” whereby solidarity is to turn our feet around to work and live with the poor, and to know their suffering.²³¹

But how is it that we can be oblivious to the suffering and dying of 24,000 children every day? Goizueta speaks about how we deny suffering to shield us from our own vulnerability and mortality. Tucked away in the safety of our own upper rooms, we can even deny our complicity in that suffering.²³² Ironically, the disciple we refer to as “doubting Thomas” is possibly the one who, through his dialectical attitude, had the greatest conversion. Goizueta works through how Jesus’ invitation to put his finger in the wound was an invitation to the disciple(s) to heal the relationship they had hurt through their abandoning him. Such immersion allows us to feel and *experience* within ourselves the pain of Jesus’ wounds.²³³ It can lead us to *understand* the connection between Jesus’ crucifixion and his relationships with those on the margins of society. It can help us to *judge* our own complicity in His death, our neighbors’ deaths, and our own—to face, recognize and accept our own

²³¹ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 161-162.

²³² Goizueta, “The Crucified and Risen Christ,” 64-5. Also referring to social psychologist Ernest Becker, Goizueta describes “the process by which the individual strives to exempt him or herself from the common lot of all persons, our common mortality. . . . (T)he violence inflicted on the weak among us—from the Jews in Nazi concentration camps to the children left to die in the poverty of our contemporary concentration camps, the ghettos of Western cities and Third World rural villages—is simply the social face of the denial of death. If we deny death, we inflict it. But we also inflict it on ourselves. The fear of pain and vulnerability that causes us to shun real human relationships, to shun that true love that always involves surrender and vulnerability in the face of an other, ultimately kills our interior life, our ability to feel anything—neither pain, nor joy, nor love.”

²³³ Goizueta, “The Crucified and Risen Christ,” 62. Goizueta speaks of Caravaggio’s painting which “depicts Thomas grabbing his own side even as the apostle thrusts his hand into Jesus’ side, seemingly experiencing in himself the pain of Jesus’ wounds.”

mortality and that “we are *all* beggars.” Conversion begins here says Goizueta, and it is facilitated by immersion and encounter with the suffering other. We can then *decide* and opt to follow the Galilee Principle: God chooses what is low and despised in our world. Not only did God become human in the midst of contaminated and corrupted believers, but that is the very place the Risen Christ sends his disciples to encounter him after he has resurrected.

Be not afraid of the borderland . . . the borderland becomes itself the wound which terrifies, but which we are invited to see and touch . . . If we are to recognize the Crucified and Risen Lord, we must risk defilement, we must touch the untouchable. But it is a risk well worth taking because Jesus has assured us that ‘there you will see me.’²³⁴

From the apostles to Romero to Maria-Luisa, courage and compassion liberated them to risk public humiliation, by walking humbly with our God counter to popular culture. The time has come for “humility to be raised from the level of private religious piety to the level of public political virtue. The self-loss which mystics praise and all great world religions preach must now be understood as a strategy for a revolution.”²³⁵ While this “faith” in Subjects’ universal and potential authenticity may be an “idealistic” aspect of the transcendental method that Bevans notes as a critique,²³⁶ it does provide at once the theoretical and concrete model for becoming authentic and creative Subjects. Chapter Four will share several such stories of solidarity and love, and risk developing a framework to better describe, understand and appropriate them responsibly.

²³⁴ Goizueta, “The Crucified and Risen Christ,” 65-66, 69. Conversion facilitated by the face to face encounter is not exclusively Christian says Goizueta, noting how Buddha Siddhartha’s path to enlightenment only began when he was able to leave his luxurious compound and recognize his own mortality in face to face encounters with a corpse, a beggar, and a sick person. “We are *all* beggars” is ascribed to Martin Luther.

²³⁵ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 190.

²³⁶ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 108.

CHAPTER FOUR

Stories of Witnesses . . . of Pearls of Great Price

Several stories of conversions have already been presented: our unnamed bishop in the introduction, Romero, Scalabrini, and Nouwen. While each Subject is unique, two commonalities which I contend they share are their authenticity and their immersion in some form into the gritty reality of an other's life. In the present chapter, I will attempt a more structured presentation and analysis of stories of witnesses of solidarity from the literature, from interviews,²³⁷ and through my attempts at self-appropriation.

The objective of the story narratives is to help the reader arrive at insights; thus my hope is that the analysis does not overshadow the story because “we are more effectively impressed by a story than we are by formal analysis. It is the narrated event that brings the Mystery of God home,” and that allows Christianity to survive says Dunne.²³⁸ He explains how we can reach the divine Mystery in ordinary “things” by understanding the unique historical events that condition their existence.

4.1 A framework for presenting and analyzing the stories and data

In the *Framework and Model of Solidarity* on page 91 (Figure 2), alongside Lonergan's transcendental precepts are seven liberation theology and spirituality descriptors

²³⁷ Appendix I briefly lists and describes the interviewees. Appendix II is the *The Summary Protocol Form and Interview Guides*, reviewed and approved by the Concordia University Human Research Ethics Committee. It explains how the interviews were conducted, the questionnaires and consent forms used, data managed, etc.

²³⁸ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 155.

gleaned particularly from the work of Gutiérrez, Boff, and Paiement, introduced earlier and elaborated on below.

1. It is a personal living commitment with the praxis of love and liberating action being *at the root* of liberation theology and spirituality. This hands-on solidarity can give theologians a “new spirit” for doing theology. Such solidarity movements are generally grassroots, calling for servant leadership and a certain flattening of hierarchies, be they church, socio-economic, academic, etc.
2. It is a contextual or local theology in the sense of drawing from the concrete experience and situation of the people.
3. There is critical reflection on praxis, with praxis being committed action in the socio-political sphere, yet appreciating Boff’s synthesis of prayer-*action*, faith-liberation. This reflection is both individual and communal.
4. The committed action, reflection and preferential option for the poor aim to transform the world in the light of the scriptures. History and scriptures are read from the perspective of the poor and oppressed. Evangelization is conscientizing.
5. Exercising a preferential option for the poor which involves identifying with and being in solidarity with the poor, aimed at promoting positive change for those in greatest need of human dignity.
6. Praxis—reflected upon—becomes the orthopraxis which leads to orthodoxy, meant to in turn guide further praxis-action, but always mingled with contemplation and thanksgiving.
7. A communal living commitment, such as basic Christian communities, showing: (a) fraternity; (b) liturgical celebration and joy; (c) conscientizing education for the community and the public; and (d) action to decrease suffering due to injustice.

Generally, praxis reflected upon critically and prayerfully leads to renewed and revised praxis, and so on. Likewise, experience understood, judged, deliberated and acted upon leads to new experiences, new data for understanding and evaluation, and so on. While the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors are presented sequentially and adjacent to specific transcendental precepts, their relationships are much more fluid and dynamic. At the *first level*, I have personal living commitment coinciding “roughly” with *experience* because

liberation theology puts priority and emphasis on praxis even though the liberation theology and spirituality process is a spiral of ongoing development, as is *Method*.²³⁹

At the *second level, understanding*, I have placed contextual and local theology and spirituality which draws its understanding from the concrete experience of the people.

At the *third level, judgment*, I have placed critical reflection on praxis and the notion of liberation theology and spirituality being done in light of the scriptures. At the end of the day, what will the Lord ask other than whether I acted justly, loved tenderly, and walked humbly with my God; whether I saw the Stranger hungry and welcomed him and gave him some food (Micah 6:8; Matthew 25:31-46)?

And at the *fourth level* I have placed preferential option for the poor, orthopraxis leading to orthodoxy, and communal living commitment roughly alongside Lonergan's *decision* because here the responsible Subject will deliberate and opt for what is truly good, and share the joys and sorrows with a community of meaning, and carry it forward into renewed praxis, communications and teachings for one's own life and others.

²³⁹ Bevans describes liberation theology within the Praxis Model, where praxis is the first requirement or step, followed by reflection as the second step involving an analysis of the committed actions in the particular situation and in light of a rereading of the Bible and Christian tradition. The third step is renewed committed action—refined by new theory, which is even more rooted in scripture and contextual reality through concrete action and critical reflection. So the circle becomes an unending spiral. Bevans refers to Lonergan's image of a scissors' action to explain the ongoing process of theologizing in terms of the Transcendental Model. One blade is the Subject in his or her experience of the present context; the other blade is the Subject's experience of God and of the past in light of scripture and tradition. Contextual theology results because the individual or communal Subject is a contextualized Subject in a particular spatiotemporal and cultural milieu. As with the spiral, the responsible actions arising from the authentic Subject's decisions will become new material to be attended to, understood, and subjected to refined judgment and decisions. In *Models of Contextual Theology*, 70-87; 103-116.

McAfee Brown's three dimensions of meaning of liberation theology and spirituality, which he parallels with Micah 6:8 form the base of the framework. Integral to these three levels are conversion, grace, Easter joy, spiritual childhood, and community as described earlier in section 1.2.1. In addition, my reading suggests a parallel also with the three features of dialectical attitudes described by Dunne. That these are so vital can be appreciated in light of the importance of the functional specialties of dialectic and foundations for liberation theology and spirituality.

Figure 1. Parallel between Micah 6:8, the three levels of meaning of liberation theology and spirituality, and Dunne's features of dialectical attitude

Micah 6:8	Three levels of meaning of liberation theology and spirituality	Tad Dunne
To act justly	= to be liberated to help create a just society	= courage
To love tenderly	= to be liberated to take responsible action	= compassion
To walk humbly with your God	= to be liberated to live a grace-filled life	= humility

I believe these are key values, meanings and features which facilitate living out the descriptors and precepts of my framework. The aim of the solidarity framework is not to categorize and totalize Subjects and their experiences, but rather to allow liberation theology and spirituality to be expressed and discerned in oneself and in others in diverse ways, yet united by the common characteristic of authenticity. As such, different components of the framework can be recognized by, and be useful to, individuals and non-governmental organizations coming from various disciplines and faiths. My use of this and earlier versions of the solidarity framework have allowed me to arrive at a better knowledge of the praxis and faith journeys of people I have read about, of people I interviewed, and of myself.

Figure 2. A Framework and Model of Solidarity

Liberation Theology & Spirituality general descriptors		Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis		Experience - Be Attentive	
2. Contextual or Local Theology and Spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people		Understanding - Be Intelligent	
3. Critical Reflection on Praxis		Judgment - Be Rational	
4. The Liberation Theology and Spirituality descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures / Gospel			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity		Decision - Be Responsible <i>Be in Love</i>	
6. Orthopraxis to Orthodoxy			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: (a) fraternity; (b) celebration; (c) education; (d) action to decrease suffering due to injustice			
<i>Act Justly</i> <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society</i> <i>(political liberation)</i> <i>Courage</i>	<i>Love Tenderly</i> <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love</i> <i>(human liberation)</i> <i>Compassion</i>	<i>Walk Humbly with your God</i> <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life</i> <i>(religious liberation)</i> <i>Humility</i>	
<i>Micah 6:8 — Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation — Three features of the dialectical attitudes</i>			

Guidelines for using the Solidarity Framework - model

Explaining its use in detail is rather difficult because it is not a recipe or a set of rules, but rather a model of interrelated meanings, features, descriptors and precepts. As with Lonergan's *Method in Theology*, I hope it to be a framework for collaborative creativity. Overall, I am exploring how the Subjects/interviewees are using the transcendental precepts in relation to liberation theology and spirituality. I am also being attentive to my own transcendental precepts in my exploration and analysis of the Subjects' communications, whether they are interview notes, recordings, written reflections, or interviews. Where a step says "ask questions for verification" or "elicit a description" this is possible during a live interview. However, it also refers to my own use of the transcendental precepts during the analysis as I struggle to be attentive and intelligent with the data and to authentically know what I am doing when I am knowing. (#s in brackets refer to liberation theology and spirituality descriptors)

- First - Be as **attentive** as possible to the person's communication of her story/**experience**.
 - Listen for or elicit a description of how she lived it (1).
 - Be attuned to my experience as interviewer, how it makes me feel and what I think.
- Second - Ask questions for elaboration and clarification in order to try and **understand** how she came to an **intelligent** understanding of her experience.
 - What was the external context (2), and explore her internal context to the extent possible.
 - What thoughts, feelings, biases, are possibly affecting my understanding?
- Third - Ask questions for verification and confirmation in order to **judge** whether what the interviewee is sharing (4) is coherent and **reasonable** with respect to how she evaluated whether her evidence supported her judgment.
 - Is she exhibiting a critical reflection (3) on hers and others' praxis? Is there an awareness of possible biases?
 - Is my **judgment** coherent and reasonable? Verify by both thinking back on my own use of the precepts, and by communicating it back to the Subject. The verification is done through reflecting back to the Subject during the interview and by providing her with the written summary for her feedback (as described in my protocol, Concordia UHREC, Appendix II).

- Fourth - Solicit and identify information in the interviewee's story pointing to potentially life-changing **decisions** and actions (5, 6) and the internal (1, 3, 4) and external (2, 7) factors which led to or did not lead to responsible action.
- Fifth - Review recorded and written material to inscribe directly onto the notes in a different colour, and into the framework:
1. which descriptors, precepts, meanings and features from the framework are present in the story;
 2. which area/section of the framework these primarily, or more spontaneously come from; and
 3. whether there are other patterns.
- Sixth, - Show the framework to the Subjects and ask whether some of the descriptors, meanings, features "speak to them." This step however was not done because it is not part of the protocol, and in fact the interviews have served to revise and improve the framework. If this step is used for future research, its effect on Subjects' answers would have to be evaluated, since it might be "leading."
- Seventh - How am I being a good and responsible steward of the data and insights that I have collected (6)?

This seventh step arises out of my becoming aware of four phenomena in the course of my analyses. While this could be in my conclusions, I discuss it here because it becomes part of my analysis as I am not an "empty head" in the process.²⁴⁰

1. I am entering into a special encounter with the Subject, and for the taped interviews, this increased as I re-listened to the tapes and transcribed more and more notes with greater detail and fidelity. There seemed to be some symbiosis between interviewer and interviewee.
2. This led to an interesting extension of the cognitional myth notion which is normally applied to sight. I was now endeavouring to apply it increasingly also to sound. In other words, knowing is more than just hearing.
3. All this was filling me with a great sense of responsibility and stewardship because through their stories I was being offered precious pearls of great price! At many times while listening to or reviewing a story, I felt I was standing on Holy Ground, that the Subject was a Being in Love, and I too was inspired to change my life and embark on a vector of progress—to be responsible and in Love. It is moving and inspiring to be in the presence of someone who is describing how he or she became open-eyed and realized that it is up to her to determine what she will make of

²⁴⁰ Lonergan, *Method*, 156-158.

herself. Their authenticity draws me in, not only in their victories, but also, if not particularly, in their wounds.

4. I had an increasing sense that the solidarity framework was becoming a model or a guide for collaboratively co-creating the self, the other, the Kingdom!

4.2 Exploring the journeys of people engaged in solidarity work

4.2.1 Using the framework with witnesses of solidarity from the literature

The following two excerpts²⁴¹ of students returning to Canada from immersion experiences show a simple use for the framework, simple in that the data available is limited to their written statements. Judenne Roache shared: “I could not understand why I live in a place of opportunity and so many Haitians are in these terrible situations. I cried whenever I turned on the tap and had water pressure and hot water that the families I lived with did not. I cried when I went to school and all my friends talked about were insignificant dramas, unaware of the real drama that the poor live every day.” Early in my own experience of such poverty, I felt similar frustrations, and for long periods, disoriented, because I did not understand that experiencing is only a part of a dynamic process.²⁴² Attentiveness to disturbing and even traumatic experiences drives us to be intelligent and seek to understand those experiences, as well as how we fit into the context we were immersed in and the context of our daily lives. Using the solidarity framework can lead us to ask whether Judenne has the resources and mentors to guide her in reflecting on both her praxis and her feelings and thoughts so that it leads to accurate understanding, to good rational judgments, and then to fruitful actions? (Appendix III)

²⁴¹ Judenne Roache and Laura Graham, in “Salt of the Earth,” by Riley, *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 2, 14-15. (See Footnote 137).

²⁴² Lonergan, *The Subject*, 18. “The transition from the neglected and truncated subject to self-appropriation is not a simple matter. It is not just a matter of finding out and assenting to a number of true propositions. More basically, it is a matter of conversion, of a personal philosophic experience, of moving out of a world of sense and of arriving, dazed and disoriented for a while, into a universe of being.”

Laura Graham shared what happened at a mass while praying the *Padre Nuestro* during which everyone holds hands: “I noticed that no one was holding the hand of the elderly woman who was not far from me, so I held her hand. At the end of the prayer, she kissed my hand and I started to cry . . . I am forever grateful for the opportunity I was given through my school and the *Encuentro Dominicano Program* in Consuelo led by Dean Riley and his group of enthusiastic, young Dominicans who were our guides, interpreters, and supporters through the emotional journey. The evening reflections during our short week in Consuelo were only the beginning of a lifetime of reflection.” This young lady’s experience, understanding, and judgment are palpable, and with critical reflection on her praxis and on her inner journey and living commitment, one can see her moving responsibly toward her own decision-making of what is valuable. One feels through her words how the communal support she received which included fraternity, celebration, education, and justice work were vital to her growth as a person. Gillis states that these experiential learning experiences have the power to stay with the participants for the rest of their lives, and, for most, to affect the choices they make in life.²⁴³ However, the framework leads me to anticipate that as she moves back to our Canadian context—a being in Love—she will still be vulnerable to the many vectors of decline of our society, where slowly experiences of materialism and individualism will outnumber those of self-giving and altruism, introduce group biases into her understanding, and cloud her judgment. She will therefore need to find or create a new support group such as a basic Christian community or solidarity group to sustain her personal living commitment in a communal context (Appendix III).

²⁴³ Gillis, “An Experience of a Lifetime,” 3.

4.2.2 Using the framework with witnesses of solidarity that I interviewed

Conducting interviews/conversations with people involved in solidarity work is my second route for exploring my thesis question; the methodology is detailed in Appendix II. The technique involves exploratory case studies using depth interviews²⁴⁴ with each participant individually because the Subject is the focus of my research. For members of non-governmental organizations, the focus is on his or her own journey, and not on the organization as a social entity. This is not to minimize the value of the group because it is vital to our development as *solidaire* individuals. It is rather to prioritize the focus on the theologizing Subject, because: “Only a regular obedience to the transcendental precepts by each member of a community can successfully direct brilliant insights toward worthwhile ends.”²⁴⁵ The following themes were explored:

1. the participant’s attentiveness to his or her experiences of situations;
2. the participant’s endeavours through intelligence to understand those experiences;
3. how, as a reasonable person, the participant judges whether the evidence confirms his or her understanding; and
4. how the participant approaches the responsibility of deciding what to do about his or her situation, and if he or she will take appropriate action or not.

Within the general goal of exploring the participants’ transcendental precepts in relation to their experiences of solidarity work, the analysis also hopes to discover both the unique and common elements which arose out of their particular contexts, intentionally selected to be diverse so as to explore the *unity in diversity* of liberation theologies and spiritualities.

²⁴⁴ Edwin P. Hollander, *Principles and Methods of Social Psychology*, Fourth Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 34-75.

²⁴⁵ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 88.

4.2.2.1 *To do justice . . . and to welcome the Stranger amongst us*

Sr. Maura McGrath, CND, is a past director of Montreal's *Refuge Juan Moreno* which provides emergency shelter and assistance to women and children refugees. Sr. McGrath founded it after returning from mission in Guatemala. Previously a highschool teacher in Montreal, her life direction was changed by her assignment in 1977 to a school in San Miguel Acatan, Huehuetenango, where she experienced a local liberation theology. Following her return to Canada in 1981, she gradually discerned an acute need for "welcoming" refugee women and children, and so transposed and translated her experience of Latin American liberation theology into our Québec context. In interviewing Sr. Maura about her life and work at the *Refuge Juan Moreno*, the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors very quickly and easily become evident, such as her daily living commitment, her preferential option for the poor within her local context but in light of the global refugee situation, and her ongoing reflection on her praxis. The characteristics of basic Christian communities, such as a fraternity, celebration, education and actions to decrease injustice were also present in the life of Sr. Maura and *Refuge Juan Moreno*, although for the latter the celebration has to maintain a secular tone due to it being partly government subsidized.

The mingling of Lonergan's transcendental precepts and of liberation theology and spirituality in Sr. Maura came to life in an article she wrote in 1996, *Paths of Resistance*,²⁴⁶ following a trip to Central America. This, and the solidarity framework, are reproduced in Appendices IV and V to demonstrate the rich dialogue to be had. She writes:

The words spoken by one Guatemalan to another in the midst of such magnificent beauty, so permeated by oppression and violence, come from a very courageous heart. These days help put me in touch with what sometimes becomes blurred in the business of my everyday life.... That's why I'm here. I need to see, to hear and to feel the life experience of real people. I need to be reminded.

²⁴⁶ Maura McGrath, CND, "Paths of Resistance," *The Upstream Journal*, by the Social Justice Committee of Montreal, vol. 12, No. 1, October 1996, 3-4. See Appendix IV.

Besides attesting to the power of this immersion experience, these words also reflect her self-appropriation which is the foundation of her praxis—now recharged to continue and bear good fruit. She humbly admits her own bias and assumes responsibility for conversion, for her need to be reminded and to engage in ongoing critical reflection. I can believe her decision to be responsible is authentic because it derives from her intentional experience, understanding and judgment. In my own judgment I must ask: “Is it so?” I can affirm it is so because we were companions on this part of her journey and the fruits of her labour are well known.

4.2.2.2 *To love tenderly . . . like dos angeles*

Karen shared the story of her unintentional immersion experience on a Los Angeles city bus which forever changed her life. Faced with the choice of a 100\$ taxi ride or a \$2.75 bus ride she chose the latter despite the disbelief of her hotel clerk, bringing along a book from her course on compassion. The bus went through a very poor neighbourhood of L.A. where many got on whom she judged to be homeless and dysfunctional—a burden on society—based on their unkempt appearance. Her attempt to ignore them by reading or looking out the window was interrupted, however, by a man who sat next to her. She was shocked and frightened because it looked like half of his face had been shot off. He must be in a street gang, she thought, but he looks too old; maybe he’s a Vietnam veteran? They said hello to each other and the fear started to be replaced by thoughts of his strength for having survived some horrible trauma, and of his courage for going out in public. As he spoke with her, it led her to try to understand the inconsistency between her initial impression and what she was now hearing as he spoke gently, intelligently, and with genuine interest. Her

attentiveness toward him was especially sparked by his attentiveness—his asking her in the midst of an L.A. ghetto: “Do you speak French?” He had noted a tiny French subtitle on the cover of her book. He asked her about her studies; he too spoke French, having graduated from an Ivy League University. She understood that “the surface reality was very different from the substance of the person.” She had to revise her prejudgment and be reasonable: “This person is very in the moment and going out of his way to have an authentic and nice conversation with me.” She had considered everything and judged she was being responsible as she decided to make the encounter mutual, engaging in conversation with him. “There is nothing to be afraid of . . . but where are they going?” she continued wondering as the bus made its way past the glamorous streets of Beverly Hills. Moved today as she was eight years ago, Karen explains how some time later, they all stood up at a certain stop and walked toward a veterans’ hospital. The juxtaposition was overwhelming for her as she recalls these men who had given their body parts for their country now dysfunctional and dirty in a society that values shopping more than truly reintegrating its American heroes into normal life. Karen’s thoughts and feelings transcended patriotism and were concerned with the value and dignity of these forgotten soldiers who were sent off to a war that forever scarred them physically and emotionally.

In a surreal way, she felt herself realizing and living her course on compassion and her book, *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin*, which details the horrific injuries of war, the surgeries, the pain of the soldiers and their families—a course she did not choose and a book she did not wish to read. This encounter shatters the cognitive myth that one knows by taking a look. It also shows the complementarity of theory and experience. Karen says this

really “hit her in the heart” because she had thoughts of compassion through reading her book, but the authenticity of her fellow passenger “put it in your face, you couldn’t miss it!” She also believes that had her professor planned a meeting with war vets or even with this same person, she would not have understood about war and this man “at such a deep, cellular, interior level” because it could never be like the shocking juxtapositions of this real-life immersion. Her faithfulness to the transcendental precepts is evident and it has allowed her to enter into new horizons, changing her perceptions.

It was interesting that in telling her story, Karen quite spontaneously used the transcendental precepts and revealed her inner dynamism, both in the mundane process of deciding to take the bus, and in the more complex decision to speak with the Stranger. This could very well be due to her familiarity with Lonergan. What is even more interesting is that as the completed framework for her story shows in Appendix VI, her high degree of self-appropriation led to my finding examples for every meaning, and feature and verse with great facility. The liberation theology and spirituality descriptors were a little less evident, but this may be due to their relatedness to liberation theology while as I suggest earlier, the three levels of meaning of liberation are more general. Thus, with Karen I can conclude that her authenticity led her into a mutually liberating encounter, and that her immersion experience contributed to her growth in authenticity and solidarity, and to her ongoing conversion.

4.2.2.3 *To walk humbly with our God . . . and to be faithful*

Fr. Ernie Schibli founded the *Social Justice Committee of Montreal* (SJC) in the early 1970s with several other Montreal priests struck by the severity of world hunger, revealed via the magic of television. Dissatisfied with Development and Peace’s lack of

attention to the underlying issues of injustice, their goal was to form several local Catholic Church committees. Interest from other denominations, and later from other faith groups as well as non-faith groups led the SJC to eventually become a secular non-governmental organization. Besides its education and lobbying, the SJC regularly leads delegations to the South to both strengthen ties and be in solidarity with Latin American partners, and also to provide immersion experiences for Quebec members. It is noteworthy that the section of the solidarity framework which was last to be completed pertained to Fr. Schibli's transcendental precepts personally, probably because his account of the SJC's work centered on its communal achievement rather than his individual contribution. The liberation theology and spirituality descriptors and meanings were quickly evident. It was interesting however, that once I fitted them onto the framework, it revealed that the transcendental precepts were also being followed by the SJC as a community. For example, their commitment to defend peoples in Latin America displaced by gold mining activities lead them to discover and understand the role played by the Canadian corporate elite and politicians. Critical reflection on their praxis as SJC and as individuals led to their judgment that there is work to be done in our context in order to exercise a preferential option for the poor abroad. Their judgment was both informed and confirmed by their on-site visits to the communities, by the testimonies of and dialogue with guest speakers to Canada, and through dialogue with government and business officials, leading to revised and renewed praxis.

Fr. Schibli explains to parishioners who fear that his trips to Central America might depress him: "No, they inspire me and recharge my battery! Their struggle and their faith are a source of hope and a call to action and solidarity. I've got to do something with what I've

learned.” This supports the hypothesis that immersion sustains and deepens conversion, at all levels and stages, and particularly in someone with a dialectical attitude rich in humility. Yet his countless trips to Guatemala and El Salvador in the midst of their Civil Wars is a testimony to his courage and selfless love in order to do justice. Back home, he communicates his experiences and insights via secular presentations, as well as homilies. These focus on both education and advocacy because his challenge to people is to reflect, and to decide to take responsible action, which may include changing one’s lifestyle by buying less gold jewelry and by writing to governments to lobby for ethical corporate practices and socio-economic rights for the marginalized. Whether with church or secular groups, Fr. Schibli is effective because he can share personal experiences and anecdotes filled with laughter and tears—he can speak to their hearts and not just their heads. There is an attraction to someone whose life and work, whose words and actions, whose spirituality and solidarity are in harmony. This is what McAfee Brown, Boff and Dunne mean when they speak of conquering the great fallacy and healing the split soul. His authenticity and rigorous critical reflection on praxis have earned him immense respect from non-governmental organizations, government officials, international bodies, and the Church.

Reflecting on his story in the context of the framework revealed how, in fact, his faithfulness to his transcendental precepts enabled him to translate his inner dynamism into a life of liberation theology and spirituality personally and communally (Appendix VII). In the early 1970s, immersion in both the television images of abject poverty in the South and in the poverty of his own parish stratified by socio-economic levels led him to discern an

incongruence. “Ever since being ordained, in my homilies I tried to speak to myself first, and one Sunday after six sermons, I felt I was telling them a lie.” There began his journey of seeking information, understanding, and critical reflection in light of his faith. Perhaps much of the Church at that time was still functioning in common sense charity mode wanting to give the poor a fish. Development and Peace was perhaps at a theoretical/intellectual level saying we must teach the poor to fish. Fr. Schibli, I believe, was at an interiority level allowing him to realize we in the North through our participation in socio-economic structures which favour the wealthy actors and put the poor at a disadvantage—*were stealing the fish*. Reflection with others, and trips to Central America confirmed his judgment, nourished it with Latin American liberation theology, and openness to the Advocate gave the timid young priest the courage to engage in a life of advocacy. “For one reason or another, I’ve been pushed in this particular direction. I’ve been blessed with certain experiences and knowledge and I have to be faithful to these even if they are not in line with the institutional Church.” But it is also a life of loneliness because he is not on a path shared by many of his brother priests and because the masses are drawn by capitalism more readily than by Christianity. Was Petrella right that anyone truly authentic to the task of liberation will be on the fringes?

While the SJC is “secular,” Fr. Schibli is not and so consolation can be found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus who knew all too well that free lunches attract thousands, not many of whom stick around at the foot of the cross. Fr. Schibli believes the Lord says, “I didn’t ask you to be successful, I asked you to be faithful.” The SJC is not a basic Christian community because it is not a *Christian* organization, but, the Spirit

discreetly blows through its humble quarters hinting at something even more powerful and foundational.²⁴⁷

4.2.2.4 In other words—*courage, compassion, humility*

Catherine Henry is the founding director of *Alifera Globetrotter*, which organizes short-term immersion trips for recent Quebec nursing graduates. Her hypothesis is that through humanitarian experiences recent graduates, who are the most likely to abandon the profession, will be affected in a special way so that their way of providing care changes, improving their pride in nursing and their loyalty to it upon returning to Quebec. I was fascinated by such a fresh and radical idea—so contrary to common sense! Such was in fact the rebuttal of many hospitals from which they sought funding: “You’ll make us lose nurses by having them go work abroad!” My interview with Ms. Henry and analysis of an article about the group’s trip to Honduras focused on her conviction about the transformative power of the trips. “Marie-Pier Cyr et Anne Verret trouvent facilement les mots pour décrire une aventure qui les a profondément bouleversées. Leur satisfaction est palpable. Ce périple a changé leur façon de soigner. De nouvelles valeurs, voir vertus, ont émergé du rapprochement avec les patients.”²⁴⁸ Henry says that regarding immersion, the journals of the

²⁴⁷ While it is not a *basic Christian community*, it could be a *basic Loving community*, because as a member and past volunteer, I learned fraternity from two employees who took pay cuts so neither one would lose a job; I learned and helped others to learn; we engaged in concrete work to lessen suffering due to injustice; and I saw and felt celebration in the communal joy of “opting to thrust oneself towards the poor and the true good, touching moral self-transcendence, and striving to exist authentically.” Paraphrased from Lonergan, *Method*, 50.

²⁴⁸ Charles Meunier, “Expérience d’une vie,” *Perspective Infirmière* 5, No. 8, Novembre/Décembre 2008, 29-31. My translation: “Marie-Pier Cyr and Anne Verret speak with ease about an adventure which touched them deeply. Their satisfaction is palpable. This journey changed their way of caring; new values, even virtues, emerged through their *rapprochement* with patients.”

three nurses attest to their transformations and to their increased passion for remaining in nursing, *in Quebec*.

Because this is a secular group and because I solicited no information about the interviewee's faith affiliation or practice, I was particularly interested in what my use of the solidarity framework would reveal. Ms. Henry's passion and commitment to her project was evident; very striking was the harmony between her story and the concrete elements of her life. Equally striking was the richness of her story which I had initially missed. As in the case of only "taking a look," I had listened but missed the inner depths, or the dynamism which moved her because it was not expressed in explicitly theological or liberationist language. The first components of the framework to come out were the features of the dialectical attitudes: courage, compassion, and humility. Ms. Henry shared how difficult her experience was in a Woman's health unit; returning in the morning and seeing the empty bed of a woman she had met the day before and who died *alone* during the night. Death so real, the 40-degree heat, the smells, the uncleanliness, the fans blowing it all around, and the cries of pain sometimes exceeded her threshold and she would have to leave the unit for a while. And in the face of such suffering, deplorable conditions, and the unjust distribution of the world's resources, she was driven to return to the room. Furthermore, she is *courageously* driven to coordinate future projects in which they work and live with the people and contribute to the local economy. The lack of supplies and equipment forces her to motivate the nurses to transcend their reliance on pain medications and technology, to find instead the *compassion* to once again hold and comfort the patient as a human being and not see him as a "client" or "services utilizer" or "liver in bed 2". With *humility* she shares how she too, the

mission leader, needed support during difficult moments and how she continually discerns how her approach and work could be improved. Her praxis helps me to better understand today what the prophet Micah wrote some 2700 years ago.

Ms. Henry describes her backpacking travels as journeys of both discovery of new cultures and of self-appropriation and transformation. “My anti-resort immersion trips force me out of my comfort zone and push me to discover within myself new schemes, strengths and skills I didn’t know I had, and so advance to a new comfort zone. This requires trust in oneself but also in the people of the host culture. This led me to do humanitarian work which not only helped others, but also changed me. You can change yourself, the profession, and society.” Her first life-changing trip took place when she was 17. As they were leaving the airport in Mexico, a little boy jumped onto the windshield of their moving taxi to wash it and earn some money. This incident is just as vivid today, more than ten years later, and it has re-oriented her personal and professional life. Her *attentiveness* to the people’s lives and struggles, and to the feelings and thoughts that this stimulated in her, led her to read and travel extensively. “J’ai eu la pique et je veux retourner pour *comprendre* comment ils font pour survivre et s’en sortir.”²⁴⁹ She improved her Spanish and the new dialogues and relationships further informed her *understanding and judgments* about different cultures and about the effects of globalization. She expresses an almost visceral inability to live as a consumer as a result of witnessing that boy’s desperate jump for survival. She decided to clarify her experience, understanding, and developing judgment by completing studies in the

²⁴⁹ My translation: “I was “infected” by that experience and so wanted to return to *understand* how they survive and improve their lot.”

travel industry and is now specializing in management at *HEC Montréal* in international studies, which confirm and further nourish her direction in who she and *Alifera-Globetrotter* are becoming.

In addition to the immersion into the horizon of the little boy in Mexico City, there is another experience which impacted her life's direction immensely and that is the immersion into her father's chronic illness. She developed the utmost admiration for the home care nurses and considered it a blessing that she could help them care for him with tenderness ever since she was five years old. Her father's perseverance, she says, is the source of her perseverance and strength, be it when evaluating an unknown situation in a new country or in confronting the financial challenges of *Alifera*.

While Ms. Henry does not refer to faith, it is noteworthy how her life and words coincide with those in the framework, with some highlights in Appendix VIII. Her "mission" sounds like a vocation: "Je suis quelqu'un qui a le coeur sur la main. Il faut avoir le désir de faire le don de soi... parce que ces projets prennent énormément de temps et d'énergie."²⁵⁰ How her personal living commitment arises out of both her Northern and Southern contexts is clear. She reflects on her praxis which was also a regular activity of the group of six, communally "at sundown" as well as individually through journaling. These nurses are exercising a preferential option for the poor with respect to both socio-economics and health. I would also venture to adapt the orthopraxis to orthodoxy descriptor to healthcare in the

²⁵⁰ My translation: "I'm someone who puts her heart into what she does. You have to be willing to be self-giving ... because these projects take an enormous amount of time and energy."

sense that their immersion into a context which elicits more compassionate and just ways of providing care may lead to better theories and lessons in nursing care. The group also developed into a small community with a strong “complicité” and exhibiting the traits—if not of a basic Christian community, then of a *basic Loving community!* There was lived fraternity in their mutual support, education, and actions to decrease suffering due to injustice. Celebration, though not in the liturgical sense, was present in their shared moments of joy and sadness, recorded through words and photos in a book which Ms. Henry proudly showed me—it seemed like she was communicating the *good news*.

4.2.2.5 In other words—*liberation*

This fifth story is drawn from an interview with Mr. Nazareno Ruscito, and from the documentary-video²⁵¹ of the immersion experience of his small group from *Loyola High School* that went to Mexico to build homes with the *Arial Homes Foundation*. The word liberation best describes the transformation that both Mr. Ruscito and the teenage boys share. While not speaking of liberation theology, their experiences, new understandings and judgments, and decisions reflect the three levels of meaning of liberation in the lower section of the framework. At the beginning of the trip the excited young men chanted: “Let’s go build some homes!” During the post-trip reflections, however, they express in a reverent and subdued tone their thoughts and feelings about having built *relationships* with the Mexican family and with each other. Their language suggests that they also built their own moral characters.

²⁵¹ “1 Day,” produced by *Salt + Light Television Productions*, 2009. Video-documentary covers the trip from the preparatory stage to the participants’ post-trip reflections

They were very *attentive* to their new surroundings, particularly the stark contrast between the few luxurious houses and the many shantytowns. Cory Reynolds explains: “I knew their situation was going to be bad, but not that poor; their sanitary conditions are horrible.” No plumbing, no electricity. The family was living in a tent, the father, Luis-Angel, earns three dollars a day, the little girl had one old toy, the 35-year-old mom had never lived in a house with a solid roof. The students were very moved by her faith and perseverance in prayer for a little “casita.” One can see, hear, and feel the boys trying to reflect and *understand* how the family could still have joy and peace in this context. Then they were able to *judge* for themselves that present amongst them was something far greater than material possessions when the family, out of their poverty, prepared a festive meal for them, when they saw the little girl to whom they had brought numerous gifts choose one, and then give the others to her friends who had none. Andrew Steeves said after the trip: “You look at their situation and how little they have and they’re happy, and how when we don’t get exactly what we want we are displeased—that’s something I’ve tried to work on.” Michael Yaremko, for whom it was his second trip, said that it has affected his career choice. The fact that the students were not merely on an emotional high, and that these transformations were sustainable is confirmed by Mr. Ruscito who says that two years later, the parents of the young men still express surprise at how their sons have *changed* and are thankful for what they have.

It is quite “moving” to feel how the students are experiencing a change in cognition, to witness their inner dynamism operating as they become open-eyed and accepting responsibility for their decision-making and their future actions. What was

fascinating and equally moving was that as I “charted” the thoughts and feelings of Mr. Ruscito and also of the Mexican family onto the solidarity framework, the liberation comes alive in all of them (Appendix IX). The acts of intentional loving are synergistic and embark everyone onto a vector of progress despite being in a socio-economic context of decline. They are liberated to participate in creating a more just society. Yaremko for example asks: “We have so much in Western society, and they have so little. Why? Just because I am born in Canada?” They are liberated to be responsible and to love tenderly. Mr. Ruscito, for example, remembered his roots of poverty in Italy and was moved to treat the family with compassion. They are liberated from personal sin so as to walk humbly with our God. Luis-Angel, for example, is shown reflecting with profound gratitude on how despite his past errors, God has not forgotten him and his family, and he tries to guide the young men not to make the mistakes he did.

The young men expressed how they who had come to help were the ones who were helped, being taught by the family that whatever you have, you can use it to help others. They were becoming *men for others* not in a narrow sense of giving things or doing things for the poor, but by becoming authentic and responsible Subjects, transcending themselves and discerning and orientating themselves toward the truly good. The group explained how immersion into the family’s reality affected them. Getting to truly know the family allowed Mr. Ruscito to witness the hard labour required simply for day to day survival and that for reasons beyond their control, education is not even an option for many of those families. Immersion effaced the cognitional myth. Sean Griffin said: “Reading about the situation is different than when you actually go down and see it. Ya, they’re living in a tent! It’s tangible.

This is actually somebody's situation in life." And Ryan Patton: "I feel so much more open to other people and see them as part of the community of God." Ruscito explains that "immersion removes any buffer between you and the first-hand experience of the extreme material poverty, and that if this doesn't affect you, then there's something wrong with your make-up; integrity is responding responsibly even when no one is looking but you." In other words, he is saying that immersion facilitates our being authentic to our transcendental precepts—to our make-up.

This was also a very moving trip for Mr. Ruscito because it allowed him to share in the experience his own son had a year earlier. When he was young, his son used to be mesmerized listening to his grandfather describe life in Italy. Despite the language barrier, he grasped that what his grandfather was saying was of value. After his trip, his son said: "I think I knew what *Nonno* was talking about, and now I've seen it, and I've experienced it. I understand now; now we have something in common. Now I want you to go so that we can share the experience *Nonno* passed to me and I pass to you." And so the son helped his father remember his past and carry forward into the future the good. With respect to the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors, a personal living commitment seems to have begun as Mr. Ruscito is involved in additional projects and several students are returning. I would venture to propose that a communal living commitment has also been established, perhaps not as traditional basic Christian community but rather as a community of meaning between a Mexican family and nine Loyola High School men, and between three generations of Ruscitos, transcending differences of culture, space, and time as they remember always—and strive to be a *basic Loving community*, building the Kingdom of God, " *1 Day* " at a time.

4.2.3 Using the solidarity framework for self-appropriation

To be more authentic, or more faithful to Lonergan’s *Method* and to liberation theology and spirituality, I have tried to explore my question in a more integral manner—better articulated by Boff. “In this field, more than in others, it is vital to move beyond a merely intellectual approach that is content with comprehending a theology through its purely theoretical aspects, by reading articles, attending conferences, and skimming through books. We have to work our way into a more biblical framework of reference, where ‘knowing’ implies loving, letting oneself become involved body and soul, communing wholly.”²⁵² In this section of my research, I will enter into my own working through of the solidarity framework.

The monk in the market — a grace-filled **experience**

I had buried him in a dark corner of my mind. And now some 40 years later, he was brought back to life. I’m at a loss to explain how, other than desiring and seeking to better understand how my faith journey is related to my daily life. I was around five or six years old living with my family near the Little Italy neighborhood of Montreal. I was at the Jean-Talon Market with my Nonna Francesca. I remember the young monk so vividly. While other people were buying or selling or haggling, he was in the background, quietly going through a large garbage bin picking out leaves of lettuce. I was fascinated by this contradiction: what was garbage for some, was food for this person. Was he going to eat it? Was he going to give it to others who were poor? Why couldn’t he afford to buy it like everybody else? Was *he* “poor?” Or, was the lettuce still good? I stood barely three feet tall, and yet in some

²⁵² Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 9.

mysterious way, he and I shared the same horizon. I felt comfortable with what he was doing, and I wanted to understand why he was doing it; I think that if I could have, I would have followed him.

Six million lepers — and seeking to **understand**

Around the age of 12—but this memory has never left me—I was alone in my living room watching a program on leprosy, probably sponsored by a relief organization because it encouraged viewers to help pay for treatment. I remember being shocked and upset not so much by the images of disfigured men, woman, and children wasting away, as by the program's claim that they could so easily be cured with only cents per day. It was inconceivable in my mind that we as a society would let fellow human beings suffer so terribly when medicine was readily available. After the program I read about the disease in our encyclopedia. Hansen's Disease was in fact cheaply treated and only moderately contagious, not the biblical plague that we still fear and whose innocent victims we still ostracize. I wondered: why doesn't someone organize a global campaign to eradicate this infection? I figured there are so many lepers—six million around the world—yet what is that compared to the population of the world! I calculated that even if we could get every Canadian to give a little bit of money, then every leper would be cured. I planned that I was going to become a physician and organize such a drive. Until such a time came however, I managed to send the organization around \$150.00. I remember my father's disbelief at how I could have been so gullible and irresponsible with my money.

This evaluation of my actions was unfortunately reinforced during my teens, as I realized that such a dream met with ridicule rather than support. I struggled with the facts about the disease that I had learned and the peer pressure to focus on more worldly matters. The final event, at the age of 18, which led me to keep my dream a secret was my girlfriend's reaction—my desire to become a “medical missionary” in Africa was clearly incompatible with her idea of marriage. In retrospect I believe that one of the weaknesses of my understanding of my desire was that it was only humanitarian. I did not perceive a faith-motivated “calling.” I went to church regularly and religion was taught in school; yet I was clueless that Jesus and I were both moved by the lepers' suffering and angered by their being herded to the fringes of society. Undoubtedly, I had had occasions to meet people of faith who could have helped me in my seeking, but I was in a different horizon where religion, theology, and life were unmediated entities. The societal current to get a good education and job, married, buy stuff, go on vacation swept me along the road of obliviousness, yet was not able to totally extinguish the preferential option for the poor that God had lit in my heart—unbeknownst to me. With my marks too meager for medical school, I got a degree in nursing and worked in pediatrics. Later, in my late 20s, shock at the plight of miners in South Africa led me to a MSc in occupational health. Looking after the health and safety of healthcare workers in several older Montreal hospitals which in certain ways resemble the Third World provided some solace! I felt faint calls from the helpless newborn and the oppressed proletariat, but, my life was totally immersed in the noisy material world to truly hear and discern them. I felt a void within and alone without; my heart was restless for reasons I did not know.

Diagnosis: obtuseness and unreasonableness; Treatment: *Being in Love*

“The restlessness of our souls is a divine restlessness,”²⁵³ I slowly started discovering as my conversion began one Sunday in 1994. While leaving Church I was intrigued by the joy radiating from some lay missionaries on the back of a *Scarboro Foreign Missions* magazine. I read it, obtained more literature and was overwhelmed by the insight that scriptures have to do with life and that perhaps my life-long desire was faith related. The girlfriend-become-spouse encouraged me to speak to our parish priest and during a subsequent weekend retreat, I experienced God’s free gift of love flooding my heart, which for the first time in my life I started to open and slowly empty of its arrogance and pride, as God provided *not* what I wanted, but what I needed.²⁵⁴ This liberation from personal sin was a special turning point because I was striving to act justly and love tenderly but without walking humbly with my God. With the beginnings of religious conversion came an improved ability to be attentive to my journey and the signs of the times, to be more intelligent and discerning in my decision making. On this slow journey of discovery I haven’t cured 6 000 000 lepers (maybe 1 or 2 with that donation). But I have had the opportunity to deepen my *experience* and understanding of the South by being part of a human rights delegation to Guatemala and El Salvador with the Social Justice Committee, and through volunteer work in Haiti with the Scalabrinian missionaries. Involvement with these groups and with *Development and Peace* helped me be more immersed in the issues physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. Reading, reflecting, and discussing it helped me better *understand* issues of poverty and injustice, and how the root causes are primarily

²⁵³ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 109.

²⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 105; Romans 5:5.

determined in the financial capitals of the world. I was blessed that such communities also helped me feel and *judge* that I was “normal” (or rather, authentic). I was no longer the leper that I had so desperately sought to save.

Such changes, however, were accompanied by questioning and doubting, yet “Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.”²⁵⁵ I was challenged over the negative impacts of my unpaid sabbaticals on my career and family, of my carelessness as a husband and father for going off to politically unstable countries. At the other end of the spectrum I was distressed by theologians who made me doubt my authenticity due to my lack of full immersion and commitment in liberation theology; I can be a *transitional* liberation theologian at best!²⁵⁶ My reflection led to some consolation as I recognized that: “community is constituted by processes of the soul, and by nothing else ... The core reality within any community is invisible, intangible, inaudible ... community is common experience, common understanding, common judgement, and common commitment.”²⁵⁷ Nonetheless, to find explanations or “excuses” for my lack of more radical and sustained action would be too easy. Many times I *have been* the young rich man (Mark 10:17-22) who turned away grieving, who did not trust Jesus enough to truly follow him. Thankfully, I was guided by friends of integrity who confirmed me in my understanding and my **judgment** of what was happening in our world and in me. Spiritual direction and courses in theology made me less afraid of facing my ache, my interior hole. I drifted less and slowly let go of material attachments as

²⁵⁵ Lonergan, in an excerpt from a discussion on politics, philosophy and reading: “Eric Voegelin in Toronto,” accessed 13/5/2010, www.youtube.com. Lonergan is citing John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 239).

²⁵⁶ Cook, “Jesus from the Other Side of History,” 260-261, 266.

²⁵⁷ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 25.

I became more deliberate in my reflecting, judging and decision making.²⁵⁸ Vowing a life of simplicity made me more acutely aware of my enslavement to the security of a regular income and future pension plan. Resigning from a government job to pursue theological studies, seek ordination as a deacon (unpaid), and studying to later work on my own providing foot care, while good for my sense of actual effective freedom was not so good for my sense of fear. Cherry discusses how contemplating a radical change in our lifestyle is to invite an experience of dual-featured dread, connected to generic guilt and shame, and related to my social imperfectness and lesserness in the Face of the Wholly Other, freedom and possibility. One can become stuck and paralyzed, or walk away sadly, or one can use the dread as an enabler to face the pain and move toward the light of a new horizon and conversion—by the Grace of God and our cooperation with it.²⁵⁹

I sense a few occasions of being open-eyed, when my restlessness and my moral impotence gave way to the frightening conviction that what I make of myself is up to me, and yet I was mysteriously *liberated and comforted* that all would be good. I capture part of this **decision** in a reflection²⁶⁰ where I understood that I had become a manager of others and of

²⁵⁸ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 102-106. Cherry names fear of facing one's ache, one's interior hole as an impediment to moral conversion, leading to superficial material lives (escape in extreme sports, resorts, spectacles) and drifting. Drifters avoid reflection, decision-making and personally appropriated action. They do not choose evil but go with the current of unthinking and uncritical society, regurgitating clichés (unethical investing ; exclaiming “What can you do!” in apathy). All of us live at least part of our lives as drifters, caught up in moral impotence, the gap between our potential effective freedom and actual effective freedom.

²⁵⁹ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 87-89.

²⁶⁰ Reflection written during my *Confessions* course: *Reading the Confessions of Saint Augustine: A Christian Classic—A Contemporary Challenge*, Theo 643A, History II, Prof. Pamela Bright, Department of Theological Studies, Concordia University, Montreal, Fall 2004 & Winter 2005. It is an adaptation Augustine's encounter with the drunken beggar in Book VI (6.6.9) in my contemporary life. (Appendix X is my solidarity framework and Appendix XI is the original reflection, here annotated with the transcendental precepts).

myself in relation to external stimuli and exigencies, selling myself to bureaucratic and hedonistic masters. Being in Love and surrendering to Mystery led me to find myself. Moral conversion, says Dunne, is “to entertain the belief that what is truly valuable may not be free from hurt, so that we recognize God’s gift of the divine self in our very darkness and longing.”²⁶¹

“To seek Him is to have already found Him,” He who was within while I desperately sought without!²⁶² The Mystery at the source of my transcendental tug and tension leads me beyond the precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, and Be responsible, to Be in Love. “It is this fifth precept *Be in Love*, that gives us the power to obey the other four. Taken together, all five constitute the source of full human authenticity. All other laws, precepts, wisdom, insights, and heroic deeds originate with these five ‘Be-attitudes.’”²⁶³ It was *Being in Love* that allowed me, retrospectively, to remember the monk and the old Haitian Lady,²⁶⁴ and to be healed in new ways so as to more creatively respond to His call.

In terms of the framework, it is quite easy to insert tasks and deeds, the “things I do,” into the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors column, perhaps with the exception of communal living commitment (Appendix X). It is more difficult to discern how

²⁶¹ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 186-187.

²⁶² Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.27.38.

²⁶³ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 115-116.

²⁶⁴ The Haitian Lady was a skinny, weak 90-year-old with terrible pain in her knees, but what a glow in her eyes and smile and gentleness. The medications we gave her were quite useless. Out of character, I spent some time simply massaging her knees. As she spoke to me in Creole which I didn’t understand well, I cynically assumed she was telling me that would be just as useful as the expired meds! But a Haitian medical technician told me she said “only God can repay you for what you are doing.” He already has; her gift of faith, charity and hope enables me to respond creatively to His call.

I reflect the meanings of liberation theology and spirituality: “who I am,” but the framework guides me toward objectivity as the fruit of authentic subjectivity. In the beginning, was Being in Love, then I accepted to be liberated from personal sin and to walk humbly with my God. So, while my “deeds” in liberation theology and spirituality generally preceded my consciousness of my “be-attitudes,” those deeds were in effect infused with a renewable faith, charity, and hope when I came to know that though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for He is with me (Psalm 23) . . . even when the shadow is mine.

Chapter Five

Journeying Together: Drawing on the Literature, the Interviewees, and Personal Experience

Essentially, my two-fold question asked (i) if immersion into the plight of the poor can facilitate conversion, and (ii) if an *authentic* faith, or “mission in life,” can lead to living theology and spirituality—or more inclusively, one’s mission—in a *solidaire* liberating way, even if not referred to as liberation theology and spirituality?

This final chapter will attempt to gather together my findings from the literature, the interviews, and my personal journey, and highlight the authentic Subject as ultimately being at the heart of any authentic theology and spirituality—which will be inherently liberating for self and others. The first part points to the synergy between Lonergan and liberation theology and spirituality, followed by a recovery of the Subject in part two. Part three summarizes the ways by which immersion can lead to conversion, noting the vital conditions. Part four suggests certain implications and applications of this work, in more or less detail; for example, for non-governmental organizations, schools, and parishes. The chapter closes with some questions for future consideration and study.

5.1 Lonergan’s eight functional specialties and liberation theology and spirituality: a synergistic relationship

My initial intuition of relationship between Lonergan’s functional specialties and liberation theology and spirituality has been confirmed by my reading, reflection, praxis, and

the interviews.²⁶⁵ In his book *Ecclesiogenesis*,²⁶⁶ Boff writes of his experience living in a basic Christian community which helped formulate many of his insights. This **Communication** of Gospel living thus is the data which can be studied, reflected upon and judged in relation to existing **Research** on what might be the earliest basic Christian communities—those recorded in *Acts*. Lonergan and Gutiérrez agree on **Interpretation** of such scriptures which is more sensitive to the historical circumstances of the authors and the common theme of liberation, from Exodus to the denunciations of social injustices by the prophets, to the Gospel of Jesus who came to bring good news to the poor. It reflects how exegetes within liberation theology and spirituality listen to the past, so as to communicate to present living, and envision the future. In light of the **History** of socio-economic oppression and suffering out of which liberation theology arises, Lonergan’s work is very valuable for he spoke prophetically about bias and its socially distorting influences, and proclaimed the possibility of healing in history. Karen’s reflection uncovers the scars from the Vietnam war and the healing that can happen. **Dialectic** can help heal the serious divisions that are the result of varying levels of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, poor self-transcendence and self-understanding, resulting in alienation and ideology. Ideologies such as neoliberal capitalism, or the old “American dream” are at the heart of the justification of the self-interests and structures which are widening the chasm between rich and poor. Challenging the idolatry of material possessions, liberation theology faced much criticism for its use of Marxist categories. Unlike Marx however, liberation theologians

²⁶⁵ This section is drawn from liberation theology and spirituality sources, the interviewees, and Lonergan, particularly *Method*, pages 130-132, 356-357, 363-364, and Doran, “Prolegomenon...,” 85.

²⁶⁶ Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986).

believe that: “socio-economic analysis of forms of social and economic oppression is compatible with religious consciousness.”²⁶⁷ Horizon analysis could help promote liberation instead of developmentalism, and basic Christian communities or basic Loving communities instead of individualism. Alifera’s and Loyola’s projects are doing this in courageous, loving, and humble ways, and the Subjects we met in Chapter Four have entered new *Foundational realities*. The praxis of liberation theology and spirituality, or of solidarity, led to conversion for those who find in it a concrete way of understanding and expressing their faith. Liberation theology fulfills other characteristics described by Lonergan: it is both a personal and communal commitment to sustain one another in self-transformation and fulfilling the promise of their new life; it spreads from one cultural milieu to another, adapting to changing circumstances and new situations, and it affects all of a person’s conscious and intentional operations, directing her gaze and imagination, enriching her understanding, guiding her judgment, and reinforcing her decisions. I was privileged to witness this in my interviewees as strongly as in members of basic Christian communities and non-governmental organizations I met in Guatemala and El Salvador. Liberation theology is theological reflection on religious living-praxis which allows one to distinguish the horizons within which religious *Doctrines* can or cannot be apprehended, and those authentically converted within it reflect on its development, themes, achievements and failures, in a self-corrective fashion. Sr. Maura, Karen, and Fr. Schibli live this personally and infuse it into others, showing how, “assimilated doctrines bear the stamp of vitality of the community that assimilates them.”²⁶⁸ And Maria-Luisa welcomed Sabrina and Lily into her home, and they

²⁶⁷ James B. Sauer, *A Commentary on Lonergan’s Method in Theology*, ed. Peter L. Monette and Christine Jamieson (Ottawa: Published by The Lonergan Website, 2001), 246.

²⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Method*, 300.

welcomed her into their lives with the gift of becoming their mother—this “adoptive single mom” is a sign of hope for some but a source of discomfort for others. Leonardo Boff was accused of distorting old doctrines by reinterpreting them in new contexts; and he emphasized that the Holy Spirit could challenge the hierarchy.²⁶⁹ Living old doctrines authentically in the contemporary scene can do that! A First World phenomenon seems to be that people want to believe doctrines, but do not know what to believe. *Systematics* aims to understand the doctrines, the questions, and even the inconsistencies they seem to raise, and to move toward some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience. Nouwen’s experience in Latin America illustrates how at the popular level, people living a theology and spirituality of liberation had an easier time believing and understanding the doctrines because they were **Communicated** more through the lives of their fellow Christians and pastoral leaders than through their words. The formal constituent of community is common meaning and this is the fundamental aspect of liberation theology and spirituality at the professional, pastoral, and popular level. Basic Christian communities may be seen as *being church*, for they exemplify Lonergan’s self-constituting process of the Christian message conjoined with the inner gift of God’s love, and resulting in Christian witness, fellowship, and service to humanity. Lonergan also states that Church exists not for itself but for mankind, with the aim being the realization of the Kingdom of God for all humanity, not just in the afterlife, but here and now; this *is* the work, prayer, and vision of Jesus—and of liberation theology and spirituality.

²⁶⁹ McAfee Brown, “Leonardo Boff: Theologian for all Christians,” 615.

As is witnessed by basic Christian communities and basic Loving communities such as *L'Arche*, communication arises from a concrete community which embodies a shared way of life. Communication is thus linked to its culture, arising from it but not bound to it. Boff, for example, speaks of how Asian and Black Americans have drawn from Latin American liberation theology, to later bless it in return with new insights about the importance of considering other major faiths or racial issues. By expanding the horizon of liberation theology, first to reclaim itself as liberation theology *and spirituality*, and second by welcoming realms other than the socio-economic, such as *L'Arche*, an adoptive single mom, and international health, the insight arose about the centrality of the authentic theologizing Subject. Lonergan's functional definition of theology comes alive, and, we have at play within liberation theology and spirituality the key insight arising out of *Method* that "in handing on the faith, we also transform it."²⁷⁰ When one realizes this, it explains the ultimate importance of using a theological method which ensures the authenticity of the theologian and the tradition, providing the tools to attentively, intelligently, reasonably, and responsibly appropriate and communicate that faith.

5.2 The Authentic Subject—liberator of self and others

The authentic person immerses him or herself into the gritty matrix of life. Somewhere in that process, he is graced by the insight that what he makes of himself, and of his world, is his responsibility. That in fact appears to be a commonality that the interviewees share: a sense of being responsible, and this came out much more strongly than anticipated. A commonality which I had anticipated but which did *not* manifest itself in the

²⁷⁰ Sauer, *A Commentary on Lonergan's Method in Theology*, 341.

interviews concerned the relationship between this sense of responsibility and faith or religion, other than in those interviewees who were “publicly religious.” This however may have been influenced by my protocol which favored open-ended questions, none of which addressed faith or religion directly. My very small sample size must also be kept in mind, as well as the qualitative nature of my case studies which strove to have a cross-sectional sampling of diverse Subjects.

This commonality of sensing responsibility is, to different degrees, the authenticity of each person’s involvement, in the sense of each Subject’s awareness and deliberateness of his or her following the transcendental precepts. Each person must draw from his or her inner dynamism, and answer the question in the face of the other “Who do *you* say that I am?”(Matthew 16:15).²⁷¹ Our actions will then be more than a pastoral strategy or a passing fad. They will be other than the repetition of 500-year-old ethnocentric errors of a theology transposed or transplanted from one people and context to another, as Hennelly warns.²⁷² Our actions, in deeds and words, will be the pastoral task that Lonergan envisioned so that the Christian message becomes a personal enduring commitment, “not disruptive of the culture, not an alien patch superimposed upon it, but a line of development within the culture.”²⁷³

Even in the story of evil and redemption in our world, the dialectical view of history notes how among many principles of change, there is the normative dialectic going

²⁷¹ This question gives rise to tension as I become conscious of my tendency towards individualism despite advocating the plural and communal nature of our faith; this is an issue for future study in section 5.5.

²⁷² Hennelly, *Liberation Theologies – The Global Pursuit of Justice*, 336.

²⁷³ Crowe, “Lonergan as Pastoral Theologian,” 140; Lonergan, *Method*, 362.

on within all human relationships: authenticity or obedience of one's transcendental precepts, and inauthenticity or disobedience of one's transcendental precepts. In trying to live liberation theology and spirituality or solidarity, "we cannot explain evil and propose treatment based on a social analysis without considering our irrational disobedience of our transcendental precepts."²⁷⁴ It became apparent in the process of conducting and subsequently analyzing the interviews, that awareness of one's transcendental precepts is not evident in practice with people unaccustomed to reflecting on their own cognitive processes. So while the transcendental precepts are ideal due to their universality and applicability also to "secular" Subjects, the three features of dialectical attitudes and the three meanings of liberation theology and spirituality are a useful complement for understanding and facilitating the Subject's sharing of his or her experience.

"The basic reference point for doing theology, that which is directly accessible, is not scripture and tradition but the immediate and irreplaceable experience of the people's praxis . . . Any other approach simply produces abstract ideologies . . . I love mankind; it's people I can't stand,"²⁷⁵ (especially slow people in the church parking lot after mass!). Recovery of the Subject is to liberate people from such childish faith, and from the power of fate, unjust social structures, and personal sin and guilt. Immersion experiences can help us to stop justifying the status quo in ourselves, in church circles and in the secular common sense world, where we often hear people apathetically exclaim with a sigh: "What can you do!" Good immersion experiences are a concrete antidote for this by facilitating a space and

²⁷⁴ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 3, 162, 175.

²⁷⁵ Cook, "Jesus From the Other Side of History," 277.

time for encounter with the other—for conversion, Grace, Easter joy, spiritual childhood, and community (section 1.2.1). This is what our interviewees witnessed to, one eye lovingly on the other, and one eye transcending the limits of the here and now to gaze at the Source of our faith, hope and charity. Paradoxically, we cannot see or know one without the other.

5.3 Some “mechanisms” by which immersion can facilitate conversion

With respect to immersion’s role in facilitating conversion, three interrelated mechanisms were introduced in section 1.4.2 of the literature review. These were: 1) partaking in the gritty reality of life; 2) intentional loving; and 3) self-emptying. The discussion in Chapter Three and the “fieldwork” in Chapter Four now allows us to elaborate on them, highlighting how conversion from immersion is also related to and in combination with the witnessing of others and Grace—Mystery.

5.3.1 The witnessing of others and God’s Grace

If stories of witnesses of solidarity have touched me, from those who helped the lepers I saw on television, to Scarborough Foreign Missions, to the people I recently interviewed, I believe it is because they reach something deep inside me through God’s Grace—some shared invisible essence that unites us all, a *prior We*. For example, reading about Simone Weil,²⁷⁶ a “liberation theologian” ahead of her time, led our hearts, even if for only a few

²⁷⁶ Hellman, *Simone Weil: An Introduction to her Thought*. Weil makes Lonergan and Levinas’ somewhat abstract theologies very concrete in her lived experience—in her “preferential option for the poor” long before the expression was coined. She was a Critical Marxist who influenced Paul VI. The insufficiency of politics and unions led her to Jesus. In her selfless genuine concern for the other, she was branded a slave as her heart beat across continents with those suffering famine in China (pp. 11,19); and so I felt our misunderstood hearts resonating in solidarity for others, for reasons which reason does not yet fully know (pp. 41-42).

seconds, to beat in unison for causes at once so utterly transcendent and yet so totally concrete. I borrow from Dunne's explanation of how mystics lead others to conversion to help me explain my own:

When we study the mystics, we must shift our attention from their inner experience, to their culturally conditioned understanding of that experience. There we need to make a hermeneutical analysis of their understanding of what happened, particularly how their often metaphorical language relates to the categories that can be grounded through the analysis of interiority that we have been doing. And at that point the existential question often emerges for ourselves, namely, whether their understanding of the movement between humanity and divinity so far surpasses our own that we are drawn to undergo a metanoia ourselves.²⁷⁷

God's grace is operative everywhere and so I mention retreats as a form of immersion from my experience, but also in connection with Vanier because of the number of people who are called to *L'Arche* following his retreats and whose lives are changed forever.²⁷⁸ Thus, immersion need not be exclusively in areas of poverty. Retreats and spiritual direction are to guide us to "cooperate with God's action in our world, and love-inspired action binds us far more intimately with the end-point of our transcendent love than merely experiencing inner movements does."²⁷⁹ Immersion into a retreat can therefore facilitate a conversion which then immerses us back into the world in a more radical way.

While the focus of this study is on immersion experiences and short-term mission trips, and this section attempts to enumerate several "mechanisms," it is important to emphasize their complementarity, and ultimately the primacy of Grace: Unconditional Loving Mystery touching conditional human response. Lindsay Helmers shares how her

²⁷⁷ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 115.

²⁷⁸ Vanier, *An Arc for the Poor*, 47, 51.

²⁷⁹ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 218.

immersion response was magnified by the gift of Grace. She dreamt of DREAMS²⁸⁰ ever since she saw a presentation in elementary school, and finally in grade 12 was chosen to go. The trip made her realize how she had mistakenly thought she knew what to expect and that she was ready. She shares how a little boy discouraged by how slowly she was learning Spanish put his arm around her and even though she was covered in cement, mosquito bites and sweat said to her that she was “bonita, more beautiful than a princesa.” Helmers concludes: “I think that everyone should go on a journey such as DREAMS because no matter how many stories you hear; it’s not the same as actually experiencing it for yourself.” It is not the same as actually being unconditionally and intentionally loved, and actually loving intentionally in return.

5.3.2 Immersion realizes the *prior We*

Immersion puts us face to face with the other who touches the Subject’s heart directly,²⁸¹ unbuffered by our biases.²⁸² And so through intersubjectivity we naturally reach out to help, re-establishing the harmony and unity of a prior We which existed before our separation into and I and a Thou.²⁸³ Walking down the street, who can stop oneself from spontaneously reaching out to catch a total stranger who is stumbling? In my “prior We” I

²⁸⁰ Lindsay Helmers, “Dominican Republic Education and Medical Support program (DREAMS),” *Scarboro Missions* 91, No. 2, ed. Kathy Gillis, March/April 2010, 5. Program begun in 1999 encouraging encounter between Ontario students and remote mountain villages in San José de Ocoa. Hundreds of Ontario students have participated in building 60 homes, a school, and a teacher’s residence; and this was the idea of a student during a class discussion on how we can make a difference in the world. Principal Piccioni says the students often state that they receive far more than they could ever give to the Dominican people—for what they receive is the gift of generosity of spirit and pure love of heart.

²⁸¹ Conn, “Moral Development: Is Conversion Necessary?” 318.

²⁸² Nazareno Ruscito, see section 4.2.2.5.

²⁸³ Loneran, *Method*, 57-61.

am experiencing a connectedness with the unemployed father, the hungry child, Simone Weil, a vicarious sharing of *solidaire* emotions and thoughts difficult to explain. The communication which characterizes liberation theology arises out of a stance of interiority, for as expressed by Sauer, communication is a “partaking—a living through in the acts of communication, a relationship that exists prior to the act of communicating.”²⁸⁴ Cherry notes how reflection helps us appreciate the interconnectedness of humans to each other and to the earth; this prevents diminishing self and community and thus entering into a cycle of pain and a vector of decline.²⁸⁵ That interconnectedness is similar to Lonergan’s intersubjectivity where we can come to experience the Divine-other via the prior We. This conversion can be facilitated through immersion in contexts that are conducive to reaching out to others, where our heart can love intentionally even before our mind can comprehend it. And this orthopraxis, through personal and communal reflection, will later lead to orthodoxy.

5.3.3 From the *prior We*, to a formed conscience

While we are created good, naturally designed to be our brother’s keeper, left to our own devices and subject to societal pressures, we can stray from our transcendental precepts. Immersion places the self-constituting person concretely into situations which summon the moral order. The tension and question in us “To be?” is essentially “To be moral?” The peace and consolation that come from being authentic are from following the transcendental precepts within us as the most fundamental moral action. While this decision to act morally at the fourth level of consciousness depends on the previous three cognitive

²⁸⁴ Sauer, *A Commentary on Lonergan’s Method in Theology*, 340.

²⁸⁵ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 4.

levels of experience, understanding, and judgment, these three are themselves completed and coloured by our moral order, which, “if anything, precedes the cognitive both in time and importance.”²⁸⁶

In addition, the experiential learning we receive in immersion concerns not only interpersonal, technical, professional, and language skills, but more importantly we learn about feelings and values. Through reflection and support, one can learn to identify and rank those feelings and values. The positive feelings we experience from the memory of key value judgments can mediate the transcendental precept *be responsible*, leading me to do, more and more, the good instead of the merely self-satisfying.²⁸⁷ Good immersion programs can therefore facilitate conversion by guiding the Subject to inform, train, and develop his or her own conscience. The double-thrust of moral development spoken of by Melchin is multiplied by immersion into liberation theology and spirituality contexts which emphasize the self in community and touched by Grace. The Loyola story illustrated this.

Immersion is, in very concrete terms, immersion into the face of the other who summons forth my transcendental precepts, leading me to love the other and to give up part of my self. In other words, “Authentic love tries to start with the concrete needs of the other and not with the ‘duty’ of practicing love.”²⁸⁸ And again very concretely, gazing into the other’s eyes can draw out one’s authentic love, explaining why concentration camp officers

²⁸⁶ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 59-65. With respect to the sublations denoted by the levels of consciousness, Loneragan says that human action “both presupposes and completes human sensitivity, intelligence, and judgment.” *The Subject*, 21-22.

²⁸⁷ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 77-83.

²⁸⁸ Gutiérrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, 108.

were forbidden to look into the eyes of their victims. The world might be a little more humane if all financial advisors and investors had the opportunity to look into the eyes of those whose lives are directly impacted by their decisions and actions.²⁸⁹ At the root of every sinful social system, be it the “faceless neoliberalism” or the officers of the Nazi regime, are Subjects who, if immersed into situations which solicit their inner dynamism—their hearts and dignity²⁹⁰—have the potential for becoming authentic. This will require, however, much painful creative work from below, and healing from above, a paradoxical self-creation through self-loss. We can be drawn to a self-emptying communion with our brothers and sisters because we have been given the same gift of dignity, we share the same inner dynamism.

5.3.4 Self-emptying

I have sometimes wished I didn’t know what I know: the joy and sadness of children singing and dancing around me in a poor and oppressed village of Guatemala; the confusion and anger of giving patients lard and expired medications in Haiti because that’s all we had that week—and their being thankful for it! What a consolation and liberation to read about Weil’s radical self-emptying for the love of others,²⁹¹ and to hear Strockbine refer

²⁸⁹ Dillon, *Turning the Tide*, 1997.

²⁹⁰ Christine Jamieson ties together the vital notions of our transcendental precepts, dignity, and conscience. “The dignity of the human person is related to a dynamic in the person that calls him or her to obedience and freedom. This may seem counterintuitive. Human beings are self-determined beings but it is a self-determination that calls for a profound authenticity. This authenticity consists of acting in the world with full knowledge of what one is doing. *Gaudium et spes* speaks of this phenomenon as ‘fidelity to conscience’ ... ‘For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor...(GS16)’” *The Ethical Challenges of Medicine Today*, 9.

²⁹¹ Hellman, *Simone Weil: An Introduction to her Thought*, (footnote 276).

to immersion experiences as: “being ruined for life!”²⁹² Interestingly, all the interviewees gave of themselves in connection with a common humility which called the “I” to decrease so that other/God could increase. It is especially fascinating how Ms. Henry of *Alifera*, in secular language, spoke of her immersions as “une pique” and of her work as “un don de soi.” This indicates how self-creation from self-giving is not only for the “religious.”

5.3.5 Glimpsing at Divine Light through others via immersions

“Conversion happens when we recognize the richness and beauty not of what we do but of who we are.”²⁹³ Immersions help this to happen when we realize that we are loved unconditionally by our hosts not because of what *we do* (which we do poorly such as barely speak their language, come and go, ignore their history and culture), but simply because *we are*. Immersion into real-life contexts makes it possible for faith, the “eyes of the heart” to catch a glimpse of divine Mystery in human affairs. Also, the love for others, the perseverance, and the faith that the poor, the sick or oppressed demonstrate in the most dire of human affairs can *inspire us* to charity and hope. This can be experienced as a consolation or a conversion, and it can spark the Subject to love his or her neighbor with genuine care. “Faith and charity together enable us to withstand the dark forces both of God’s transcendence and of human malice. Faith assures us that sin has no ultimate power, and charity points to the next steps to take in the Valley of Darkness.”²⁹⁴

²⁹² Clare M. Strockbine, personal communication as we shared our experiences. She refers to the Jesuit Volunteer Corps which says that their volunteers become “ruined for life.” She adds that immersions lead students to never again see life as they did, to question societal norms because they now know that the “disenfranchised” have names and faces and loved ones, they struggle to make their vision become clearer and to enact it, and like Romero, to become prophets of a future not their own. Also in, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 44-45.

²⁹³ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 35.

²⁹⁴ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 141, 138.

For those already engaged in solidarity work, “re-immersion” can be the inexhaustible source that “recharges our batteries” to love again, or more radically. It is very interesting that Ms. Henry and Fr. Schibli used the same battery metaphor to describe how immersion makes their conversions sustainable. In a pluralistic society, this inquiry allows us to witness how there are common inner movements in people even for those who have not explicitly identified a Thou.²⁹⁵ Yet, “being in love with God changes one for it provides a vibrancy, a depth, and a radiance that is based on an awareness that the key relationship that underscores all other relationships is one’s relationship with God.”²⁹⁶ Sr. McGrath expressed how re-immersion kept her on a vector of progress because it led her to remember and to build on earlier conversions. The notion of remembering was also very important for Mr. Ruscito.

5.3.6 Conversion facilitated by immersion—in conjunction with three conditions: reflection, community support, and spirituality

The literature, interviews and personal experience concur with Strockbine’s blunt conclusion that immersion is rather useless without community support and individual and group reflection which can guide students toward personal conversion.²⁹⁷ The value of communities such as basic Christian communities in liberation theology and spirituality is explained in part by Cherry who says most of us “need a supportive community to supply the safe environment in which to ask the reflective questions and to try out the new modes of behaviour inherent in affective, intellectual and moral conversion.”²⁹⁸ And for immersion

²⁹⁵ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 111-114.

²⁹⁶ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 118.

²⁹⁷ Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 21, 25.

²⁹⁸ Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 26.

experiences to facilitate conversion, spirituality and solidarity must be integrated. This reflection, community support, and spirituality are the vital and interrelated conditions which not only facilitate conversion abroad, but also nourish and sustain us for the long and sometimes lonely journeys when we are back home. “For a militant liberationist to lose touch with God’s intimate presence ensures burnout, cynicism, a loss of joy, and self-righteousness.”²⁹⁹

5.4 Implications and applications of this research

Despite the mess, the incarnation was into a “good creation.” The Word become flesh and God become poor.³⁰⁰ The Nomad immersed himself into our midst so that we can do likewise. We speak no longer merely of our immersion experiences as facilitators of our conversions; we can speak rather of a *mutual immersion* where our Creator’s kenosis allows us to become co-creators with Him of self and of the Kingdom, and to bear fruit that will last.

In light of the critiques of disconnectedness from real-life issues voiced against Lonergan by some liberation theologians, and due to misunderstandings that might arise from his life-long withdrawal into the world of ideas, I have a responsibility to return to the world of praxis. Lonergan’s mode of pastoral involvement was “concern for the poor and oppressed, but action at the very roots of the problem,” whereby his long withdrawal was a massive effort to learn, to get to the bottom of things,³⁰¹ and this within the context of his functional specialty of systematics. In a world where poverty is becoming an increasingly

²⁹⁹ Cole-Arnal, *Liberation Theology in Canada*, 158.

³⁰⁰ McAfee Brown, *Spirituality and Liberation*, 74-79.

³⁰¹ Crowe, “Lonergan as Pastoral Theologian,” 130, 144.

complex human condition, Gutiérrez too stresses the need to analyze its deepest causes, for that is what it means to be truly radical.³⁰² Collaboration and complementarity amongst the functional specialities are to be appreciated, as both Lonergan and Gutiérrez did; indeed it is critical before we authentically strive for multidisciplinary. Then we can hope for the truly good, for fruit that will last. What is the third level of the good for, if not ultimately to say “I love you” to society’s last, something Jesus himself did when he returned from the desert? This perhaps is the paradox and the tension of the *good* existential subject.

So the paradox of the existential subject extends to the good existential subject. Just as the existential subject freely and responsibly makes himself what he is, so too he makes himself good or evil and his actions right or wrong. The good subject, the good choice, the good action are not found in isolation. For the subject is good by his good choices and good actions.³⁰³

5.4.1 Liberation theology and spirituality practitioners are called to broaden their horizons

Many liberation theologians would claim that Mother Teresa of Calcutta did “charity” and not liberation theology. However, is this an example of a narrow view of what liberation theology and spirituality can encompass? If she was authentic, then she practiced liberation theology and spirituality because she was countercultural and through her praxis and practice she led others to liberation theology and spirituality in its foundational meaning of living Micah 6:8. She may not have marched like Dorothy Day, nor spoken out like Romero, but her very life was a protest of love against a growing culture of individualism, hedonism, and socio-economic exploitation of the most vulnerable.³⁰⁴

³⁰² Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1988, xxv.

³⁰³ Lonergan, *The Subject*, 26.

³⁰⁴ Ashley Hutchinson is an American mother who lived her life-long calling of working with Mother Teresa and she was transformed beyond her expectations and preparations. She saw poverty and disease that

The data collected and analyzed through my conversations-interviews with Sr. McGrath, Ms. Karen, Fr. Schibli, Ms. Henry, and Mr. Ruscito has led me to turn to the authentic Subject as the dynamism for any theology, spirituality, or movement which is liberating and “solidaire.” Further, the stories of communal support, unity, and love arising out of the work of *Alifera*, the Loyola-Ensenada project, and the SJC, led to my enlarging the basic *Christian* community to basic *Loving* community. This expanded notion of *solidaire* living makes it possible, for example, to more easily consider the homes of *L’Arche* along the lines of liberation theology and spirituality even in interfaith settings. The “Churches from below and of the people”³⁰⁵ selected from the literature and the interviews were intentionally varied so as to explore how Hennelly’s assertion of liberation theology having unity in diversity is expressed in dialogue with Lonergan. Expanding the horizon timewise and breadthwise shows the authentic Subject to be the source and heart of this unity.

Peter Maurin spoke of *round tables* so academics, bishops, and laity could truly dialogue. This requires humility, which is also one of the three characteristics Dunne

she’d never imagined. She washed the feet of lepers. She learned she could love anyone. She changed in how she views everything, especially the surplus and stockpiling we’ve been taught to do. Her transition back to the U.S. was not easy, but her lifestyle does witness to a sustainable transformation; not owning a car allows her to walk, take time to center her thoughts, find peace, and eliminate her need for high blood pressure pills! “No one can say that it is better there than here ... And it is not out of guilt that I want to simplify my life here or return to work in Calcutta. ... There is a new richness for me. People in Calcutta would open their house and never feel put out no matter what time of day it was. They recognize the oneness that makes us all the same. That invisible essence we all have inside of us.” In Janet Luhrs, *The Simple Living Guide* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 165-168.

³⁰⁵ In the 1970s, Metz started speaking of the contrast between church “from above” and “for” the people, compared to church “from below” and “of” the people; the central category in the contrast being *basic community*, and, “At the heart of basic community is the conscious human subject operating in its constitutive and communicative functions of meaning” and where community is a matter of common experiences, common understandings, common judgements, and common commitments and loves.” Lawrence, “Basic Christian Community,” 1984.

specifics, along with courage and compassion, for exercising a dialectical attitude; this integrating spirituality is evermore vital to correct the social and moral difficulties countless people face. But this process is for all who dare to humbly, compassionately, and courageously uncover their basic positions—that is the reason of a *round table*—for there all parties stand equally indictable under the finger of conversion.³⁰⁶

5.4.2 Thoughtfully and prayerfully planned immersion trips

Immersion trips must be more than “alternative vacations,” but truly journeys to build solidarity by building first and foremost one’s moral character. This will lead to a perspective that prioritizes correcting injustice at its roots rather than applying a bandage by only giving donations of service or supplies, often a balm on our own wounds, and increasing the dependency of our host.³⁰⁷ Well planned and adapted, immersion trips can become part of gritty education for a school as Strockbine and Kolvenbach assert, and a journey of faith and solidarity for a parish or non-governmental organization; but, the support, reflection, and spirituality cannot be merely grafted on or reduced to a post-trip “evaluation.” In fact says Strockbine, “bringing it back” can be more challenging than entering into the new culture.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁶ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 187-189.

³⁰⁷ Van Engan, “The Cost of Short-Term Missions,” 20-23.

³⁰⁸ Strockbine, *Practicum of Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 39-45. I can contrast my two experiences: Central America (1996) and Haiti (2006). For Haiti, while support was present throughout, there was less structured preparation, little communal reflection on praxis, and less opportunity for critical sharing and spiritual integration. This resulted in a diminished appropriation of the experience, so that it was only during a recent conversation with Ms. Henry of *Alifera* that I connected an experience I’d had with a 90 year-old lady in the clinic, with my faith journey and with my return to hands-on nursing 2 years later.

The quote below by Riley summarizes beautifully the unity of comprehensive immersion projects which bring together the themes of gritty education, intentional loving, reflection, spirituality, and support at all phases: pre, during and post-trip. The concerns expressed by Van Engen are also addressed to the extent that the programs aim to effect in the students sustainable conversions and enduring commitment, not simply an emotional response to an exciting situation they do not really understand.

It is precisely the opportunity to see the world from the perspective of the poor that transforms our visitors who then desire to participate more fully in the unfolding of the Kingdom of God. We provide opportunities for visitors to gain an initial understanding of the global structures that create and sustain poverty and injustice in the world. Together we identify our roles in these structures and look for ways to change our lives. It must always begin with self. As Gandhi said: 'You must be the change you wish to see in the world.' We encourage visitors to insert themselves into justice networks once back at home, to seek out accurate information, continuing to educate themselves on the issues related to poverty and injustice; to begin working for systemic change (becoming practitioners of peace and justice) rather than merely acting as purveyors of charity alone; to become light for the world, to be salt for the earth.³⁰⁹

Riley spontaneously echoes Lonergan's transcendental precepts, and in fact when the students' stories were analyzed using the solidarity framework, the precepts stood out. The students' accounts generally demonstrate their attentiveness to the situations of the people, a keen understanding of the conditions and the causes, and reflective judgment on its meaning and on their responses of solidarity, present and future. There is self-appropriation going on; there is operative grace and cooperative grace in action; there is liberation theology and spirituality arising out of their authenticity.

5.4.3 Advantages of using the solidarity framework

It is comforting to know we are not drifting aimlessly, alone, because authentically *solidaire* people risk being the outcasts of mainstream society. The framework is envisioned

³⁰⁹ Dean Riley, "Salt of the Earth," *Scarboro Missions*, March/April 2010, 12.

as a roadmap and a heuristic which can bring people together into one unitive spirit yet free to respond to the Holy Spirit where they are at, from a faith perspective or not.

A key characteristic of the interviewees that comes out of using the framework is how “attractive” they are because of their authenticity. They liberate others, and are open to converting themselves. They led me to reflect on their praxis, and on my praxis, in the ways of liberation theology and spirituality. As I reflect on my interview notes, I can *taste and see* how the Lord is good through their lives. I am humbled by their becoming responsible and loving individuals, and am vicariously moved to assume responsibility for what I will make of my life. The exercise itself is a road to religious, moral, and intellectual conversion for others: as Fr. Schibli shares and uncovers how his conversion happened, or as Sr. Maura describes her concrete life of solidarity, or as Karen goes through an explanation of what knowing, deciding, and loving involve.³¹⁰ The framework also makes more explicit and deliberate the practitioner’s reflection on his own approach and biases.

Besides confirming the parallels between the transcendental precepts and the key descriptors of liberation theology and spirituality, the framework has made it easier to identify:

1. certain common elements in the Subjects’ lives and faith journeys which can be used for the guidance and counselling of others who are involved with solidarity groups or open to living immersion experiences; and
2. certain criteria and characteristics for “immersees,” so that their trips do lead to a deeper experience and understanding of the Subject’s own faith, to a more profound and sustainable conversion, and ultimately to societal progress and to the truly good for all of God’s Creation.

³¹⁰ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 189: Fr. Schibli sharing religious conversion; Sr. Maura sharing moral conversion; Karen sharing intellectual conversion.

5.4.4 Creation of guidelines for selection of participants for immersion experiences

The key points presented here are elaborated on in Appendix XII. We must strive for good stewardship of our resources, and it is in that spirit that selection criteria are proposed as guidelines, to be adapted. It is a communal discernment of terminal value, versus one's personal desire for doing good. Lonergan and my solidarity framework can complement the criteria suggested by Van Engen, as well as those of the *Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Mission*,³¹¹ particularly in the areas of dialectics and foundations of individuals. Applicants who live these criteria will recognize them and be able to speak to them naturally and spontaneously.

1. **The applicant's openness to others**, because conversion is impeded by bias. And, the unreflective person will ignore and trample upon the other's culture, says Cherry.³¹²
2. **The applicant's examples of living the transcendental precepts and dialectical attitudes**, which are universal. Also, Micah 6:8 and/or the liberation theology and spirituality descriptors can be used for faith-based applicants.
3. **The level of moral conversion**. The morally converted strive for the common good even in disagreement, while those whose moral character is at earlier stages of development but who are attracted to the world views of the converted have the humility to be good learners. The highest risk is with applicants whose moral conversion has barely begun because from their horizon of self-satisfaction, they will not be moved by the lives of good persons onto the paths of self-sacrifice for the greater good. Too many such immersees in the group will lead to decline,³¹³ and one cannot simply argue a group out of decline because they work out of facts arising out of inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility.³¹⁴
4. **Medical, psychological, logistical, and other mundane criteria**, intricately woven with the spiritual and thus requiring consideration out of respect for the host community, the sending organization and the immersee. Ms. Karen mentioned the interesting ability of being able to "go with the flow and be open to an adventure. If you cannot embrace the change, then immersion might block you."

³¹¹ SOE, *Standards Of Excellence in short-term mission*, are voluntary standards developed by a coalition of evangelistic and missionary organization. Available at www.stmstandards.org. Accessed 4/24/2010.

³¹² Cherry, *The Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 97.

³¹³ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 91-92.

³¹⁴ Cherry, *Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 98, referring to Lonergan, *Insight*, 1958.

These guidelines are not to “weed out” people or differing critical viewpoints, but are meant to guard against persons with closed positions who know by taking a quick look and listen, as is the case for classicists and fundamentalists who know the eternal truth and thus are closed to questions and reflection.³¹⁵ And these guidelines are not foolproof. Ironically, faithfulness to our transcendental precepts will lead to mistakes³¹⁶ —more than from following some moral or ethics code, but the very authenticity of our individual and communal movement will engage us onto a vector of progress, as the fallible disciples have shown us. God’s creative grace far exceeds the human errors we might make.³¹⁷

5.5 Questions for future consideration and study

1. Insufficient authenticity decreased liberation theology and spirituality’s vitality and sustainability in the First World. A related reason which I have proposed is that when it was transposed from Latin America to the First World, its “spirituality” stayed behind or got diminished and lost along the way. Did this occur accidentally, or intentionally, via a misguided “political correctness” for example? These questions remain to be explored.

³¹⁵ Cherry, *Salient Factors that Assist or Impede Conversion*, 98-100. Lonergan, *Method*, xi. Elaborating on his functional definition of theology, Lonergan explains: “The classicist notion of culture was normative: at least *de jure* there was but one culture that was both universal and permanent; to its norms and ideals might aspire the uncultured, whether they were the young or the people or the natives or the barbarians. Besides the classicist, there is also the empirical notion of culture.”

³¹⁶ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 190-191.

³¹⁷ My spiritual director, Sr. R. was refused admission to a contemplative congregation due to supposedly “feeble health,” but was accepted as a *Missionary Sister of Africa*, and worked fruitfully over forty years in Uganda in difficult conditions! And Fr. Emmett Johns shared at his 50th anniversary of ordination how he failed to meet the criteria of a certain Canadian missionary congregation, yet God accepted him to begin his own mission in Montreal for street kids, *Le Bon Dieu dans la Rue*, becoming affectionately known as Pops. (Personal communications).

2. I am becoming increasingly aware of a dissonance and tension between my realization of being created in the image of the communal Trinity, expressed by Jesus in the “plural” nature of the *Our Father*, and my automatic “singular” identification with the “you” in Jesus’ question “Who do *you* say that I am?” This contrasts with Gutiérrez’ plural *you*. Why is this? Might it be an ethnocentric individualism less prevalent in African cultures, for example? The Loyola-Ensenada group made similar observations about the interpersonal relationships and sense of community between neighbors during their experience. Are these communal behaviours more expressive of what it means to be authentically human?

3. Lonergan scholars need to enter into dialogue with other disciplines in all segments of society: the business world, education, medicine, government, and Church.³¹⁸ Lonergan himself and Eileen de Neeve provide examples of dialogue in economics; Moira Carley in education, Jamieson in bioethics, Paul Allen in science, and Dunne in spirituality. Dunne gives concrete examples of how faith can be studied theoretically to counter Marxism and neoliberalism so that faith, charity, and hope can lead to redeeming human wreckage in the secular world.³¹⁹ We must endeavour to make theology evermore authentic, relevant, and liberating for contemporary society and the issues it faces. Lonergan’s return, later in life, to economic theory was partly, at least, out of a profound concern for the social order and the

³¹⁸ Ivan Petrella asks whether the time has not come for theology to infiltrate other disciplines “undercover.” In, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, 2004. However, I hesitated to use the word “infiltrate” due to its subversive connotation.

³¹⁹ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 119-121, 224; in economics, Eileen de Neeve, *Decoding the Economy: Understanding Change with Bernard Lonergan* (Montreal: Sherbrooke-Valois Inc., 2008); in education, Moira T. Carley, *Creative Learning and Living: The Human Element* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 2005); in science, Paul Allen, *Ernan McMullin and Critical Realism in the Science-Theology Dialogue* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006); in bioethics, contributions by Jamieson have been integrated previously.

increasing uneven distribution of wealth.³²⁰ The challenge for some of us will be to bridge in our lives the learning from the past through research, interpretation, history and dialectics, with *experiential learning* by being immersed into the concrete reality of our people. It is there that we can humbly ask: “What are you going through?”, courageously be attentive to the whisperings or the cries of the Holy Spirit, and gently reach out in love and solidarity.

4. Authenticity requires empirical and rigorous studies on immersion trips. Claims that immersion and short-term mission trips “change lives and impact career choices” require statistics in the face of reports about their limited or even detrimental impacts to the host community.³²¹ And ultimately, self-creation is the short-term goal of immersion trips; the medium to long-term goal is *solidaire* living which will create a vector of progress in all of society. These studies should be both cross-sectional and longitudinal. As well, they need to be interdisciplinary and ecumenical in nature, and theology must not be shy to take the lead!

5. Based on the literature, the interviews and personal experiences with various non-governmental organizations, I suggest that there may be two general streams of liberation theology and solidarity work being expressed in Quebec. The first has a longer history, some even precedes “liberation theology” and arises out of a local experience leading to a significant change in lifestyle. We see this authentic theology and spirituality in the

³²⁰ Doran, “Prolegomenon for a New Systematics,” 75-87.

³²¹ American data indicates an exponential growth in short-term missions: 22,000 lay people participated in volunteer/immersion trips of a few days to 4 years 1979. This increased to 1,000,000 lay people from 40,000 churches, schools and agencies per year in the early 2000s. Ken Walker, “Agencies Announce Short-term Mission Standards,” *Christianity Today*, October 2003, 30. Study of the pastoral impact and effectiveness is necessary, beginning perhaps with an assessment of the projects’ abilities to *be attentive* to the other. “Authentic love tries to start with the concrete needs of the other and not with the “duty” of practicing love.” Gutiérrez, *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, 108. CARA (Centre of Applied Research into the Apostolate) is an example.

sustainable conversions and enduring commitments of Fr. Schibli, *L'Arche*, and Sr. McGrath. We see it also with *Des Chemins* who almost 40 years later are still active with most of their original members, even though they are discerning why their children and new members are not attracted to their basic Christian community.³²² The second stream is more recent, having been influenced by Latin American liberation theology, and involving a greater variety of people and causes. It leads to shorter-term engagements or less enduring commitments because participants volunteer with a non-governmental organization such as *Development and Peace* because they are interested in a particular cause but they have had less opportunity to work through the transcendental precepts.

Whether for *Des Chemins*, other solidarity movements, or parishes facing attrition, if liberation theology and spirituality is *authentically in movement*, then perhaps the challenge is to surrender what we have experienced, understood, judged, and decided. By so doing, we will liberate ourselves to grow, and liberate newer members and youth to themselves become open-eyed in their own contexts, to themselves become authentic Subjects and solidaire theologians—for we too must humbly accept to be “prophets of a future not our own.”³²³

³²² Paiement, *Témoins d'un parcours*, 10.

³²³ Prayer by Bishop Oscar Romero, quoted by Strockbine, *Immersion Experiences in Cameroon*, 45.

CONCLUSION

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

Perhaps liberation theology and spirituality is to remain open and authentic to that spirit of Mystery and Inquiry, even if immersed in a bloodied battlefield of early and unjust death, and of painful tensions. Maybe that's where we can go back to basics, to the compassion and solidarity that Jesus had at the tomb of Lazarus as he wept. Stripped of all our masks and paraphernalia, be they medical or religious, that is where our transcendental precepts are awakened to know and care for the other, simply with who *we are*. These immersion occasions transcend health care, or pastoral care, or human rights advocacy as we are challenged by the gritty reality to change and to grow in authenticity. Every struggle, every event can be at least two stories, we know the right one when we are able to recognize the movements of Faith, Charity, and Hope in us.³²⁴

This thesis has explored how a more holistic appropriation of liberation theology and spirituality—authentic theology and authentic spirituality arising out of the very dynamism of each Subject— contributes to people's ongoing development and conversion, to enduring commitment, and to societal progress. It has also shown and explained how immersion experiences can facilitate conversion, allowing one's self—heart, mind and body—to be caught up in the other and God so as to be drawn to enter a new horizon, to decide to “put one's hand on the plow and not turn back”(Lk 9:57-62). It has tried to answer

³²⁴ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 145.

that exceedingly concrete, nagging pastoral question: “How do we say ‘God loves you’ to society’s last?” It is the question out of which theology, and the lives of responsible men and women, arise. It is related to one’s *being*, and so it is that I have tried to allow it to be integral to our journey into Easter joy.

The **Introduction** presented my thesis question in light of my quest and desire to live the Gospel values of love, justice, and humility in the context of my suffering community and world and in response to the Face, the other who summons me to responsibility. **Chapters One and Two** demonstrated that God is concerned with people’s integral salvation, and that the work of liberation theology *and* Lonergan aim for liberative progress. Turning to people whose conversions were facilitated by immersion experiences, I also enlarged liberation theology’s horizon to speak of *liberation theology and spirituality as theology in movement*, to liberate men, women, and children from the conditions we devise that diminish or destroy human dignity and Creation. **Chapter Three** uncovered how liberation theology and spirituality and Lonergan collaborate to root liberation theology in the very authenticity of the theologizing Subject, who is contextual and committed, dynamic and spiritual. *Solidaire* living is therefore not restricted to this or that person, and it is not restricted to this or that functional specialty or discipline, but is possible for each one of us, especially if we are immersed into situations which summon our inner dynamism to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Using the solidarity framework conceived and developed out of the union of liberation theology and spirituality and Lonergan studies, **Chapter Four** recounted conversion stories highlighting how the Subjects’ authenticity to their transcendental precepts led them to say ‘God loves you’ to society’s last in creative and beautiful ways. In accordance with the literature, all the interviewees confirm that immersion

facilitates conversion, and they contribute valuable insights into how this might happen. The process of using the framework itself turned out to be a source of conversion for this author as it revealed the interviewees' dynamic dignity in their preferential recognition of dignity in the poor. I have tried to present in a more explanatory fashion my own journey of self-appropriation, able to "subject my self" to questions and reflections beyond the constraints of my own research protocol. **Chapter Five** then showed the synergy between liberation theology and spirituality and the functional specialties, and the centrality of the authentic responsible Subject. The "mechanisms" by which immersion facilitates conversion involve the gritty experience being able to go straight to our hearts, summoning in us both a spontaneous reaching out and an intentional loving, emptying us of previous biases and blocks, and replacing them with new feelings of goodness and judgements of value for that which is truly worthwhile.³²⁵ These interrelated mechanisms are immersed in praxis and in the other, and connected to the vital conditions of reflection, community support, and spirituality, but they are also immersed in and animated by God's gift of Grace. Practical applications of this study include expanding the horizons of "liberation theology" itself with a turn to the authentic Subject, and providing guidance and support to the many individuals and organizations desiring to engage in immersion trips and everyday *solidaire* living.

And at the end of the day, what ultimately matters most is not nomenclature and semantics—liberation theology or liberation theology and spirituality, basic Christian communities or basic Loving communities, and so on—but rather whether I am *being* in Love, so that faith and charity will give me the sustainable hope to *authentically* communicate to others, in words and actions, the messages that mean "God loves you."

³²⁵ "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh"(Ezekiel 36:26).

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Appendix I

List of Persons Interviewed

(When no surname is given, it is at the interviewee's request as per protocol)

1. **Sr. Maura McGrath**

Sr. McGrath is a member of the Congrégation Notre Dame (CNDs). Was a missionary in Guatemala and later involved with the Refuge Juan Moreno (RJM) in Montreal, which provides emergency shelter and assistance to woman and children refugees. RJM can be found at www.refugejuanmoreno.ca .

2. **Ms. Karen**

Karen, an American studying in Montreal, shared her experience of an unintentional immersion on a Los Angeles city bus which she says forever changed her life.

3. **Fr. Ernie Schibli**

Fr. Schibli founded the Social Justice Committee of Montreal (SJC), a grass-roots human rights organization that educates locally about the root causes of underdevelopment globally. Its solidarity work has evolved from urgent actions aimed at Third World leaders, to sensitizing the Canadian public and politicians about how our lives and policies impact communities abroad (ex. mining). It leads missions to the South to both strengthen ties and be in solidarity with Latin American members. SJC and its *Upstream Journal* can be found at www.sjc-cjs.org. Ed. Derek MacCuish.

4. **Ms. Catherine Henry**

Ms. Henry is manager and co-founder of *Alifera Globetrotter*, a Québec non-profit organization she began in 2007 with two recent nursing graduates who had transformative experiences in Africa. Their work is volunteer. The humanitarian trips involve pairing each with a recent nursing graduate with assignments in clinical settings according the participants' expertise. Their assertion is that their immersion trips to the South will increase retention in the nursing profession by providing life-changing experiences. Alifera-Globetrotter can be found at: www.alifera.org

5. **Mr. Nazareno Ruscito**

At the request of his son who had been touched by a volunteer experience in Mexico, Mr. Ruscito participated with a group of Loyola High School students on home-building short-term mission to Ensenada, Mexico. The projects are organized through Ariel Homes Foundation, begun by Tom and Jane Pirelli which strives to reduce the problem of homelessness in developing countries by providing durable and self-sufficient prefabricated houses. They also strive to build the local economy and be respectful of the local context. Loyola High School can be found at www.loyola.ca and Ariel Homes at www.arialhome.org

6. **Ms. Maria-Luisa Scrabbi**

Maria-Luisa is a lay Scalabrinian involved with the Scalabrini Centre for Migrants and Refugees in Montreal. She adopted Sabrina and Lily from China, and as a single woman, was encouraged and supported by some, but discouraged by others.

Appendix II

The *Summary Protocol Form* and Interview Guides

Reviewed and approved by the Concordia

University Human Research Ethics Committee



SUMMARY PROTOCOL FORM
UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE

IMPORTANT: Approval of a *Summary Protocol Form (SPF)* must be issued by the applicable Human Research Ethics Committee prior to beginning any research project using human participants.

Research funds cannot be released until appropriate certification has been obtained.

FOR FACULTY AND STAFF RESEARCH:

Please submit a signed original plus THREE copies of this form to the UHREC c/o the Office of Research, GM-1000. Allow one month for the UHREC to complete the review.

FOR GRADUATE or UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH:

- if your project is included in your supervising faculty member's SPF, no new SPF is required
 - if your project is supported by external (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC) or internal (e.g. CASA, FRDP) funds, the supervising faculty member must submit a new SPF on behalf of the student as per faculty research above. The supervising faculty member MUST be listed as the PI.
 - if your project is NOT supported by external (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC) or internal (e.g. CASA, FRDP) funds, the student must submit a new SPF to the relevant departmental committee. Contact your department for specific details.
-

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Please check ONE of the boxes below :

- This application is for a new protocol..
- This application is a modification or an update of an existing protocol:
Previous protocol number (s): _____

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Principal Investigator/ Instructor (must be Concordia faculty or staff member)	Department	Internal Address	Phone Number	E-mail
Dr. Christine Jamieson	Department of Theological Studies	D-Annex D-104	848-2424, ext. 2477	jamieson@alcor.concordia.ca
Co-Investigators / Collaborators		University / Department		E-mail
Michael Di Girolamo, M.A. student		Department of Theological Studies		michaeldigirolamo@hotmail.com
Research Assistants		Department / Program		E-mail
N/App.				

3. PROJECT AND FUNDING SOURCES

Project Title:	<i>Liberation Theology: Or a Question of Authentic Theology and Spirituality</i>
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In the table below, please list all existing internal and external sources of research funding, and associated information, which will be used to support this project. Please include anticipated start and finish dates for the project(s). Note that for awarded grants, the grant number is REQUIRED. If a grant is an application only, list APPLIED instead.

Funding Source	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Period	
			Start	End
<i>none</i>				

4. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH OR ACTIVITY

Please provide a brief overall description of the project or research activity. Include a description of the benefits which are likely to be derived from the project. Alternatively, you may attach an existing project description (e.g. from a grant proposal).

Introduction

I plan to explore and discover both from the literature and from grassroots experiences how theologian and philosopher Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology* can be a framework for collaborative creativity in the field of Liberation Theology. The question which animates this research is whether Lonergan's "transcendental method" might be a practical "tool" for exploring how Liberation Theology was and is lived in the Canadian context, in our own struggle for peace and justice.

Methodology

The research component of this thesis is comprised of three parts:

- (i) the major one is the review of the literature. Two minor parts include;
- (ii) a description of my own working through of Lonergan's *Method*; and
- (iii) brief descriptions of the experiences of organizations and individuals involved at the grassroots level in solidarity work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The organizations I plan to contact are listed on page 4 (Ref.: section 6).

I hope to learn about these experiences through interviews with the directors and staff (paid or volunteers) of these organizations. I will draw on Lonergan's insight into each person's potential for being authentic and responsible. He focuses on the 4 levels of cognitive operations of our minds, common to all humanity. We begin through attentiveness to our experience of a situation, which leads us through our intelligence to understand that experience. As rational beings, we can then judge whether the evidence tells us that our understanding is correct, and finally we are faced with the responsibility of deciding what we are going to do.

Goals and Objectives of the Interviews

The general goal of the meetings and interviews with the directors and staff and volunteers of the organizations is to explore their experience of solidarity work.

Specific objectives are to:

- (i) explore if there are common elements in the individuals and in the organizations which arose out of our First World/Northern context and circumstances;
- (ii) identify and explore the motivations, characteristics, reflections, and actions that are being named as describing who the individuals and NGOs are, and what they do.

Anticipated Benefits of my Research

It is anticipated that these findings will provide qualitative information into the characteristics of organizations and individuals who practice solidarity. This information will be helpful in assisting other NGOs and individuals to reflect on and evaluate their contexts and responses in order to increase the likelihood that their endeavours in liberation theology or solidarity work be truly fruitful and sustainable.

5. SCHOLARLY REVIEW / MERIT

Has this research been funded by a peer-reviewed granting agency (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC, Hexagram)?

- Yes Agency: _____
- ✓ No If your research is beyond minimal risk, please complete and attach the
Scholarly Review Form, available here:
<http://oor.concordia.ca/REC/forms.shtml> Not Applicable

6. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

a) Please describe the group of people who will participate in this project.

Below are the solidarity groups, communities, and organizations being considered for my research. All participants will be 18 years of age or older.

Québec and Canadian Solidarity Movements

1. Refuge Juan Moreno (RJM)

Located in Montreal and providing emergency shelter and assistance to woman and children refugees. This NGO is considered an example of local Liberation Theology, with its genesis through Sr. Maura McGrath, CND, who was its founding director after returning from mission in Guatemala.
2. Development & Peace (D&P)

NGO started by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Canadian, provincial, diocesan, and French and English, therefore probably representative of Canada's diversity. Its 2 major campaigns are an educational one in the Fall through which it aims to inform and transform people locally, and a fund-raising one in the Winter (Share-Lent) through which it raises money for development projects globally.
3. Social Justice Committee of Montreal (SJC)

NGO founded by Fr. Emie Schibli; it is a grass-roots human rights organization which aims to educate locally about the root causes of under-development globally and functions equally as a solidarity group through its urgent action network to denounce human rights violations. It regularly leads missions to the South to both strengthen ties and be in solidarity with Latin American members of the network, and to also provide exposure or immersion experiences for new Québec members.
4. Scalabrini Centre for Migrants and Refugees (SCMR)

NGO founded by lay members of the Scalabrinian missionaries in Montreal, it offers low-cost housing for recent migrants as well as various services and activities to help them integrate into Québec and Canadian society. The SCMR members and friends come for the most part from local Scalabrinian parishes.
5. Alifera Globetrotter

Catherine Henry organizes exposure trips for young health care professionals to the South. One of the 2 nurses who recently returned from Central America explained at a Québec Order of Nurses' conference how this was a life-changing experience for her. It may be interesting to retain this NGO as it is the only one which is not faith-motivated. www.alifera.org

6. L'Arche

Begun by Jean Vanier in 1964 in France, it has increased to have over 100 homes worldwide. Each is "An Arc for the Poor" where mentally disabled persons and caregivers live together in community. Possibly an example not only of Liberation Theology, but also of Basic Christian Communities.

b) Please describe in detail how participants will be recruited to participate. Please attach to this protocol draft versions of any recruitment advertising, letters, etcetera which will be used.

Process

1. The directors of the above organizations will be contacted by telephone and/or mail/e-mail in order to inform them of the nature of my research and to invite them to participate.
2. If the organization is interested, a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled with the director or Board of Directors of each NGO separately, in order to more fully explain the thesis, and the process.
3. Copies of this present document, including the interview guides in Appendices I and II will be made available for the meeting, as well as for research participants so that they may have an idea of the conversation subjects and interview questions ahead of time. (While the document is provided in English, I can also hold the meetings and interviews in French).
4. While directors and staff/volunteers can be met as a group in order to explain the goals, objectives and process, thus ensuring consistency in the information received and the opportunity to ask for clarifications, the actual interviews will be held on a one-to-one basis. The meetings and interviews should last around one hour.
5. Research participants will be informed of their rights orally and we will review together on a one-to-one basis the consent script (see Annex III). Essentially, participation is voluntary and no one designated by the directors will be obliged to participate. Participants can choose to skip certain topics or questions if they wish, and stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
6. The participants will be offered the option of being taped so that my full attention can be on them, rather than on note-taking, and it will ensure a more accurate recording of their answers. On the other hand, they may wish not to be taped, which may help to create or promote a more natural climate for sharing ideas. This may have the advantage of allowing the participant reflection time while I write down some notes. I will inform the person that I will summarize and reflect parts of the conversation back to him or her in order to clarify and confirm my understanding. I will complete my notes immediately after the meeting. I will explain these pros and cons to the participants and let them know that my preference is what they are more at ease with.
7. The directors and participants will be informed at the initial meeting that their respective sections of the interviews will be sent to them for their review and acceptance prior to my submission of the thesis.
8. I will request permission at the initial meetings with the Directors or with the Boards to use the names of the NGOs. Individual participants will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their "real" identity, the choice being between confidential and disclosed. Any third party or person mentioned in the course of our conversations will not be identified, unless the information is already published elsewhere.

- c) **Please describe in detail how participants will be treated throughout the course of the research project. Include a summary of research procedures, and information regarding the training of researchers and assistants. Include sample interview questions, draft questionnaires, etcetera, as appropriate.**

Participants will be met for the interviews in a private office or location of their choice, ideally at the offices of their organization, but the graduate student office of the Department of Theological Studies can also be used if need be. All meetings and interviews will be conducted by Michael Di Girolamo, B.Sc.(N), M.Sc.(A), permanent deacon, trained and having over 20 years experience in interviewing under different circumstances (medical and nursing histories; human resources; pastoral care).

While a relaxed and conversational climate is aimed for so that the interviews can be a positive and enjoyable experience for the participant, an interview framework has also been developed in order to have as much consistency as possible in both content and style of questions asked. For example, if in answering question 1 the participant progresses naturally into question 4, when I later get to it I will simply validate my understanding of his or her earlier answer, and facilitate any elaboration.

There are two interview guides and frameworks:

Annex I is the guide to be used with the directors (either a director or members of the board of directors/advisors). It strives to explore the experiences of the organization, particularly those which lead to its genesis, and to its development.

Annex II is the guide to be used with individuals. It strives to explore the experiences of the individual persons involved with the organization. These can be directors, advisors, founders, employees or volunteers depending on the NGO. These conversations will take place one on one. I will request that the director(s) designate the staff and volunteers to be met, but no employee or volunteer will be obliged to participate.

It is possible therefore that a person may be met twice. For example, first as a member of the board of directors and second as an individual personally involved with the organization. It may also be possible that an NGO Director or Board will not be able to meet or be interested in meeting me, but may agree that I meet with his/her employee(s) or volunteer(s); this too will be acceptable. A third possibility, due to the very nature of their work, is that certain participants are out of the country. However rarely this may occur, I foresee inclusion of these participants, via e-mail / telephone / teleconference, to be feasible.

7. INFORMED CONSENT

- a) **Please describe how you will obtain informed consent from your participants. A copy of your written consent form or your oral consent script must be attached to this protocol. Please note: written consent forms must follow the format of the template included at the end of this document.**

There are no foreseeable risks associated with these interview activities (ref.: section 9). A consent script will be reviewed orally with each participant. On this form, we will check off if the interviews will be audio-taped or not, and the level of disclosure; it will be dated and signed by the interviewee and interviewer. There may be a reading comprehension difficulty for some volunteers for whom English or French is not their first language; they may have a person of their choice read the consent form with them.

The script to be used (Appendix III) will be made available to the NGO and the participants at the same time as this document and the interview guides (Appendices I and/or II). The consent script will be read together with the participant after my introduction; I will inquire as to whether he or she has any questions or requires clarification, and then obtain the consent (see Appendix III).

- b) **In some cultural traditions, individualized consent as implied above may not be appropriate, or additional consent (e.g. group consent; consent from community leaders) may be required. If this is the case with your sample population, please describe the appropriate format of consent and how you will obtain it.**

The participants are being “recruited” via the NGOs they are affiliated with, and they are being proposed by their Director or Board, thus there is already another level of consent. I do not expect that the participants will be hesitant to give an individualized oral consent because volunteers with solidarity groups tend to be individuals who have assumed leadership roles. Should there be a need with someone for an additional form of consent, then I will discuss this with the individual and make sure that it is appropriately obtained, prior to proceeding with the interview.

8. DECEPTION AND FREEDOM TO DISCONTINUE

- a) **Please describe the nature of any deception, and provide a rationale regarding why it must be used in your protocol. Is deception absolutely necessary for your research design? Please note that deception includes, but is not limited to, the following: deliberate presentation of false information; suppression of material information; selection of information designed to mislead; selective disclosure of information.**

No forms of deception will be used.

- b) **How will participants be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time? Will the nature of the project place any limitations on this freedom (e.g. documentary film)?**

Participants will be informed of their freedom to discontinue at any time, without any negative repercussions, during our reading of the oral consent. If they have read the interview guide ahead of time, they will also know it prior to the interview. I plan to also mention it during my initial invitation and or setting up of the interview date and time. The nature of the interview activity will not place any limitations on this freedom.

9. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- a) **Please identify any foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants. This includes low-level risk or any form of discomfort resulting from the research procedure. When appropriate, indicate arrangements that have been made to ascertain that subjects are in “healthy” enough condition to undergo the intended research procedures. Include any “withdrawal” criteria.**

There are no foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants as a result of participating in these interviews. Through the interviews, some participants will perhaps lead themselves to discover in a more explicit way than they may have already done the thought and discernment processes that they had worked through in order to get at where they are. This could be considered a benefit.

- b) **Please indicate how the risks identified above will be minimized. Also, if a potential risk or harm should be realized, what action will be taken? Please attach any available list of referral resources, if applicable.**

There are no foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants.

- c) **Is there a likelihood of a particular sort of “heinous discovery” with your project (e.g. disclosure of child abuse; discovery of an unknown illness or condition; etcetera)? If so, how will such a discovery be handled?**

There is no likelihood of “heinous discoveries” within this project.

10. DATA ACCESS AND STORAGE

- a) **Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any debriefing information that will be provided to participants post-participation.**

The first post-participation feedback each participant will have consists of the interview notes and summary pertaining to their meeting with me, in order to ensure they are in agreement with my understanding and interpretation of their answers. Once the thesis has been completed and accepted, certainly it will be available to all participating NGOs and individual participants. Should there be an interest in individual or group debriefing, it will be my privilege to provide it.

I am hopeful that the results of my research will be interesting and useful. Subsequent to my presenting these results to those whose participation made them possible, I would like to publish them and present them to interested public audiences. These may include for example, diocesan or church groups, schools, and NGOs involved in solidarity work and or immersion programs domestically or internationally.

- b) **Please describe the path of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal. Include specific details on short and long-term storage (format and location), who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or any other disposal or destruction methods).**

Data, particularly from those participants who have opted to maintain their identity confidential will be collected and kept in hard copy files only. Following each interview, the data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet with restricted access. I will assign a code name to each file so that when I will be subsequently using it and referring to it, the real identity of the participant will remain confidential. Therefore only files with code names will leave the filing cabinet. The “key” or legend to the coded names will remain in the locked filing cabinet. This will be kept for five years, after which time it will be shredded. Five years has been selected as the probable delay during which I may pursue the research.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESULTS

Please identify what access you, as a researcher, will have to your participant(s) identity(ies):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fully Anonymous	Researcher will not be able to identify who participated at all. Demographic information collected will be insufficient to identify individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The participation of individuals will be tracked (e.g. to provide course credit, chance for prize, etc) but it would be impossible for collected data to be linked to individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pseudonym	Data collected will be linked to an individual who will only be identified by a fictitious name / code. The researcher will not know the “real” identity of the participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential	Researcher will know “real” identity of participant, but this identity will not be disclosed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosed	Researcher will know and will reveal “real” identity of participants in results / published material.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participant Choice **	Participant will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their “real” identity.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe)	** choice between confidential and disclosed

- a) **If your sample group is a particularly vulnerable population, in which the revelation of their identity could be particularly sensitive, please describe any special measures that you will take to respect the wishes of your participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.**

I do not anticipate that any of the participants will be part of particularly vulnerable populations because they will all to some extent be involved publicly within their NGOs, as leaders (Director or Board Member), as paid staff, or as volunteers. For participants who opt for confidentiality, they will be reassured that this request is certainly acceptable and that it will have no negative repercussions on their participation. Section 10 above describes how this request for confidentiality will be respected and guaranteed.

- b) **In some research traditions (e.g. action research, research of a socio-political nature) there can be concerns about giving participant groups a “voice”. This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for your participant group, please describe how you will address them in your project.**

The NGOs I have selected are varied enough that it will be unlikely that participants will be drawn from any one particular “lobby group”. One of the insights from my literature review has been that while Liberation Theology has traditionally meant the economically poor when referring to the “preferential option for the poor”, any time and under any circumstances when a person’s human dignity is not fully acknowledged, then one is summoned to be in solidarity with that person. That person may be an intellectually disabled person in Montreal, a Salvadoran political refugee in Sherbrooke, a person with unequal access to health care in our “régions éloignées”, a homeless person or an economically poor single mom in Québec. However, it is worth repeating that I will be interviewing the employees and volunteers who are the providers of the “solidarity service”. I will **not** have contact with the population they serve.

It is also worth mentioning that a major emphasis in Dr. Lonergan’s work is the identification and control of bias and distortion in our thinking and acting. His “transcendental method” strives in fact for objectivity, and my thesis is that it can assist Liberation Theology by preventing it from replacing certain biases or reigning voices already present in our society by other biases or reigning voices. *“Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity”* (Bernard Lonergan).

12. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- a) **Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic and/or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns which may arise in the conduct of this protocol (e.g. responsibility to subjects beyond the purposes of this study).**

While I am also subject to other ethical guidelines and codes as a permanent deacon and as a member of the Order of Nurses of Québec, I do not foresee any other ethical concerns arising out of these interview activities.

- b) **If you have feedback about this form, please provide it here.**

I have appreciated filling it out as it has helped me to clarify my thinking and the processes I will use.

Thank you.

Form completed by: Michael Di Girolamo, Graduate student, Co-investigator

Reviewed and approved by: Dr. Christine Jamieson, Thesis Director and Department Chair.

13. SIGNATURE AND DECLARATION

Following approval from the UHREC, a protocol number will be assigned. This number must be used when giving any follow-up information or when requesting modifications to this protocol.

The UHREC will request annual status reports for all protocols, one year after the last approval date. Modification requests can be submitted as required, by submitting to the UHREC a memo describing any changes, and an updated copy of this document.

I hereby declare that this Summary Protocol Form accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct. Should I wish to add elements to my research program or make changes, I will edit this document accordingly and submit it to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for Approval.

ALL activity conducted in relation to this project will be in compliance with :

- *The Tri Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects, available here:*

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/policystatement/policystatement.cfm>

- The Concordia University Code of Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Actions

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Annex I

Interview Guide and Framework with the Directors

Introduction

- Thank you! Introduce self, and purpose of these conversations within my M.A. thesis in theology at Concordia if not already done. Invite members present to introduce themselves.
- Before beginning, discuss with them their rights as research participants (points 5,6,7,8 from “process” p. 5, and Appendix III); and, that if at any time they have questions about their rights they may contact Kyla Wiscombe, who is the Research Ethics and Compliance Officer at Concordia.
- The conversation/interview should last about 1 hour.

Questions to guide the conversation

1. Can you tell me a little about your organization and the work it does? ...Not-for-profit?, NGO (non-governmental organization)?
2. Describe its internal structure. Who works here, both as paid staff and as volunteers. Who makes up your Board of Directors?...advisors?...
3. Can you describe your mission, your goals, your objectives?
 - (i) Do you consider that you have a special or particular charism?
 - (ii) Who do you serve / who do you provide services to specifically, ... and why them and not others?
 - (iii) What services do you provide specifically, and why those services, programs, etc, and not others?
4. Are you part of an external network of equal or similar organizations, or part of a coalition, ...?
5. Can you describe for me **the genesis** of your organization, in other words, how did it come to be?
 - (i) general information such as year conceived, year service began, founders;
 - (ii) what was the context/circumstances, locally and / or globally, out of which your organization emerged, and what were the experiences or feelings of the founders about those circumstances?
 - (iii) what did the founding members understand these experiences in (ii) above to mean?

- (iv) how did the founders go about confirming or judging their understanding of the situation to be correct?
 - (v) how did they make the jump from their assessment in (iv) above to actually deciding to take action and begin “name of NGO” ____n____? (ex.: external factors such as funding and social support; internal factors such as values, motivation,...).
6. What is the meaning of your organization’s name? How was it chosen?
 7. How has your organization evolved /changed over the years and what factors or conditions led to this? These can be changes in mission, services, people served, human resources organizationally or as individuals, etc...
 8. Over the years, what challenges, obstacles or difficulties have you faced? How did you deal with these? What helped and what didn’t?
 9. You are still here today. To what do you attribute this? What do you think are your strengths, and perhaps what do you think are your greatest *sources of strength*?
 10. What do you see in the future for your organization, its mission, and those it serves.
 11. If you were to boast!... and if you have “competitors”, without naming them, what would you say is unique about you / “____n____”?
 - What makes you special in *your eyes* and in the eyes of the community?
 - What have you seen? heard? smelled? felt? ...and what have others told you?

Conclusion

12. I have perhaps asked a lot of questions. And maybe I did not allow you to express ideas, feelings or questions of your own. Before we end, please feel free to express anything else that did not come out in our conversation....

With my e-mail and tel # below, please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything that comes to mind later on and which you would like me to include, or exclude.

Thank you for your time, your involvement, and the privilege you’ve given me of meeting with you.

Michael Di Girolamo, 514-797-7051

michaeldigirolamo@hotmail.com

Thesis director: Prof. Christine Jamieson, Chair

Concordia University, Dept of Theological Studies, 514-848-2424, x2475

Research Ethics and Compliance Officer at Concordia: Kyla Wiscombe, 514-848-2424, x2425.

Annex II

Interview guide and framework with staff and / or volunteers

Introduction

Thank you! Introduce self, and purpose of these conversations within my M.A. thesis in theology at Concordia. Explain as needed, particularly if the participant has not had a chance to review the present document and questions.

- Before beginning, discuss with them their rights as research participants (points 5,6,7,8 from “process” p. 5, and Appendix III); and, that if at any time they have questions about their rights they may contact Kyla Wiscombe, who is the Research Ethics and Compliance Officer at Concordia.

- The interview should last about 1 hour.

- Ensure participant is comfortable and has no other questions or concerns. Invite him or her to introduce him or herself along with the role he or she has in the organization.

Questions to guide the conversation

1. Can you tell me a little about how you got involved with this non-governmental organization (NGO)?
 - (i) How long ago? Under what circumstances? Motivation?
 - (ii) Was it part of an intentional schooling, career, or volunteer work choice?

2. What do you see as the mission, goals, and objectives of “name of NGO”, ___n___?
 - (i) Do you consider that it has a special or particular charism?
 - (ii) Who do you serve / who do you provide services to specifically, ... and why them and not others?
 - (iii) What services do you provide specifically, and why those services, programs, etc. And not others?

3. How do you see yourself as fitting into the mission, goals, objectives, and charism of ___n___?

4. Have you been involved in solidarity work in the past either with other NGOs or on your own?

5. I am interested in learning more about how you have experienced your involvement in solidarity work, especially in its early stages. When did you first start becoming interested and involved in solidarity work?
 - (i) Describe for me if you can ***the genesis*** or the beginning of your interest in studying, working in, or volunteering in this, or another earlier cause, movement, or organization.
 - (ii) What was the context/circumstances, locally and / or globally, in which you experienced this?
 - (iii) What did you understand these experiences (described above) to mean?
 - (iv) How did you go about confirming or judging whether your understanding of the situation or of your experiences was correct?
 - (v) What drew you or led you to decide to get involved in this cause or mission, rather than to turn away, or to “change the channel”? (For example, external factors such as social support; internal factors such as motivation, values, etc...

6. How has your involvement in solidarity work evolved / changed over the years and what factors or conditions do you think contributed to this?

7. What have been for you joyful moments, or special times and memories that you carry with you from this work?

8. Over the years, what challenges, obstacles or difficulties have you faced as a result of or in relation to your involvement in solidarity work? How did you deal with these? What helped and what didn't?

9. You are still involved today. To what do you attribute this? What do you think are your strengths, and perhaps what do you think are your greatest *sources of strength*?

10. What makes your work or your NGO's work special or unique in *your eyes* and in the eyes of the community (community you serve and the community at large)?

11. Looking back, have there been experiences in your life, (family, school, work, travelling, ...) which you feel or think have had an impact on you and led you to being involved with this organization?

12. Do you think that your experience with this organization has changed you in any way?
How, when, why, ...

Conclusion

I have perhaps asked a lot of questions. And maybe I did not allow you to express ideas, feelings or questions of your own. Before we end, please feel free to express anything else that did not come out in our conversation....

With my e-mail and tel # below, please also feel free to contact me if there is anything that comes to mind later on and which you would like me to include, or exclude.

Thank you for your time, your involvement, and the privilege you've given me of meeting with you.

Michael Di Girolamo, 514-797-7051

michaeldigirolamo@hotmail.com

Thesis director: Prof. Christine Jamieson, Chair, Concordia University, Dept of
Theological Studies, 514-848-2424, x2475

Research Ethics and Compliance Officer at Concordia: Kyla Wiscombe, 514-848-2424, x2425.

Annex III

CONSENT SCRIPT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Consent must be obtained from any study participant. This consent script includes the same information as other written consents. A copy of this and the interview guide with contact information is given to the participant.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW FOR AN M.A. THESIS IN THEOLOGY
ENTITLED: "Liberation Theology: Or a Question of Authentic Theology and Spirituality"

"I agree to participate in this interview which is part of a programme of research being conducted by Michael Di Girolamo, Graduate Student in Theological Studies at Concordia, under the Direction of Professor Christine Jamieson, Dept. of Theological Studies at Concordia University.

"I have been informed that the purpose of this research interview is to explore my experience of solidarity work, and to then go on to see if there are common elements between participants and organizations which arise out of our First World/Northern context and circumstances. Being exploratory interviews which aim to identify the unique motivations, characteristics, reflections, and actions of individuals and of organizations, there are no right or wrong answers and I am not being 'evaluated'.

"This interview is being conducted in the office of my NGO (or of the Theological Studies building of Concordia University), and it will last approximately 1 hour. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this interview.

"I understand that I am totally free to choose whether the interview will be taped or not; each has its pros and cons described in #6 of the *process*. Taped _____ ; Not taped _____.

I will be provided with a copy of my section of the interviews for my review and approval prior to the thesis being submitted.

"I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences. I may choose to skip certain questions if I wish.

"I understand that I am free to choose the level of disclosure for my participation in this research, either CONFIDENTIAL _____ (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity), or

NON-CONFIDENTIAL _____ (i.e., my identity may be revealed in study results).

"I also understand that the data from this study may be published or presented at conferences, churches, schools, etc. If the participant is "confidential" then her/his identity will be protected. A file with the identity of confidential participants will be kept in a locked cabinet for five years and then shredded.

"I HAVE REVIEWED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY."

Date: _____ **Interviewer:** _____ **Interviewee:** _____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Kyla Wiscombe, with the Research Ethics and Compliance unit, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424 x2425 or by email at kwiscomb@alcor.concordia.ca.

Appendix III

Solidarity Framework – Scarborough Foreign Missions – **Judenne Roache** and **Laura Graham** (4.2.1)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>For both, yes during immersion, and potentially when return home.</i>		Experience - Be attentive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Very attentive to the lack of basic necessities like water in Haiti.</i>• <i>Attentive to her own thoughts and feelings.</i>• <i>Story shows attentiveness to community she was with and to one elderly woman left alone.</i>	
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Yes for both during immersion.</i>		Understanding - Be intelligent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Asking questions and not understanding why she “has” in Canada and so many “have not” in Haiti.</i>• <i>Was intelligent in understanding another person was alone.</i>• <i>Participated in evening reflections.</i>	
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Yes for both, individually and communally.</i>		Judgment - Be rational <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Struggling to understand and judge rationally; facing what she is “judging” to be insignificant dramas in the lives of her peers.</i>• <i>Judged impact of being ignored and saw no reason for “justifying” it.</i>• <i>Reasoned the good thing to do was to hold elderly lady’s hand.</i>• <i>Positive attitude about evening reflections.</i>	
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>For both, immersion is faith-based. Insufficient information regarding scriptures.</i>			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Yes for both during immersion.</i>		Decision - Be responsible * Be in Love <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The article reveals her deep desire to be responsible. It is not evident however if she has shared her thoughts and feelings with others (but articulated them extremely well and concretely in the article).</i>• <i>It is necessary to follow up with her and offer resources.</i>• <i>To facilitate her understanding and judgment so it leads to responsible decisions, sustainable conversion, channeling her passion into love for Others, e.g. by living the LT&S descriptors personally and communally.</i>• <i>Her reflection article suggests that her experience allowed her to live most of the LT&S descriptors during her immersion in the Dominican Republic.</i>• <i>When she returns to Canada, it will be necessary to become involved with local NGOs to sustain her conversion and offset social pressures which are at odds with “solidaire” living.</i>	
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Seems to be occurring for both.</i>			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity; b) celebration; c) education; and d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>All 4 axes are present for both ladies during the immersion.</i>• <i>Both express desire for enduring commitment back home but will need support.</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Courage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Expressed by both.</i>	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Compassion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Expressed by both.</i>	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Humility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Expressed by both.</i>	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix IV

Journeys in Central America

On August 6th five Canadians set off for Guatemala and El Salvador. The objective was twofold: to experience firsthand the reality of Central America, and to visit the partners of the Urgent Action Centre. Here are some reflections of the participants.

Paths of resistance

by Maura McGrath

It's Thursday, August 15th and we have just left Xela and are headed for Guatemala city. Clara was right. The 2:30 bus *did* depart an hour later. This means we'll get into the capital way past dark. Not a happy thought. But right now I'm feeling very content, even exhilarated.

In spite of the fact that the rickety vehicle carrying us, obviously a discard from the United States, is moving at breakneck speed around 90-degree curves on the "wrong" side of a very bumpy road, this ride allows moments for pondering. And how could I not help but be still? Through the broken window I watch the majestic mountains hover on either side of us. Vivid reds, golds, pinks and purples enfold the gentle but strong faces of the Mayan women. And if I didn't know better I might even think that Guatemala, so breathtaking in its beauty, is a country at peace.

I think of Efrain Merida in whose home Carole, Michael and I have just spent almost two days. The lines in his face are now etched much more deeply than they were and the last several years have sprinkled his thick, black hair with grey. But his smile still changes his rather stern face almost completely.

Efrain is ladino and a Roman Catholic priest who can communicate in at least two Mayan languages. Most of his adult life has been spent among the indigenous people whom he loves very much. For me, Efrain typifies some of the uniqueness and the paradoxes of Guatemala. He was pastor when I, with three other North American Sisters arrived for the first time in San Miquel Acatan, Huehuetenango. It was late December 1977 and his greeting then was cautious, almost wary. Perhaps he suspicious of four "gringas" who had come to work in the parish. Now as the bus driver's helper collects our fare, I remember these beginnings as though they were yesterday.

Last evening time was spent pouring

over photos as Efrain whispered the names on the faces....Mateo, Chavela, Rutilio Grande, Jose, Juan, Cecy...disappeared, assassinated or fled to el norte as refugees. Yes, I remember.

As the bus lurches toward the capital which now awaits us in complete darkness I remember last Sunday's Mass. The Gospel had spoken of fear and resistance. Efrain underlined the Guatemalan collective fear by saying, "We as Guatemalans are afraid.

We've been betrayed by our country and our government. Today we have less social security, less education, less health, less protection. Yes, we are afraid."

And I ask myself once again, if the attempt to name the reality, takes courage? And is it possible that the giving voice to the truth as one sees it, is the first step in the movement toward freedom and equal relationships? Toward justice? I believe so and the words spoken by one Guatemalan to another in the midst of such magnificent beauty, so permeated by oppression and violence comes from a very courageous heart.

These days help put me in touch with what sometimes becomes blurred in the busyness of my everyday

humility



Photo by Michael Di Girolamo

Experience

Judgment

Living Commitment

Contextual Reflection

Preferential action for poor

Contextual Reflection

Understanding

Orthopraxis - Orthodoxy

Scriptures - Celebration

Understanding - Judgment

humility
Action-Justice

life. In my false effort to be productive, in control, Guatemala and El Salvador help focus the meaning of it all.

Fraternity

The five of us who are traveling together are dependant. We are the learners, the observers and in a sense we are as children once again. Central Americans many of whom are indigenous and most of whom are living in dire poverty speak to us with energy and strength. And we listen and receive.

Efrain's answer to one of the questions about urgent action letters now echoes in my head. "Si, como no! Urgent Action letters are very important. But not only

Maura McGrath lived in Guatemala from 1977-81. Presently she coordinates an emergency shelter for refugee women and families, a project of the United Church and of her community, the Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame. Maura is a member of the Board of the Directors of the Social Justice Committee.

Education

for Guatemala. They're a way of educating Canadians. That is even more important," he says.

The bus has stopped; it is time to get off. The two taxis that were waiting have already left. We'll have to walk. But the darkness of the city moves us quickly through the streets.

I am feeling very grateful. I know that Efrain's words, "It's important for you as Canadians," will be echoed by different voices and in various ways often during this trip. That's why I'm here. I need to see, to hear and to feel the life experience of real people. I need to be reminded.

All LT+S descriptors
All transcendental precepts... Love

"... my 16-year-old son was killed."

by Gloria Pereira-Papenburg

It was a modest office, somewhere in San Salvador. We were interviewing a low key middle-age woman, and I was taking notes verbatim. As I translated for other members of the Social Justice Committee delegation, I was trying to convey, as accurately as possible, the information and the feelings coming out of her account.

She was one of the leaders and a founding member of one of the oldest and most respected women's groups in El Salvador, COMADRES. This organization started back in the 70s, with the support of Msgr. Romero. He understood how just their cause was. These women were trying to find out what happened to their loved ones that had "disappeared". They had been taken by the police or the military or some para-military force. What had happened to them? Were they dead or alive? These women did not know if their husbands, children, brothers, or sisters were in jail somewhere, if they were

being tortured or they had being killed and buried anonymously in a clandestine cemetery. It was very difficult, next to impossible, to obtain that information from the authorities.

I knew about all this from my work at the Urgent Action Centre of the Social Justice Committee. But there is a world of difference between reading, in Montreal, "Juan Garcia, 16 years old, male, was killed yesterday on the streets of San Salvador" and to actually be in San Salvador and hear this woman saying "on February 13, 1993, my 16-year-old son was killed".

When I had to say, in English, "my 16-year-old son was killed", that was more than I could take. The words just stopped in my throat and I could not continue translating for what it seemed to me like a long time. It hurt so much to say it because I identified with her instantly, my own son was a 16-year-old in February, 1993.

Impact of immersion

Gloria Papenburg was born in Chile where she lived until her arrival in Montreal as a young adult. She and her husband have two grown up children. Gloria is a part-time worker at the Social Justice Committee and Urgent Action Centre. This was her first visit to this region.

Anger and hope

by Carole Mathieu

When I reflect on my trip to Central America, the image that keeps coming to my mind is that of an endless mud-covered road. At the time, I thought

that this day had to be the worst day of my life.

On a very hot and humid morning we left Nueva Esperanza in Uzulután to travel to San Salvador. It had rained all night and we had not gone very far when our

Attentive to experience

van got stuck in the mud, every spin of the wheels getting it trapped deeper and deeper. One by one we got out of the van and started walking, sometimes ankle deep in mud.

Many different emotions invaded my mind and my body on that hot morning, the first one being total disgust at having to walk in the mud wearing, and probably ruining, my expensive shoes. Would I ever be able to clean them? Certainly I would have to throw away the laces!

Then came a feeling of insecurity, slowly putting one foot in front of the other, unbalanced, slipping, not knowing if I would fall with the next step. Then suddenly, as I lifted my head, I was paralyzed by fear. Walking towards me was a herd of cows. They are huge beasts seen up close! But the crowning moment came when I felt something warm fill my shoes only to look down and realize that what I had walked in was green and definitely not mud.

Contextual - Reflection

Impact of immersion:
Understanding - Judgment - Decision

Self-pity was rapidly replaced by anger. I was just about ready to cry or scream. As I turned around I was taken aback by the sight I saw. Our van was being pulled out of its rut by a sister driving a pick-up truck, while helpful Salvadorans - a few of them women wearing clean dresses - were pushing at its back and taking a chance at getting dirty to help us, to help me.

I resumed my walk still angry, but now it was at the Salvadoran government for not providing usable roads for its people. So much energy is being spent just getting anywhere. I looked down at my shoes, laughed, and felt pretty silly, because these people walk through this day after day to get to work, school, or the market, and still they find in their hearts the goodness to help a stranger feeling sorry for herself. So when I look back on that day I thank God for permitting me to humbly discover the beauty, goodness, and the community spirit of the Salvadoran people.

Justice

humility - Love

Carole Mathieu is the Coordinator of the Justice and Peace Office of the Archdiocese of Montreal. As well as being a mother of two teenagers she works with several non-governmental organizations. This was Carole's second visit to Guatemala and first to El Salvador.

Smiles and Tears

by Michael Di Girolamo

Be attentive

One of the most basic and beautiful of human relationships is that between a parent and his or her child; it is a life-giving relationship. The simple, sincere, and unconditional love of a helpless child is embraced in the unconditional love of his parents. As I looked into the sad tearful eyes of a little boy in Tierra Nueva II, a little boy my own son's age, this belief was threatened, if not destroyed. As I looked at the smiling faces of his sister and brothers, this belief, my faith, and my hope were re-built. Re-built stronger by the incredible contrasts which are Guatemala; the smiles and the tears, the poor and the rich. The love, hope, faith, and strength of so many human rights activists which we met rose out of their painful personal accounts of their infants being tortured, family murdered, and spouses disappeared. The lush green mountains, with their peaks shrouded in mystical clouds, are tainted by clandestine cemeteries of the brutal massacres which they camouflage.

Tierra Nueva, meaning "New Land," is half an hour from the capital; it is basically a slum composed of internally displaced refugees from all over Guatemala. Tierra Nueva II is literally an extension of Tierra Nueva, due to "lack of land" it extends like tentacles down steep mountainsides to impossible limits. The

Be attentive

poorest of the poor live in shacks precariously put up on these slopes; occasionally one crumbles down into the ravines. The inhabitants of Tierra Nueva II, or invaders as they are referred to, are children and families who had to leave Tierra Nueva due to lack of space, or people obligated to leave rural areas due to lack of land and work.

We were visiting the area with two young *Congrégation Notre Dame* sisters living in Tierra Nueva, who were bringing bread and a few other bare necessities to one extremely poor family with five children. As we descended the steps down the mountainside, the condition of the shacks lining it got progressively worse. As we got closer to the family's home made of scrap materials, the joyful smiles of the older boys greeting the two nuns made me forget the stench of rotting garbage and excrement which littered the community. (Sanitation, running water, and electricity are at least many years away and when they do come, they are unreliable). The children's mother was not home and the father had to be away for several days at a time at a job which pays well below levels of minimum wage and human dignity.

I was anxious and uncomfortable entering the house knowing that the eldest child, a teenage girl, was

Preferential option for the poor

Be intelligent

Be rational

paralysed from the waist down. She had been raped by someone of her extended family and become pregnant. Just a few weeks before, in her third trimester, she had a miscarriage. It is hard to even imagine what else could happen to such a young girl. A girl who is not only a prisoner in an unjust national and international socioeconomic system, but also held captive by her own body, and violated by a male-dominated society.

My discomfort easily left me as we stepped into the room. She was on the one bed with her youngest baby brother of around 2 years old. The warmth in her smile and the glow in her eyes made all the bad that surrounded us vanish. Her three other brothers played around us cheerfully laughing and having fun as my own kids do. Visibly in discomfort and yet still smiling, she sat up and straightened her torn shirt. Unlike his siblings, her baby brother got closer to her, weeping quietly; he had the saddest little face I had ever seen. His expression however was not simply of "stranger anxiety". The tears in his eyes and the sadness on his lips brought me back to the reality which surrounded us. As she lovingly cradled him closer to her, they told us of how he still caresses her abdomen where he earlier felt a new life quickening, but where the new life is now no more. In the little child's sorrow I saw God's tears; the tears he shed when his own son was put on a cross to die, and the tears he sheds when he sees his children, my brothers and sisters hungry, cold, diseased, and oppressed.

I looked around their dark house, no bigger than 10 by 15 feet. Dirty rain water from higher up on the slope entered the house through a "wall" which was falling apart. The only evidence of food, besides the bread that the boys were hungrily eating, was a dish of decomposing fruit which some flies were feasting on. I could not help but imagine what it might be like to raise children in such inhuman conditions, to know that they are hungry and cold and not be able to provide for them and to protect them. Aside from dumb luck, there is no logical explanation for why I can tuck my kids into a warm bed at night, feed them, send them to school, and care for them when they are ill. I am no better than any of these parents who have been stripped of all human dignity by the "developed" peoples and by the first world. Perhaps my greatest pain came from fearing that I would not have the will and the faith to go on and care for my family in the face of such insurmountable obstacles, that I could never be as strong as these mothers and fathers.

I am filled with great sadness at how we have come to value more our relationships with material things than with our children and each other. However, although there is great sadness, there is even greater hope and faith because regardless of the increasing attacks on the most vulnerable in our society, for

Be loving - Be responsible

Critical reflection - Scriptures - Contextual


example through increasing cuts to health and education both in Canada and in Guatemala, love prevails. Despite her own suffering, this young girl welcomed us strangers into her home with a smile, and to see her radiate with such love was a witness of God's presence among us. Since my return to Canada, especially immense is the joy and thankfulness I now experience from my own kids' smiles and hugs.

Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to his disciples, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." (Mark 10: 13-15).

Michael Di Girolamo works in health and safety at the Royal Victoria Hospital. He and his wife have two young children. He is a member of the Human Rights and Development Committee. This was Michael's first visit to Central America.

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[HEALTH PROFESSIONAL]

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Appendix V

Solidarity Framework – To do Justice – Sr. Maura McGrath (4.2.2.1)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions	Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts		
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>4 years in Guatemala</i> • <i>Invested herself in founding and running refugee centre.</i> 	Experience	- Be attentive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attentive to socio-economic reality in Central America and for women and children refugees in Montreal.</i>
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When returned to Montreal attentive to local reality and needs for refugee centre.</i> 	Understanding	- Be intelligent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strives to understand the factors involved.</i> • <i>Ask questions for facts and clarification.</i>
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>During our stay in Guatemala, this was “at sundown” as we prayed, shared, and reflected on our day.</i> 	Judgment	- Be rational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not prone to the cognitional myth; the peaceful beauty of Guatemala hides a deeper painful reality.</i> • <i>Asked “is it so?”</i>
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evident and natural during evening sharing/reflection.</i> 			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Made an informed option/decision when returned to Montreal to care for women and children refugees.</i> 	Decision	- Be responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Be in Love • <i>Following her return to Montreal in 1981, was faithful to her transcendental precepts and followed through with decision to begin a refugee centre.</i> • <i>Her re-immersion deepened her conversion and enduring commitment.</i> • <i>Her presence and praxis inspires others to love God and Neighbor.</i>
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>During initial 4 years in Guatemala and during her re-immersion.</i> 			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>amongst us;</i> b) celebration – <i>mass, evening prayers;</i> c) education – <i>from senior delegates to me and from us to public in Montreal; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>urgent actions, lobbying, etc.</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Courage</i></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Live in Guatemala during unstable times.</i> • <i>Lead delegation.</i> • <i>Urgent actions.</i> 	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Compassion</i></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Run” the refugee centre like a home, to “welcome” the stranger with care.</i> 	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;"><i>Humility</i></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Admitting to blurring of priorities and to need to remember and be converted/developed, etc.</i> 	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix VI

Solidarity Framework – To love tenderly – Karen (4.2.2.2)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan's four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>This experience had an impact on her life.</i>	Experience	- Be attentive <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Attentive to people entering bus, to the poor/rich neighborhoods; struck by their un-kept appearance and the disfigured face of man who sat next to her.</i>
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Very contextual city bus with "discarded" war veterans.</i>	Understanding	- Be intelligent <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Asking herself questions about who they were and who the man was and what happened. Why did his gentle intelligent conversation so not match his appearance?</i>
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Individually and with classes.</i>	Judgment	- Be rational <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Judged that "the surface reality was very different from the substance of the person."</i><i>Judged that based on her experiences, was safe for her to be on bus.</i><i>Judged that the juxtaposition of Beverly Hills wealth and neglect of war veterans was overwhelming.</i>
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Not sufficiently explored.</i>		
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>For war veterans, socio-economically poor, forgotten by society.</i>	Decision	- Be responsible * Be in Love <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Decided the responsible thing for her to do was to engage in mutual conversation.</i><i>His speaking to her was an act of trust and love and of totally making himself vulnerable; this drew out of her compassion and love as she affirmed his dignity.</i><i>She has allowed this encounter to change her horizon and thus her life.</i>
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>This praxis became part of her faith understanding and development.</i>		
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>not sufficiently explored</i> ; b) celebration – " " ; c) education – <i>shared this experience with her classmates; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>has affected her life and values.</i>		
<i>Act Justly</i> <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <i>Courage</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>To go on an adventure.</i><i>To be welcomed by a Stranger, and to welcome a Stranger.</i><i>To speak out against worshipping wealth and neglecting war veterans.</i>	<i>Love Tenderly</i> <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <i>Compassion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>To engage in loving conversation with the disfigured Stranger.</i>	<i>Walk humbly with your God</i> <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <i>Humility</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Admits to her initial bias and pre-judging and need for conversion.</i>
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes		

Appendix VII

Solidarity Framework – To walk humbly – Fr. Ernie Schibli (4.2.2.3)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan's four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>This is something Fr. Schibli lives, and something which he and SJC challenges community to do.</i>		Experience	- Be attentive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Attentive to local and global context in '70s of world poverty.</i>• <i>Attentive to how he was becoming unauthentic early in priesthood.</i>
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Educational focus is on how local context and life style affects South and relation to our faith.</i>		Understanding	- Be intelligent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Read and studied to try to understand root causes of the poverty.</i>• <i>Joined others for support and reflection.</i>
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ongoing reflection led to Fr. Schibli's personal growth/conversion and evolution of the SJC.</i>		Judgment	- Be rational <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Confirmed his ideas and feelings through personal and group study and reflection; and trips to Central America which immersed him more into the issues, and LT&S confirmed his insights further.</i>
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Source of his solidarity and praxis.</i>• <i>Faith of the oppressed is a source of hope for him and a call to action.</i>			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Through work of solidarity, urgent actions, building relationships, lobbying.</i>		Decision	- Be responsible * Be in Love <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>His faithfulness to his transcendental precepts led him to decide to exercise a preferential option for the poor and to follow through with responsible actions, sustainable conversion and enduring commitment ever since.</i>• <i>Also credits Holy Spirit with his conversion and work; "To those who much is given, much will be expected."</i>• <i>On-going re-immersions in Central America "recharged his battery" and sustained his commitment.</i>• <i>Labour of love because source is God who "asked him to be faithful, not successful."</i>
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Praxis gives him better and clearer understanding of scriptures and church teachings (e.g. fear of the Lord).</i>			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>of SJC staff and common good;</i> b) celebration – <i>gatherings of staff and volunteers;</i> c) education – <i>of Canadians; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>through urgent actions, relationship building with poor as equals, education of Canadians.</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Courage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Going to Central America during unstable times.</i>• <i>Overcoming being timid.</i>	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Compassion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Importance given to personal relationships with Central American partners.</i>	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <p style="text-align: right;">Humility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Open to feedback and changes to his ideas and to SJC.</i>• <i>Inspired by the many volunteers, especially the youth.</i>	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix VIII

Solidarity Framework – Courage, Compassion, Humility – Ms. Henry (4.2.2.4)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. • <i>Committed to solidaire lifestyle.</i>		Experience - Be attentive • <i>Attentiveness to a family member’s illness and his strength, and to the poor’s will to survive and live with dignity were important experiences.</i>	
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. • <i>Local and global contextual solidarity.</i>		Understanding - Be intelligent • <i>These led her to want to understand how they survive and how they can improve their lot, so she travelled more and studied.</i>	
3. Critical reflection on praxis. • <i>During immersion trips, encourages journaling and group reflections.</i>		Judgment - Be rational • <i>Discussed her insights with 2 nurses and they developed a project which they evaluated with others; then judged it to be reasonable and good.</i>	
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. • <i>Faith not explored.</i>			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. • <i>Choosing to help the local economy of poor countries and to assign nurses in the public (poor) hospitals.</i>		Decision - Be responsible * Be in Love • <i>Based on their personal and social resources and support, decided to go to Honduras.</i> • <i>Decided to personally live a responsible alternative lifestyle, “faire un don de soi” (to self-give) for Others, especially the poor and oppressed.</i> • <i>Decided to make world better place and radiates with passion, hope, and joy about it.</i>	
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. • <i>Could be applied to nursing care!</i>			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>they supported each other;</i> b) celebration – <i>celebrated through a book of their experience;</i> c) education – <i>give talks to others about their experience; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>involved in solidarity work.</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> Courage • <i>Travelling in ways which support the local economy.</i> • <i>Courage to plan future immersion trips despite the difficulties.</i>	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> Compassion • <i>Moved by desire to provide loving care to patients.</i> • <i>Assuming responsibility to improve the lives of the poorest by learning from them and walking with them...</i>	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> Humility • <i>Sharing her pain in the face of poor healthcare conditions, suffering, and death.</i> • <i>Admitting when she needs support and accepting it.</i> • <i>Openness to new ideas.</i>	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix IX

Solidarity Framework – Mr. Ruscito/Loyal High School & “Liberation” (4.2.2.5)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Seems to have begun.</i>		Experience - Be attentive <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>To their own feelings/thoughts.</i>• <i>To contrasts between rich and poor.</i>• <i>To mom’s persevering faith.</i>• <i>Local kids waiting for food scraps.</i>• <i>Poverty of going without food is worse than Italy.</i>	
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Trip preparation gives some socio-economic context.</i>• <i>Strive to use local resources and answer locally identified needs.</i>		Understanding - Be intelligent <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>They are reflecting and asking questions trying to understand the family’s joy and peace in the midst of such poverty; and people care for one another.</i>• <i>They work very hard & earn little.</i>• <i>Have dignity, love one another and put Other first.</i>	
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Post-trip individual reflection re: how they changed.</i>		Judgment - Be rational <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Students judge they have too much and family too little.</i>• <i>They judge that peace and joy and something greater than material is “present.”</i>• <i>Remembers life in Italy and judges how lucky he is.</i>• <i>This family has <u>no option</u> for education, health, etc.</i>	
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Pre-work prayer created special bond to do God’s work.</i>			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>POP expressed by some post-trip.</i>• <i>POP expressed by Ruscito post trip.</i>		Decision - Be responsible <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>They decide to share their food/lunches and do so.</i>• <i>They decide to change their thankfulness and families confirm change.</i>• <i>Some return for 2nd trip.</i>• <i>Disciplined hard work was summoned out of the young men.</i>• <i>Decides to get involved with group and did so! X3</i>	
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Affected Yaremko’s career choice.</i>		* Be in Love <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Students and Ruscito moved not emotional reaction by genuine love of neighbor and by the mom’s faith and re: son and nommo.</i>	
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>for kids between kids;</i> b) celebration – <i>group prayers and festive meal;</i> c) education – <i>when return to Sec. V; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>kids project help local economy.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ensenada community war role-model.</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Yaremko asking questions about social justice.</i> <i>Courage to get involved.</i>	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Ruscito remembered his childhood in Italy and had Compassion for the family and neighbor.</i>	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Luis-Angel reflects on his errors and on God’s mercy for him and his family.</i>• <i>Humility in terms of listening to his son.</i>• <i>Guys learn to work as team for common good instead of own desires.</i>	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix X

Solidarity Framework – Self-appropriation (4.2.3)

Liberation Theology & Spirituality (LT&S) General descriptions		Bernard Lonergan’s four levels of consciousness, and the transcendental precepts	
1. Personal Living Commitment to hands-on solidarity and praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Active involvement with grassroots NGOs such as SJC, DeLP, SCMR, Labre House.</i> • <i>Immersion and volunteer trips to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Haiti.</i> 		Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be attentive • <i>I tried to be attentive to my world, maybe more globally than locally, and to my “inner workings.”</i> 	
2. Contextual or local theology and spirituality, where understanding draws from the concrete experience of the people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attempt to understand and live faith in local and global context.</i> 		Understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be intelligent • <i>Understanding facts was relatively easy.</i> 	
3. Critical reflection on praxis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trying to do this individually and communally.</i> 		Judgment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be rational • <i>I judged the facts, my feelings, my insights “to be so” through further study, involvement with NGOs, trips to “poor” countries, spiritual direction.</i> 	
4. The LT&S descriptors are lived in the light of the Scriptures/Gospel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As much as possible: Lk 4, Mt 25, James 2:14-18, Micah 6:8.</i> 			
5. Preferential Option for the Poor, for those in greatest need of human dignity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>While I initially focused on socio-economic, option has broadened to those who dignity is reduced.</i> 		Decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be responsible * Be in Love • <i>What I was doing was giving the crumbs to my “calling,” my God, and dedicating my “full-time” energy to work which met professional and material needs, but lead to feel “unauthentic.” This resulted in increasing tension until I allowed God to touch me and heal me.</i> • <i>Then I was better able to be responsible in who I am becoming and what I am doing even when there was pain or little progress.</i> 	
6. Orthopraxis to orthodoxy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My understanding of my faith, scriptures and teachings has deepened and broadened through praxis.</i> 			
7. Communal Living Commitment, such as Basic Christian Communities, showing: a) fraternity – <i>I try with the NGOs I’m involved with, at least in spirit;</i> b) celebration – <i>more with SCMR;</i> c) education – <i>for myself and to conscientize others; and</i> d) act to decrease suffering due to injustice – <i>never enough!</i>			
Act Justly <i>Liberated to participate in creating a just society (political liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;">Courage</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tried.</i> 	Love Tenderly <i>Liberated from the power of fate so as to be responsible and to love (human liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;">Compassion</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tried.</i> 	Walk humbly with your God <i>Liberated from personal sin and guilt so as to lead a grace-filled life (religious liberation).</i> <div style="text-align: right;">Humility</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foundation for acting justly and loving tenderly!</i> • <i>Oct. 1994!</i> 	
Micah 6:8 – Three dimensions of meaning of Liberation – Three features of the dialectical attitudes			

Appendix XI

From Augustine's Milano to Michael's Montreal

An Adaptation of Augustine's Encounter with the Drunken Beggar

<p>Transcendental precepts, Liberation theology and spirituality (LT&S) descriptors, dimensions of meaning of liberation theology, and features of dialectical attitude:</p> <p>- <i>being attentive</i></p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>“</p> <p>- <i>trying to be intelligent</i></p> <p>- <i>trying to be attentive, intelligent</i></p> <p>- <i>LT&S 1&2: what was I committed to?</i></p> <p>- <i>what context(s) was I experiencing and understanding?</i></p> <p>- <i>LT&S 3 - critical reflection on praxis</i></p> <p>- <i>struggling to be reasonable</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reflection on Book VI</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Milan, 385: Progress, Friends, Perplexities</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Montreal, 2005: Regress, Friendlessness, Perturbations</i></p> <p>I am becoming increasingly aware of how miserable I am, and how one day you brought me to a realization of my miserable state. I was preparing to deliver a presentation to work colleagues in my government program, during which I would put on quite an act with the object of winning favour with the well-informed by my embellishments of two-bit trivialities; so my heart was panting with anxiety and seething with feverish, corruptive thoughts. It was 06:25 as I descended from my suburban Laval bus, zig-zagging the crowds to hurriedly make my way down into the Montreal metro station. I noticed the scraggly clad subway singer, strumming his guitar with determination and conviction. His dirty guitar case open on the floor, adorned with various anti-establishment knick-knacks, awaited the odd coin or two. His face stern and purposeful, his eyes hidden behind his shades—I had seen him often; his tunes and lyrics are original compositions which he passionately proclaims to the mad morning crowd, most of whom try to ignore his subtle message and not-so-subtle profanities. As I scurry past him, armed with a laptop in my briefcase and a crock of “crap” in my heart, I groaned with anger and envy as I considered how many hardships my idiotic enterprise entails. Goaded by greed, I was dragging my load of unhappiness along, and feeling it all the heavier for being dragged.</p> <p>The following morning, the supreme import of my busyness caused me to awaken well before the cock crowed (Lk 22:61) so I could polish my speech further; I got to the metro before 06:00 while the singer was preparing to commence his labour. As I raced toward the underground serpent that would wind its way through the bowels of the city to deliver me to my own labour, I was struck by the singer's eyes—this morning not yet concealed. They revealed a gentle Face and a peaceful soul; his lips joined the warm smile which he shared with me—an authentic smile for it foreshadowed the truth that his lips would sing—it announced his genuine labour of Love. And I sheepishly smiled back, shamed by my hypocrisy and the realization of the utter meaninglessness of my labour of vanity. While all my efforts were</p>
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<p><i>LT&S 3</i> <i>-still struggling to be reasonable</i></p> <p><i>-reason backsliding as I am pressed by the values and pressures of "my world"</i></p> <p><i>-yet his Face, his joy and authenticity is disturbing me</i></p> <p><i>-LT&S 3&4: reflection on Gospel, faith, and past praxis informed my reason</i></p> <p><i>-made difficult decision to be responsible and faithful to my inner dynamism...my conscience</i> <i>- ... to be humble and walk with my God</i></p> <p><i>-LT&S 5&6&7 are strengthened to act justly, love tenderly, in hope . . .</i></p>	<p>directed solely to the attainment of unclouded joy, it appeared that this subway artist had already beaten me to the goal, a goal Lord which I fear I will never reach. With the help a few paltry coins he had collected by his shaping of ideas into words and song, this man was enjoying the temporal happiness for which I strove by so bitter, artificial and roundabout a contrivance. I do not know if his joy is a true joy, but what I am seeking in my ambition is a joy far more unreal; and he is seemingly happy while I am full of foreboding; he seems carefree, I am apprehensive. If anyone questions me as to whether I would rather be exhilarated or afraid, I would of course reply, "Exhilarated"; but if the questioner presses me further, asking whether I prefer to be like the scraggy singer, or to be as I am still, I would choose to be myself, laden with my anxieties and fears, and I would go away grieving (Mt 19:22). Surely that would be no right choice, but a perverse one? I could not prefer my condition to his on the grounds that I am probably better educated and hold a government job with a splendid pension plan, because that fact is not for me a source of joy but only the means by which I seek to curry favour with human beings and ensure the material needs of my family; I am not labouring for the greater good, but merely labouring—labouring fruitlessly. And this is why Lord, I beg you to break my bones with the rod of your discipline.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Adapted from Augustine's encounter with the drunken beggar, [6.6.9])</i></p>
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Appendix XII

Creation of criteria and guidelines for the selection of participants in immersion experiences

We must strive for good stewardship of our resources whether limited or not, and it is in that spirit that these criteria are proposed as guidelines for selection of participants. One should not expect perfectly motivated immersees, but even Jesus chose different disciples for different missions; it comes to a communal discernment of the greatest good, versus one's personal desire for doing good.

Lonergan and the solidarity framework can complement the criteria suggested by Van Engen, as well as those of the *Standards Of Excellence in short-term mission* (SOE),³²⁶ particularly in the areas of dialectics and foundations of individuals. These are mentioned briefly below as a starting point and as a concrete illustration to be adapted as appropriate to the contexts. There may also be situations where immersees automatically participate if they fund their own trip, versus trips that are also funded by others (parish community, school, non-governmental organization, . . .). The organizing body should ideally be inspired by Lonergan's three levels of the good in selecting immersees rather than by the short-sighted criterion of ability to pay.

Evaluation and selection of immersees will therefore require collaborative discernment and creativity. Applicants who live the criteria suggested below will recognize them and be able to speak to them naturally and spontaneously. (Theological lingo/jargon must be "translated" as the situation requires).

1. Applicant's openness to others

Conversion is impeded by bias, whether to the Other-Culture or Other-Stranger. Cherry says how the unreflective person will ignore and trample upon the other's culture. One cannot simply argue a group out of decline because they work out of facts arising out

³²⁶ SOE, *Standards Of Excellence in short-term mission*: voluntary standards developed by a coalition of evangelistic and missionary organizations. Available at www.stmstandards.org. Accessed 4/24/2010.

of inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility says Lonergan — classicists need no reflection for they already know “the truth.”³²⁷

2. Applicant’s concrete examples of living the transcendental precepts and dialectical attitudes

Use of the transcendental precepts and the features of the dialectical attitudes from the solidarity framework are especially useful because of their universality, and thus can be used even for non faith-based groups. Secular organizations can be inspired by Dunne’s features of the dialectical attitude (humility, courage, compassion). Faith-based groups can join to those Micah 6:8, and use other aspects of the framework as needed or appropriate.

3. Level of moral conversion

The morally converted recognize and respect one another even in disagreement, and thus will be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible in striving for the common good.

Those whose moral character is at earlier stages of development but who respect and are attracted to the world views of the converted have the humility to be good learners.

The highest risk is with applicants whose moral conversion has barely begun because from their horizon of self-satisfaction, they will not be moved by the lives of good persons onto the paths of self-sacrifice for the greater good. Too many such immersees in the group will lead to decline.³²⁸

³²⁷ Lonergan, *Method*, xi. Elaborating on his functional definition of theology, Lonergan explains: “The classicist notion of culture was normative: at least *de jure* there was but one culture that was both universal and permanent; to its norms and ideals might aspire the uncultured, whether they were the young or the people or the natives or the barbarians. Besides the classicist, there is also the empirical notion of culture.”

³²⁸ Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality*, 91-92.

4. Medical, psychological, logistical, and other criteria

Mundane issues are intricately woven with the spiritual and thus require consideration out of respect for the host community, the sending organization and the immersee. They can include, for example, knowledge of local language and customs, travel experience, and health status.

In Chapter Four, Ms. Karen mentions the interesting ability of being able to: “go with the flow and be open to an adventure. If you cannot embrace the change, then immersion might block you.” And indeed, she embraced a new horizon within the known-unknown.

Also, depending on the nature, duration, hands-on involvement, and so forth, of the immersion experience, one must consider the needs and resources of the host community, alongside the desires, charisms, and skills of the immersee. Doing human rights advocacy, volunteering in an orphanage, building homes, caring for lepers, or recovering bodies of disaster victims are very different immersion experiences.

These guidelines and criteria are not to “weed out” people of differing critical viewpoints, but they are meant to guard against persons with closed positions who know by taking a quick look and listen —people who do not engage their transcendental precepts. These criteria are not foolproof. Ironically, faithfulness to our transcendental precepts will lead to mistakes³²⁹ —more than from following some moral or ethics code. But, the very authenticity of our individual and communal movement will engage us onto a vector of progress, as the fallible disciples have shown us. But, God’s creative grace far exceeds our human errors.³³⁰

³²⁹ Dunne, *Loneragan and Spirituality*, 190-91

³³⁰ My spiritual director, Sr. R was refused admission to a contemplative congregation due to supposedly “feeble health,” but was accepted as a *Missionary Sister of Africa*, and worked fruitfully over forty years in Uganda in difficult conditions! And Fr. Emmett Johns shared at his 50th anniversary of ordination how he failed to meet the criteria of a certain Canadian missionary congregation, yet God accepted him to begin his own mission in Montréal for street kids, *Le Bon Dieu dans la Rue*, becoming affectionately known as Pops. (Personal communications).