

**GETTING TO RECONCILIATION:
LONERGAN AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

by

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ABSTRACT

Conventional Conflict Resolution has typically denied religion a place around its table. However, with the emergence of alternative conflict practitioners, such as John-Paul Lederach, and the recognition of the positive contribution of Christianity in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, experts increasingly support the involvement of religious perspectives and practices in conflict transformation. The aim of this thesis is to introduce Bernard Lonergan's dialectical philosophy to the discipline of religious conflict transformation. In particular, an in-depth look at Lonergan's dialectic of history, which integrates the elements of progress, decline, and redemption, provides a framework from which to understand the transformation of conflict that operates within a religious perspective. Using Lonergan's dialectic, the thesis considers both Lonerganian and religious conflict transformation scholars with the aim of promoting not just resolution – the end of violent conflict – but reconciliation – the re-visioning and rebuilding of relationships with a common shared future. The long-term goal is to make Lonergan's method accessible to conflict transformation practitioners and, in effect, increasing the probability of a shift towards reconciliation as a realizable goal for conflict.

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Introduction

“In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

–Benjamin Franklin

The certainties of life may seem dire. We could perhaps add conflict to Benjamin Franklin’s witty list. As I sit here, the United States is organizing its military might to direct weapons and force on the Assad regime. Syria has been in an ongoing civil war for over two years and has forced 7 million people – one-third its population – from their homes. Conflicts in Syria and all around the world remind us that humanity has not yet learned how to deal with conflict peacefully.

Whether conflict appears to stem from power imbalances or resource control, religious and ethnic differences or gang affiliations, strategies and practices for working through conflict peacefully have often been doomed to failure or are simply ignored in favour of more forceful and authoritarian methods. However, I believe conflict, that other certainty in life, does not need to be completely devastating to those involved. When we grasp the full potential of conflict resolution, dealing with conflict can be understood as an integral part of the learning required to live well together.

i.i Establishing Relevance

Within recent years scholars have begun to study the effect of religion on conflict. They have found that while religion can play a negative role in the escalation of conflict it has also been a significant factor in the resolution of conflict. Scott Appleby writes in the *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, that religion promotes violent militancy, intolerance, and

hatred, as well as radical tolerance, solidarity, and commitment to those who are different.¹ Aside from headlines about religious militants, Appleby also finds actors “operating from within religious communities or as members of transnational social movements, [these] religious actors offer irreplaceable and effective remedies to the ills that beset societies mired in social inequalities and vulnerable systemic or random violence.”² Appleby, among other scholars³ is intent on assembling a critical mass of case studies that show the positive benefits of the work of religious peacebuilders. Such an assembly of case studies is partially dependant on an inter-disciplinary approach to the role of religion in conflict resolution, and specifically conflict transformation.⁴

The success of alternative forms of conflict resolution, and specifically religious conflict transformation, depends on the abilities of participants to understand the process and believe in the possibility of its success. By studying the role of religious peacebuilders Appleby develops a typology of religious conflict transformation. Megan Shore identifies Appleby’s typology as a useful tool for promoting religious conflict transformation. Her in-depth case study on Christian involvement in post-Apartheid South Africa contributes further to the establishment of such a typology of religious conflict transformation. Whether we are concerned with international or intergroup

¹ David Little and Scott Appleby, "A Moment of Opportunity?: The promise of Religious Peacebuilding in an Era of Religious and Ethnic Conflict," in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, 1-23 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 2.

² R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 8.

³ See Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009) and collected essays in Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, *Religion and Peacebuilding*, ed. Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (Albany: State University of New York, 2004).

⁴ For further discussion on conflict transformation see this thesis Chapter 1 and Chapter 4.

conflict, a successful approach cannot ignore, ostracize, or marginalize one group in favour of another. If diversity is to be celebrated and embraced, conflicts must be resolved in such a way that every person is acknowledged as an important member of the greater community. Transforming conflict changes the very fabric of conflict from a context that incites violence, hatred, and discrimination to one that recognizes the challenges of difference and ultimately values the common good above the particular interests of individuals or groups. The development of such typologies of conflict is an important part of the process of moving towards the improvement in the probabilities for the realization of such transformations. However, what such typologies could benefit from is a philosophical inquiry into the implicit methodological context that grounds both conflict and conflict transformation. Of special importance for this present inquiry is the inclusion of religion as an integral component of the methodological approach.

i.ii The Task at Hand

I hope to show in this thesis that the philosophy of Bernard Lonergan provides a very promising methodological context for the understanding and practice of conflict resolution. This approach is well known to those in Catholic philosophical and theological circles and Lonergan and his students have also made significant contributions to several disciplines including theology, economics, philosophy of science, aesthetics, biblical criticism, and, fairly recently, to conflict resolution.⁵ Kenneth Melchin

⁵ See Lonergan's *Collected Works* including *For a New Political Economy*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998). Go to http://www.lonergan-lri.ca/sites/default/files/LRI_DissertationList_30Oct08.pdf and <http://www.lonergan->

and Cheryl Picard⁶ have applied Lonergan's method to conflict resolution through an alternative method of mediation; Cyril Orji⁷ has applied Lonergan's method to diverse forms of social conflict in the African context. While these works have successfully introduced Lonergan's method to understanding conflict *resolution*, they have not fully exploited the opportunity to engage in the developing field of religious conflict *transformation*. By analyzing how Lonergan's work has been applied to conflict resolution and by examining the established framework of religious conflict transformation it is clear that Lonergan studies and religious conflict transformation studies would benefit from direct engagement with each other. This thesis outlines how Lonergan's method, and in particular his notion of the dialectic of history, assists in understanding what happens during conflict and directs the resolution process toward cultivating transformation in order to move toward reconciliation and healing.

A further aim of this thesis is to point out the real possibility of reconciliation after conflict resolution. Interpersonal, international, and intergroup conflict and resolution are important issues for western society. As theorists and practitioners model religious conflict transformation it is becoming clear that religion is usually an important and irreplaceable tool for conflict resolution. This thesis will offer further support for the

lri.ca/sites/default/files/LSN%20Complete%20Bibliography_1.odt for a list of dissertations and other works on various topics including those listed.

⁶ Kenneth R. Melchin and Cheryl A. Picard, *Transforming Conflict through Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

⁷ Cyril Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Bias, Decline, and Conversion Based on the Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2008).

work that has already been done within Religious Conflict Transformation (RCT). Lonergan's dialectic of history provides the philosophical framework of religious conflict transformation. By identifying Lonergan's notions of decline and redemption the framework helps to understand conflict and, the tools and steps necessary to transform conflict into new possibilities for relationship. The thesis brings together, then, the work of two groups of conflict practitioners, both of whom are working out an understanding of conflict that aims to go beyond resolution to reconciliation

i.iv Contribution

There are three specific reasons for writing this thesis. The first is to support the development of religious conflict transformation. Although this approach to conflict resolution is relatively new, it presents helpful insights that actively help to produce more favourable outcomes in conflict. Second, the thesis aims to bring attention the scholars who have bravely stepped out of (and into) Lonergan's method and philosophy and toward the complicated and confusing world of conflict (resolution). Lonergan was a prolific writer whose ideas are paradoxically beautifully simple, and terrifyingly complex. This thesis highlights the work and ideas of scholars like Melchin, Picard, and Orji who recognized and pulled out connections between Lonergan's philosophy and conflict resolution.

The final reason for writing this thesis is to highlight what might be Lonergan's central focus – redemption or healing. This thesis makes the case that for those eager to apply Lonergan's method to its fullest end in conflict resolution: discussion must move toward reconciliation. It is the most exciting aspect of Lonergan's dialectic. It is what

motivates people to work through the difficulty of understanding, the pain of hurt feelings, and the intensity of the truth. It is the possibility of reconciliation that sustains the effort of transformation. For anyone learning about Lonergan's dialectic, the redemptive, healing aspect is the most mysterious and intriguing. Lonergan entices his readers of the possibility of redemption in his foundational essay "Healing and Creating in History" like this:

Is my proposal too utopian? It asks merely for creativity, for an interdisciplinary theory that at first will be denounced as absurd, then will be admitted to be true but obvious and insignificant, and perhaps finally be regarded as so important that its adversaries will claim that they themselves discovered it.⁸

This too may be the story of religious conflict transformation and the hope for reconciliation.

i.v Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided into four distinct sections. The first chapter examines recent developments in the field of conflict transformation and provides a brief introduction to how Lonergan's philosophy has entered into this development. The second chapter provides an account of Lonergan's dialectic of history. It includes a discussion of bias and its corrective, conversion. The third chapter systematically evaluates how Melchin and Picard and Orji negotiate Lonergan's notion of bias and conversion to understand and

⁸ Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History" in *Macro-Economic Dynamics: An Essay in Circulation Analysis, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, Vol 15, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 106.

overcome conflict. Finally, the last section concludes the thesis with a discussion of how we might merge these two separate yet related fields of study. While further explaining religious conflict transformation the chapter illustrates the seamless interconnectedness of Lonergan's dialectic of history and religious conflict transformation using the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a possible future case study.

Chapter 1 From Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation

As highlighted in the introduction, this thesis is all about reconciliation. Although it may seem like a clear goal, reconciliation is not always the focus of conflict resolution. As such it is helpful to lay out the relevant background. This chapter will offer a brief historical overview of conflict resolution, focusing on its relationship to religion and religious values. I will stress those alternative forms of conflict resolution that aim beyond resolution to conflict transformation and in that context introduce the relevant Lonergan scholarship. I suggest that conflict transformation, and specifically religious conflict transformation share similarities, particularly with respect to reconciliation. The chapter ends with a discussion of reconciliation.

1.1 Brief Overview of Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution (CR), is the study of the elements and dynamics of conflict. Just like the natural sciences, the more we understand about a subject the easier we can influence and control it. As a formal academic discipline CR gained popularity after the Great Wars of the twentieth century. Wars, revolutions and social movements, among other forms of conflict have contributed to an unprecedented amount of social upheaval and mass destruction. At the same time these events have inspired dramatic change in social and political life, globally. The world was in shock in the wake of the two Great Wars. How could supposedly liberal, progressive societies fall into such chaos? The League of Nations rose as a solution to end and prevent human destruction after the First World War. However, institutional flaws, and the subsequent inability to deal with the

aggression of particular states, led to its effective paralysis and demise with the onset of the Second World War. Yet again, after the Second World War world leaders recognized the need for an international organization that would promote cooperation in the international community, organize the rebuilding of war torn and bankrupt countries, and prevent such grave atrocities from occurring again. The United Nations was created as an international body to prevent further mass conflict. In the Cold War era, CR adopted new theories that focused on to maintain a stable peace, conflict void of violence.

As fast as theories of conflict were formulated, real conflicts arose that tested these theories. After the fall of Soviet communism, intra-state and ethnic conflicts flourished in the 1990s, resulting in part from increased decolonization, increased market liberalizations, and transfer of power within and between countries. Conflict Resolution continued to develop throughout the 1990's.

Leading CR theorist, Louis Kriesberg identifies several theories that have contributed to CR theories including feminist, game, and social-psychological theory.⁹ The proliferation of conflict research and the diversity of CR theories and practices have led to “more effective efforts”¹⁰ and result, in particular, Peace Research that emerged initially as a branch within CR. Peace Research takes a holistic approach to conflict. Taking into account that different cultures have varying modes of conflict expression and resolution, peace research evaluates these differences in the context of the large spectrum of factors that fuel conflict including resources and land claims, the military-industrial

⁹ Louis Kriesberg, "The Conflict Resolution Field: Origins, Growth, and Differentiation," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict*, 25-60 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 32-33.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

complex, power and oppression, human and minority rights. The aim is to ‘demystify’¹¹ the simplicity of conflicts and shift attention to contributing factors that can provide tools to peacefully resolve conflict.

Traditional theories of conflict resolution and political policy tend to displace or minimize certain aspects of conflicts. For example they ignore or deny fundamental elements of conflict, such as religion, ethnic histories, gender, or resource control because they do not recognize the benefits of incorporating these elements in the peace process. Peace research attempts to uncover some of these neglected aspects. Specifically, for our purposes, CR practitioners typically avoid religious elements. Religiously based actors are often identified as the perpetrators of a conflict and are regarded as obstacles to peace. The potential for religious actors to also be proprietors of peace is ignored. Many prominent thinkers and policy makers have held this view. For example, Samuel Huntington, in his famous essay “The Clash of Civilizations,” which influenced foreign policy throughout the 1990’s, identifies religion and religious ideologies as a major factor in the conflict between cultures around the world and as the primary source of conflict in the post cold-war world. With respect to religious differences, Megan Shore summarizes Huntington’s views this way:

To be clear, Huntington’s work is not an attempt to incorporate the insights of religious people into conflict resolution. Rather, it is an attempt to integrate religion into a realist foreign policy strategy that protects US interests. Religion, for Huntington, is instrumental insofar as it provides policy analysts with an interpretive frame that is intentionally suspicious of religious diversity and easily

¹¹ Ibid.

adopted to mobilize US citizens to support political, economic and military initiatives that protect US interest.¹²

Huntington identifies religion simply as an element of the conflict that must be overcome. We can see the impact of this approach in policies and individual actions following events such as 9/11. People who are identified as Muslim are discriminated against simply on basis of assumed religious affiliations and beliefs. In Canada, for example Prime Minister Stephen Harper argues “the major threat” to Canada “is still Islamicism.”¹³ This assumption has a significant impact of Canadian foreign policy.

Several scholars, including Edward Said¹⁴ and Gregory Baum¹⁵ criticize Huntington’s opinion directly. Said contends that cultures are not as divergent as Huntington makes them out to be. He suggests that the cultural fault lines that Huntington suggests create conflict are dangerous. Baum highlights alternative factors such as ideology as well as political, and economic disparities. Even more vehemently Baum disputes Huntington’s use of religion as an inevitable locus of conflict between cultures. He writes: “Religions are living traditions capable of reacting creatively to new historical situations and engaging in fruitful dialogue with one another [sic].”¹⁶ Baum points to a series of contradicting values in Huntington’s argument. However, Huntington’s central failing is his inability to recognize the possibility of reconciliation and healing in society

¹² Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection*, 100-109 (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985).13.

¹³ Stephen Harper, interview by Peter Mansbridge, "Stephen Harper Interview," *The National*, CBC, Ottawa, September 8, 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/politics/story/1.1048280>.

¹⁴ Edward Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation*, October 2001.

¹⁵ Gregory Baum, "The Clash of Civilizations or Their Reconciliation?," *Ecumenist* 39 (Spring 2002): 12-17.

¹⁶ Adam Miller, *An Interview with Gregory Baum "Faith, Community & Liberation*, June 2005, <http://www.philosophyandscripture.org/Issue2-2/Baum/Baum.html> (accessed November 2, 2013).

and between ‘civilizations.’ Lonergan’s work, which is central to the argument of this dissertation and written several years before the Clash of Civilizations thesis, constitutes a critique of Huntington’s view of cultural differences: Lonergan writes:

“[P]ersecution leads to ongoing enmity and in the limit to wars of religion. In like manner wars of religion have not vindicated religion; they have given color to secularism that in the English-speaking world regards revealed religion as a merely private affair and in continental Europe thinks it an evil.”¹⁷

As I will argue, conflict resolution involves much more than dealing with differences in culture. Underlying complicated conflicts are real persecution, oppression and domination. By spotlighting obvious religious differences these underlying issues are hidden and perhaps too easily underplayed and disregarded.

In contrast, while Scott Appleby in *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*, identifies religion as a perpetrator of violence, he also recognizes religion as a potential tool for peace. He writes: “Although the conventional wisdom holds that religions have fared poorly in their efforts to stem the tide of religious violence, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu religious leaders have spoken out courageously against their extremist opponents.”¹⁸ It is this ambivalent relationship between religion and violence that is intriguing to many new theorists of conflict resolution and one of the motivations for this research. *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, was a seminal work in directing attention to religion as a

¹⁷ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970).

¹⁸ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 17.

potential tool for peace. Since its publication, hundreds of scholars have begun taking up related tasks. Megan Shore summarizes the work of several international conflict resolution theorists as follows:

If religion played a significant part in people's lives, and if religion played a part in fuelling the conflict, then when resolving the conflict, religion must be at least taken into account, for without this consideration, peacekeepers, diplomats and mediators not only fail to deal with the fundamentals of the conflict, but they also miss potential peacebuilding resources in the religious traditions themselves.¹⁹

This view should have major effect on both theories of conflict and practice on the ground.

1.2 Conflict Resolution vs. Transformation

In line with Shore's thesis, many theorists and practitioners in recent decades have changed CR by utilizing peace research and by considering alternative tools to end negative conflict. As practitioners from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines went to work on the ground, they developed research and practical conflict resolution techniques that did not fit the CR framework developed in diplomatic practices. An outstanding example is John Paul Lederach, the leading conflict transformation practitioner. His work is identified as conflict transformation because of its unique goal to transform destructive violent actions into positive outcomes for all groups. The goal of conflict transformation

¹⁹ Shore, 2-3.

is not simply to find an end to conflict but to transform it into an environment that will cultivate stronger healthier relationships.

Conflict is by no means always negative or violent, however, it often disenfranchises the involved parties. Although conflict has a beautiful potential to create positive change and bring about constructive outcomes for all parties, all too often it translates into violence and destruction meaning each party must fight for its survival. Conflict Resolution seeks to put an end to and minimize the effects of physical violence and unproductive conflict. This can happen through forced agreements, settlements, or arbitration. Often, the goals are immediate and intended simply to stop the physical manifestation of conflict and put in place a structure that will *hopefully* offer immediate stability.²⁰ These solutions often put in place a new system where one party is favoured over another or where all parties lose out, which can result in destructive conflict in the future. The possibility of mutually beneficial solutions is unlikely.²¹ Arbitrated conflict resolution, although it brings an end to destructive conflict, does not aim to cultivate structural reform. It normally is content to establish an absence of direct violence and leave intact current political structures. This type of peace may be referred to as temporary, or stable peace in which the surface conflict is resolved even though the fears, threats, or biases that initiated the conflict still exist. The situation is medicated but not healed. Thus, while peace is the assumed goal of conflict practitioners, how each

²⁰ We can look to agreements like the Dayton Peace Accord in Bosnia, or legislated arbitration between unions and employers as examples of this.

²¹ Although the goal of arbitration and other forced agreements seeks to establish mutually beneficial outcomes; timelines, people in power, and misunderstood elements of conflict can disproportionately influence the final decisions.

practitioner defines peace will affect the strategies, techniques, processes and goals for each step of the resolution process.

Lederach understands peace as a dynamic social contract.²² As we have seen, conventional CR tends to deal with the violent and politicized aspects of conflict but is often unable or unwilling to take the time to deal with the deeply rooted issues at the centre of the conflict. For Lederach, conflicts require creative solutions that move beyond simply stopping the immediate conflict to address the deeper divisions that fuel the conflict. The issues and interests that are displayed clearly in the conflict must be understood and dealt with through innovation and creativity. Only then can we avoid a later relapse back into conflict or the further exacerbation of a latent problem.

Conflict Transformation (CT) is different in that its goals are wider reaching than conventional forms of Conflict Resolution. Practitioners of CT know that what happens during a conflict affects the possibility and results of resolution. “Here, peacebuilding is understood as a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform a conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships.”²³ Figure 1 below charts out the differences between conventional CR and CT.

²² John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 20.

²³ Ibid.

Resolution and Transformation: A Brief Comparison of Perspective

	Conflict Resolution Perspective	Conflict Transformation Perspective
The key question	How do we end something not desired?	How to end something destructive and build something desired?
The focus	It is content-centered.	It is relationship-centered.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of -- but not limited to -- immediate solutions.
The development of the process	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the presenting problems appear.	It is concerned with responding to symptoms and engaging the systems within which relationships are embedded.
Time frame	The horizon is short-term.	The horizon is mid- to long-range.
View of conflict	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes.	It envisions conflict as a dynamic of ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).

Table 1²⁴

The work of Lederach, Appleby, and Shore has opened up a whole new approach to conflict resolution, one that encourages a multi-disciplinary approach which allows space for consideration of the religious dimension in conflict resolution and allows religious tools for peacebuilding to come to light in conflict transformation practices. As alternative strategies to understand conflict are identified new actors from diverse backgrounds will be encouraged to participate leading to a proliferation of new ideas and tools that can transform conflict. Religious actors become increasingly relevant when the resolution practice seeks to understand and transform values that are entrenched in and support a conflict. This can have a significant impact on the routes and avenues that create sustainable peace. Engaging religious perspectives and actors in new strategies for peace such as interfaith dialogue provides peacebuilders with new analysis of conflicts that can lead to more positive, transformative outcomes.

²⁴ John Paul Lederach, "Conflict Transformation," *Beyond Intractability*, ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, Boulder University of Colorado, October 2003, (accessed October 28, 2013).

Shore's thesis asks that religion be taken into account when dealing with conflict where religion has been a factor. Lederach has been involved with conflict resolution as a scholar and a practitioner, and is deeply rooted in an Anabaptist Christian tradition. It is with both of these scholars in mind that I conduct my research. As Shore demonstrates, religions have traditions and practices useful for conflict resolution and the peacebuilding process. From her work I isolate religious tradition as an important place to search for peacebuilding tools. From Lederach, however, I am interested in uncovering the connection between the religious roots of the tools and their application outside of religious contexts. I believe that religious traditions contain extra-religious principles and tools for the transformation of conflict that, when understood carefully, can be useful for understanding conflict and for overcoming barriers to resolution and reconciliation. In this respect, Lonergan's work is exemplary. His thought is directly rooted in a Christian anthropology and we can identify a useful parallel between his tri-polar dialectic of progress, decline, and recovery and the triad of peace, destructive conflict and reconciliation. This connection provides us with a religiously-centred analysis with a potential for developing a framework and identifying practical tools for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. In order to further advance the common thesis of contemporary religious conflict resolution, studies and elaboration of potential peacebuilding resources must be pursued.²⁵

²⁵ See Shore, xiii, 178 and Appleby, 212n10.

1.3 Lonergan Scholarship and Conflict Theory

We can apply Lonergan's method to conflict resolution in a number of ways.

There has been a marked increase in work applying Lonergan's method to conflict, including, Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard's *Transforming Conflict through Insight*,²⁶ Cyril Orji's *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Bias, Decline, and Conversion Based on the Works of Bernard Lonergan*,²⁷ and Derek Bianchi Melchin's doctoral dissertation, *Insight, Learning, and Dialogue in the Transformation of Religious Conflict: Applications from the Work of Bernard Lonergan*.²⁸ Melchin and Picard's *Transforming Conflict* identifies mediation as an area of conflict resolution that fosters an environment of learning compatible with Bernard Lonergan's theory of human knowing or cognitional theory.²⁹ In particular they exploit the relevance of the appropriation of the act of insight for mediation. The connection of learning in conflict is what inspired the development of Insight Mediation, a model of mediation developed and practiced out of Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, and in the writing of *Transforming Conflict*.

Published the same year as *Transforming Conflict*, Cyril Orji's *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* looks at how various conflicts in Africa have left the continent in a state of decline. Based on Lonergan's notion of the dialectic of history, Orji

²⁶ Kenneth R. Melchin and Cheryl A. Picard, *Transforming Conflict through Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

²⁷ Cyril Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Bias, Decline, and Conversion based on the Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2008).

²⁸ Derek Bianchi Melchin, *Insight, Learning, and Dialogue in the Transformation of Religious Conflict: Applications from the Work of Bernard Lonergan*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Montreal: McGill University, 2008).

²⁹ Present throughout Lonergan's works, a thorough study of his theory of human knowing and insight can be found in Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970).

discusses and analyzes the conflicts of Sub-Saharan Africa. He suggests that Lonergan's theories provide resources for overcoming conflict and re-establishing cycles of progress in the region. Melchin and Picard wrote their book in order to communicate a method of doing mediation, and as a hope that others would take up their study of Lonergan's work as it could be applied to conflict resolution. Orji's study discusses many of the challenges that exist in large scale, violent conflict resolution contexts that Melchin and Picard do not address. Unlike Melchin and Picard, however Orji did not write a book based on a practice but as an application for Lonergan's complex dialectic of history. Nonetheless, both books were published at the same time and serendipitously complement each other. While the first offers theory and examples of practice in interpersonal and small group conflict, the second expands the application of Lonergan's theories to large-scale group conflicts where the complicated dynamics seem insurmountable. In both cases Lonergan's method transcends the created divisions of conflict to reveal the possibility of healing.

Similar to Melchin and Picard, Bianchi Melchin relies heavily on Lonergan's cognitional theory and the importance it places on appropriating the various acts of insight.³⁰ However, in this work he explores the role insight plays specifically in interfaith dialogue. As he examines the role of insight, he discusses problems that arise when insights are incorrect or incomplete, and how this contributes to conflict. Bianchi Melchin is also hopeful that Lonergan's theories can contribute to an alternative form of

³⁰ There are direct insights, reflective insights and inverse insights occurring in all fields of inquiry. For further discussion on the various acts of insight see Lonergan *Insight* 43-50, 78-81, 305-308 and for Melchin and Picard's application of the various acts of insight in insight mediation see Chapter 4.

conflict resolution: interfaith dialogue. The dialogue process acts as a location for insights to occur and transformation of understandings to take place. Bianchi Melchin's work offers yet another perspective on how Lonergan's theory can be adapted and used to help practitioners understand the role of learning in conflict resolution.

There are more dissertations and papers that could be discussed here³¹, however, what is apparent to me is that we can constructively apply Lonergan's cognitional theory to conflict transformation. In particular I would stress its focus on creative development (progress), the reality of bias (decline), and healing (conversion), which acts to transform the pernicious effects of bias. While applying Lonergan's method to conflict resolution is a relatively new area of study for Lonergan scholars, what I propose is an integration of Lonergan's method and the field of conflict transformation. This kind of application has great promise. It is particularly important to take seriously the effect of bias, as it manifests itself in individual groups, and as the 'social surd'.³² Like Melchin and Picard, if we begin with the assumption that conflicts are not necessarily destructive and violent, we open up the possibility to find new strategies to resolve the immediate stresses of conflict and also promote healing of the situation. Lonergan's method provides a base from which to look at conflict progressively, transform understandings, heal conflict and open up horizons for increased communication, relationship and overall progress.

³¹ Peter L. Monette, *Pluralism and the Structure of Ethical Discourse: Insights from Lonergan, MacIntyre, and Conflict Resolution*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, March 1999). Agatha Glowacki, *Perception is at the Root of Conflict*, Doctoral Paper (Washington: George Mason University, April 2011). Neil Sargent, Cheryl Picard and Marnie Jull, "Rethinking Conflict: Perspectives from the Insight Approach," *Negotiation Journal*, July 2011: 343-366. Cheryl A. Picard, "Learning About Learning: The Value of "Insight", " *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (June 2003): 477-484.

³² Lonergan refers to the 'social surd' as the accumulation of absurd ideas, beliefs, and knowledge that is passed along as knowledge throughout history. See *Insight* 254-57, 651-52, 711-12, 714, 714, 721.

1.3.1 Limitations

Although, Insight Mediation offers many practical suggestions on the level of interpersonal and intergroup conflict, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* fails to discuss the difficulty of getting parties to the table in the first place and the role bias plays in the process directly. The practical skills and strategies provided offer an important method for understanding challenges of conflict and indeed overcoming barriers to understanding. However, the authors do not directly discuss the complexity of bias that is at work in destructive conflict. Insight and learning have a role to play getting parties to the point where communication, mediation, and reconciliation are desired goals, but this is not addressed in the book. Melchin and Picard do discuss some of the challenges that Insight Mediation helps to overcome; in particular, the authors place a large emphasis on how insight theory can be used to discover and overcome past narratives.³³ Biases are often woven into these narratives and are part of the challenge of getting the parties to the point of mediation. Orji on the other hand does not ignore bias at all, instead he shows a deep interest in how bias effects conflict,³⁴ particularly in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, and the specific need to overcome bias through self-transcendence and conversion (as understood by Lonergan) by focusing on Lonergan's cognitional method.³⁵ While Orji's book is overpacked with technical Lonergan expression, which makes translation to non-Lonergan scholars a challenge, it nonetheless contains many helpful points particularly for understanding bias, that are worth reformulating for a wider audience.

³³ Melchin and Picard, 86.

³⁴ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, Chapter 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter 3.

Thanks to the work of those who have opened up the field of Conflict Resolution into Conflict Transformation and who have recognized that religion can provide invaluable tools and opportunities for the transformation of conflict we can now talk about conflict in new ways with more complex and nuanced understandings. The work and research of Melchin and Picard, Orji, and Bianchi-Melchin was all made possible by the work of religious scholars and others who sought to understand the ambivalent role of religion in conflict.³⁶ Each of these Lonergan scholars focuses on a different area of conflict transformation – mediation strategies, conflict analysis, and interfaith dialogue. It was clear to each of these scholars that Lonergan has something to bring to conflict transformation, not just an idea that can help usher along religious dimensions of conflict transformation strategies but a real base for rethinking how conflict and, with the addition of this study, reconciliation works. Lonergan provides us with a general cognitional theory that grounds a transcendental method. The elements of the cognitional theory are relevant to both religious and secular contexts and apply to people of all cultures and all stages of development. Because of the complete generality of Lonergan’s approach, it has a perhaps unique contribution to make to the theory and practice of conflict transformation. Religious conflict resolution has provided an easy avenue for Lonergan to be introduced to conflict theory because it is rooted in religious thought and can be easily adopted by religious communities to promote conflict resolution, but Lonergan’s method

³⁶ The ambivalence of religion in conflict resolution was the subject and title of R. Scott Appleby’s work *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*. Through this book and other studies I have gained a deeper understanding of the wide array of effects of religion and religious actors in conflict.

is capable of reaching outside of religious avenues of conflict resolution because it aims to be a general normative process, relevant to all people, and in fact all conflict.

1.4 Moving Lonergan Closer to Conflict Transformation

The problem with conflict and also what leads to destructive conflict is that people are not dealing with barriers and obstacles that keep them from truly knowing and understanding. Lonergan calls these barriers bias. Lonergan identifies four types of bias that work together to distort, twist, and restrain our understanding so that we are unable to act out of right knowledge. When we make decisions, individually or collectively, from biased perspectives we set ourselves on a cycle of decline that is not easily identified or corrected. Biases work together on various levels to contribute to individual and group perspectives and worldviews in a way that limits the potential for progress. Reconciliation is only possible when we take bias seriously in all its manifestations. The effects of bias are pernicious and create complex and seemingly intractable situations that persist for generations.

Many people who work in conflict areas or in the field of conflict resolution recognize that misunderstandings lead to conflict and that those misunderstandings need to be overcome in order to end conflict. Conflict transformation practitioners like Lederach acknowledge that the problem is more complex than misunderstandings and requires an approach that recognizes the complexities of cycles of violence. Lederach urges others to ‘face the fact’ that the current forms of conflict resolution are not responding adequately to the conflicts at hand. Like Lonergan, who understands that bias

keeps conflict stagnant and when blind to bias people are unable to deal with the bias properly through creativity and transformation,³⁷ Lederach understands that the way we are dealing with violent conflict perpetuates its destructive patterns:

We must face the fact that much of our current system for responding to deadly local and international conflict is incapable of overcoming cycles of violent patterns precisely because our imagination has been corralled and shackled by the very parameters and sources that create and perpetuate violence.³⁸

Bias takes captive our imagination and creativity. Lonergan offers us new tools for understanding the influence of bias on conflict by locating it in the larger context of a dialectical theory of history. This approach provides us with a theoretical base for religiously rooted understanding of conflict transformation. Ultimately as we shall see, the path to overcoming bias, and indeed its goal, is through reconciliation.

1.5 The End Game: Reconciliation

Achieving genuine reconciliation is a tough task. It can be understood in a variety of ways and is an established and highly important aspect of conflict transformation. Reconciliation is the goal of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. As we have already discovered, conflict transformation seeks to holistically transform conflict into a source for learning and growth. Reconciliation is the product of conflict transformed. Although reconciliation holds such an important place in conflict transformation, failing

³⁷ Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," in *A Third Collection*, 100-109 (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 9.

³⁸ John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 172.

to understand reconciliation itself is possibly the largest obstacle to its integration into the conflict resolution process.³⁹

Reconciliation has many nuanced meanings, several of which come from the Christian tradition. John deGruchy, who has written on the processes of reconciliation in the wake of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, recognizes the implicitly religious nature of reconciliation. For him it “is a human and social process that requires theological explanation, and a theological concept seeking human and social embodiment.”⁴⁰ For deGruchy, it is impossible to separate reconciliation from its religious context. The core of the Christian gospel is Christ’s gift of salvation that seeks to restore and reconcile humanity with God. But as deGruchy highlights for his readers, reconciliation is not simply concerned with individual salvation; it is a hyperactive theology trying to make landfall in the hearts and lives of humanity through ‘human and social embodiment’. Reconciliation is meant to be experienced by all people, through engagement and relationships with others, no matter how theological or religious a concept it is.

However, reconciliation is not just a goal, it is also a process. Hizkias Assefa describes reconciliation as a process within a spectrum of conflict handling techniques. (See figure 2) He frames the spectrum in terms of the level of participation of those involved. On the left of the spectrum there is little cooperation and the level of mutual

³⁹ Hizkias Assefa, "The Meaning of Reconciliation, People Building Peace," *European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation*, http://www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/part1/2_reconc.htm (accessed 06 20, 2012). “Despite the lack of knowledge about how to operationalize reconciliation, there is however no question about the tremendous need for it. In fact, it could be said that the need in today’s world is much greater than at any other time in the past.”

⁴⁰ John W. de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 20.

participation is low. This is where we often find traditional forms of conflict resolution in use, when the need to simply end the conflict is the priority. Many of the approaches of conventional CR, force, adjudication, and arbitration are found on this side of the spectrum. Parties involved have little involvement in the peace settlements. On the right side of the spectrum there is a high level of mutual participation. Parties are involved and engaged in understanding the conflict and finding solutions. Negotiation and Mediation each focus on increased participation of parties. Reconciliation is found at the side furthest to the right being the highest level of mutual participation.

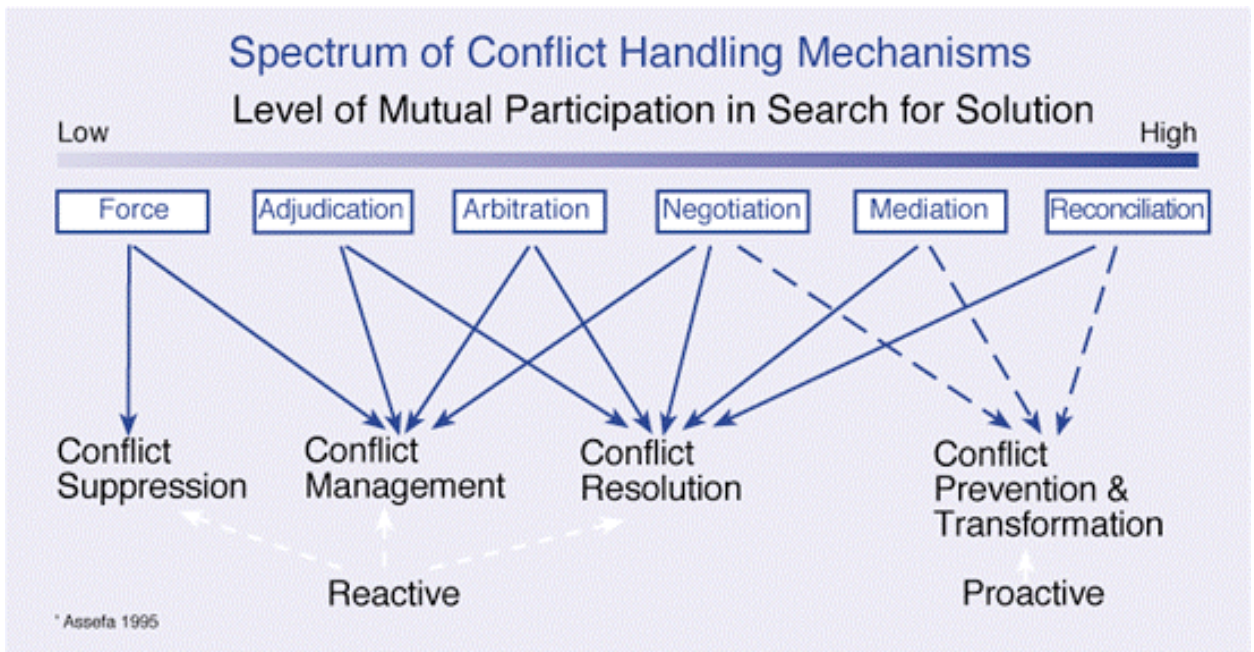


Table 2⁴¹

Assefa describes the reconciliation process as having 7 components:

acknowledgment of the role each party has played in the others' suffering; true regret for

⁴¹ Assefa.

injurious actions; desire to apologize; desire to ‘let go’ of bitterness and anger; commitment by the offender not to repeat the injury; sincere effort to make right and accept responsibility of damage caused; and desire to maintain a new mutually interdependent relationship. The process aims for parties to take responsibility for their role “and out of such recognition [seek] ways to redress the injury that has been inflicted on the adversary, to refrain from further damage, and to construct new positive relationships.”⁴²

As discussed earlier the more traditional forms of conflict resolution have proven to be less successful in the long-term and often work to suppress conflict rather than removing it or transforming it. Assefa classifies this not as resolution, but as a reactive processes resulting in conflict suppression or conflict management. Lasting resolution requires more than simply ending the conflict. Assefa recognizes that as a process reconciliation requires that parties voluntarily engage and allow for internal transformation. Stable peace may be achieved through reactive forms of conflict resolution. Unwilling actors can be forced to take responsibility for injury but cannot be forced into mutually beneficial relationships with their adversary. As Assefa points out, unless parties have ‘internalized’ the transformation the stable peace is nothing more than a temporary absence of violence.⁴³ To create a substantive peace, the conflict and the lives of those involved in the conflict must be transformed in such a way that their transformation contributes to the prevention of future conflict.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

The key to reconciliation either as a goal or a process is *transformation*. Unlike traditional conflict resolution where the goals are anticipated and obvious, conflict transformation and reconciliation make it difficult to identify authentic transformation. Reconciliation can happen at a number of levels, which culminates in political, social, personal transformation that restores justice.⁴⁴ As outlined in Assefa's seven components of reconciliation, acknowledging and coming to consensus of what happened or accepting consequences are just single elements of reconciliation, and cannot be achieved through force. "Reconciliation implies a fundamental shift in personal and power relations between former enemies."⁴⁵

1.6 Summary

My aim in this section is to make it clear that reconciliation is a goal worth pursuing and a process worth adopting. However, we still run into the problem that the process is dependent on all parties' mutual participation and a transformation that is organic and un-forced. It is difficult to place so much faith in a concept like reconciliation. There is a fear that because reconciliation is not easy, quick, nor popularly understood it should be dismissed as an unattainable goal.

The answer to this problem has less to do with the rate of success of reconciliation as a process or goal and more to do with how people deal with bias. If we can offer better strategies for dealing with bias we will be able to increase the rate of success of post-conflict reconciliation in a way that promotes peace and prevents further destructive

⁴⁴ de Gruchy, 25.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 25.

conflict. In the next section I will discuss bias in the context of Lonergan's dialectic of history in order to clarify how biases effect decisions and actions that inform conflict and how we can transform conflict and move toward reconciliation.

Chapter 2 Lonergan's Dialectic of History

To understand conflict, in a sense, is to understand history. Conflict has shaped and moved the trajectory of history and history informs the process of conflict. This chapter outlines Lonergan's dialectic of history. This notion emerged in Lonergan's early writings and became an important theme throughout his entire work.¹ He divided his dialectic into three elements: progress, decline, and redemption. Grasping the dialectic of history is central to recognizing why Lonergan's work is well matched with religious conflict transformation. Each element contributes to an understanding of conflict and all three together provide the context for identifying conflict transformation as reconciliation.

2.1 Progress

2.1.1 The Notion of Progress

The notion of progress is perhaps the central motif for the last two hundred years of global history. The 18th century scientific revolution proved the seed of a massive technological and economic development that has, at varying speeds, affected a massive displacement of tradition cultures across the globe. What is meant by 'progress' differs depending on who is speaking and what their ideologies are.² Nonetheless, all proponents

¹ See Michael Shute, *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the Dialectic of History: A Study of Lonergan's Early Writings on History* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1993).

² Frederick Lawrence evaluated liberal notions of progress concluding: "The bias towards considering human activity as essentially a matter of maximizing privately defined pleasure or minimizing privately defined pain is so central to the liberal tradition that the concern for the common good of order and value is subverted to the interests of private advantage, whether of individuals or of groups." Frederick Lawrence, "Political Theology and "The Longer Cycle of Decline", *Lonergan Workshop* (Missoula MT: Scholars Press) vol. 1 (1978), 241. Likewise, Michael Shute in, *The Origins of Lonergan's Notion of the*

of progress embrace the hope of moving toward a better life, with expanded possibilities and more efficient ways of doing things. Technological advances are often cited as the driving force for these developments. Still, some measure progress in terms of political advances, whether by the advance of democracy or the mobility of the working class. Some identify progress as simply learning to do more, while others measure it as the rate at which we can extract resources; or increase crop yields. Just as there are champions of the idea of progress, there are also critics who argue that there is more to progress than increasing the speed at which we produce goods or knowledge. There is no question that advances in technology have increased the speed and efficiency of many good things, but the increase has also included the swiftness with which we kill, and the velocity of resource extraction³, which imposes immeasurable harm to the environment and contributes to conflict between and within regions. If we look at human history within the last few centuries would we see legitimate progress for the whole of society? There is, then, a moral dimension to what we might mean by the notion by progress that has been neglected in modern views of progress.

Dialectic of History: 6. writes: “Liberal states have encouraged the rapid development of various technologies and the relatively unfettered growth of capitalist economies. Associated with these developments is the elevation of individual and group interest above any account of the common good to the detriment of social order.”

³ The rate of resources extraction has increased “from 40 billion tons in 1980 to 58 billion tons in 2005, representing an aggregated growth rate of 45%.” World Resources Forum, “The Issue”, *World Resources Forum*, <http://www.worldresourcesforum.org/issue> (accessed, November 20, 2013).

Soon after the global economic collapse of 2008 *The Economist* published an article entitled “The idea of progress - Onwards and upwards: Why is the modern view of progress so impoverished?”. In the article the unnamed author⁴ lamented that the fundamental engine of progress – moral sensibility – is being disassembled and its elements sold off as discount generic parts and placed in other ‘engines of progress’ such as science and economics so that they are completely distorted and unable to perform as designed.⁵ The author refers back to the 19th century poem by Imre Madach, “The Tragedy of Man.” In the poem Adam is sent on a whirlwind journey to discover how human progress will unfold outside of Eden. With each emergence of progress in an historical era, Adam also discovers its plight. In the end, God reveals the plan of redemption to Adam. The *Economist* author takes us on a similar journey through modern history, pausing and questioning the authenticity of economic and scientific progress. The author directs the reader to think about moral progress as a forgotten element in the engine of progress as he returns to Madach’s story. Madach concludes that an idealism, the desires of which are for a better world, is not worthless- “All God asks of man is to strive for progress, nothing more.”⁶ Lonergan might well side with Madach/*The Economist*, as Lonergan wrote in one of his early essays on the dialectic of history: “The

⁴ *The Economist* publishes its articles without assigning authorship to an individual. It is *The Economist*’ belief that “what is written is more important than who writes it”, and as such rarely publishes an author’s identity.

⁵ *The Economist*, "The idea of progress: Onwards and upwards. Why is the modern view of progress so impoverished?," December 17, 2009, <http://www.economist.com/node/15108593> (accessed October 29, 2013).

⁶ *Ibid.*

earthly task of man is not a routine but a progress.”⁷ The article demonstrates the importance and difficulty in judging just what progress is. What we do, certainly contributes to what progress is. For Lonergan, human progress in history is intricately linked to human intelligence. It is “a cyclic and cumulative process in which concrete situations give rise to insights, insights to new courses of action, new courses of action to changed situations, and changed situations to still further insights.”⁸ Progress in history and the advance of human intelligence are intricately linked, and so they possess a similar pattern: they are *cumulative*, *continuous* and *self-correcting*. However, in addition to the operations of intelligence, Lonergan adds the operations of will and so he can say that the key to progress is liberty. It is not enough to figure out what activities contribute to human progress; we have to be willing to follow through. If we are in accord with the pure desire to know and if we act on its results then we can expect advance. And if we envisage a completely successful advance of intelligence, we have what Lonergan calls progress or the ideal line of history.⁹

The nature of progress is continuous inasmuch as one action or instance of improvement in itself is not classified as progress. Instead, progress is made up of continuous moments of improvement. One instance of stubbornness (decline), deviation from the transcendental precepts, can halt the flow of progress. Progress is cumulative because it builds on previous progressions in order to gain subsequent progressions. As

⁷ Bernard Lonergan, "Analytic Concept of History," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11, no. 1 (1993): 16.

⁸ Lonergan, "Questionnaire," 366.

⁹ Lonergan, "Analytic Concept of History", 15. Of course this "ideal line of history" is upset and disrupted by sin, bias, and decline.

Lonergan explains “insight into insight brings to light the cumulative process of progress.”¹⁰ Here he connects the nature of progress as cumulative to the nature of knowledge as cumulative through the demonstratively normative pattern of human intelligence.¹¹

Progress is the spontaneous result of individuals and communities acting in accord with four transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible.

Being attentive includes attention to human affairs. Being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrealized possibilities. Being reasonable includes the rejection of what probably would not work but also the acknowledgement of what probably would. Being responsible includes basing one’s decisions and choices on an unbiased evaluation of short-term and long-term costs and benefits to oneself, to one’s group, to other groups.¹²

The self-correcting effects of observing transcendental precepts, are the backbone of what Lonergan means by progress. “So change begets further change and the sustained observance of the transcendental precepts makes these cumulative changes an instance of progress.”¹³ The ideal line of history is for Lonergan what would follow if humanity lived without sin and there was no need for grace, that is, in the pre-fall state of Christian anthropology.

¹⁰ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1970), 8.

¹¹ See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Chapter 1, Section 2 and 3, 6-20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 53.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 53.

2.1.2 Progress and Authenticity

Progress then is the result of human authenticity. The transcendental precepts are the norms of authenticity and what Lonergan calls progress is the fruit of that authenticity. Authenticity and therefore progress is a precarious achievement. Authenticity “is ever a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and every successful withdrawal only brings to light the need for still further withdrawals.”¹⁴ The struggle between authenticity and inauthenticity is a permanent feature of human development. As infants we live in a world of immediacy, where we respond to what the environment provides, the temperature of our environments, pains of discomforts, lights. While our senses do a lot of work in providing experiences, as we grow we move into a world mediated by meanings and regulated by values where given experience is mediated by all that we have learned.¹⁵ This movement of consciousness is also a movement toward authenticity, toward self-transcendence¹⁶, and toward ultimate concern.¹⁷ The movement toward authenticity is based in the desire for understanding, the desire for truth, the desire to act rightly, and the desire to love infinitely. It is movement away from laziness, silliness, unreasonableness, and irresponsibility. Authenticity is dependent on both individuals and groups; it is the “long and sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts.”¹⁸ And to do

¹⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 110.

¹⁵ See *Method in Theology*, chapter 3 “Meaning” section 8 “Functions of Meaning”, 76-81.

¹⁶ Self-transcendence is the part of the process of knowing that is affected by authenticity and the transcendental precepts. It is what is affected by intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. See *Method in Theology* 34-35, 104-105 and 241.

¹⁷ Ultimate concern is a moral question but also a question of the existence of God. See *Method in Theology* chapter 4 “Religion”, 101-124, specifically 101-103.

¹⁸ Bernard Lonergan, "Dialectic of Authority," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York : Paulist Press, 1985), 8.

this we must live consistently in a world mediated by meaning and regulated by values by balancing and negotiating a world of immediacy.¹⁹

Evaluating authenticity is difficult. An unauthentic person judges authentic what is unauthentic, and what may be authentic at an earlier stage of moral development of consciousness may be found deficient or incomplete at a later stage.²⁰ For example, a Coptic Christian in Egypt may choose to be distrustful of any Muslim Egyptian based on religious affiliation. The unauthentic person would see no need for further questions; the Muslim's beliefs, values and actions will reflect the point of view of the aggressive Muslim Brotherhood. It would be 'impossible' for the Egyptian Christian to see the other in another light. The precepts guide and give context for how people can behave authentically. As people live committed to the transcendental precepts they live more authentic lives and develop more authentic communities, which are identified through mediated meanings and values. Instead, Coptic Egyptians who have experienced real authenticity recognize the blindedness of their judgments. Their authenticity would draw out, for themselves and others, questions, understanding, insights and judgments of fact. The Coptic Egyptian may find their closest ally to be someone with differing religious

¹⁹ Ibid., 8. "To be ever attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible is to live totally in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values. But man also lives in a world of immediacy and, while the world of immediacy can be incorporated in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values, still that incorporation never is secure. Finally, what is authentic for a lesser differentiation of consciousness will be found unauthentic by the standards of greater differentiation. So there is a sin of backwardness, of the cultures, the authorities, the individuals that fail to live on the level of their times."

²⁰ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 110 and "Dialectic of Authority" in *A Third Collection*, 8.

beliefs. But how can we judge the claims of authenticity to be real, genuine authenticity?
—Through its fruits. Authenticity generates progress. Unauthenticity promotes decline.²¹

In summary, when we talk about progress we are really discussing a first approximation to the full concrete reality of history.²² The ideal line of history is not the whole experience of human life. Besides progress there is decline. We can envisage progress in human history as a cycle of the collective authentic creation of good policies that influence good courses of action,²³ which go on to create new good policies or expand on previous good policies.²⁴ We can also imagine the disruption of this movement or flow. This gives us the second approximations – what Lonergan names decline.

2.2 Decline

2.2.1

Inauthenticity and lack of understanding²⁵ lead to decline, which Lonergan explains in terms of the shorter and longer cycles of decline.²⁶ If everyone always acted

²¹ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 288, “Dialectic of Authority”, 9. In *Method* Lonergan directs readers to *Insight* chapter 7 where he discusses “Common Sense as Object”. In *Insight* Lonergan moves into his discussion of bias, which we will discuss soon in this chapter.

²² Indeed when we discuss progress, decline, or redemption we are identifying three approximations of what is happening throughout the course of human history. A complete account of an historical situation would include all three.

²³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 8.

²⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 53.

²⁵ It is important to note that bias is not simply lack of understanding. Lack of understanding mixed with inauthenticity becomes a ‘flight from understanding’, see Lonergan, *Insight*, 4-6. Lack of understanding and authentic inquiry leads to *inverse insights*, the insight that we do not yet have the ‘full picture’ and that further questions and inquiry are necessary for authentic judgments. For more on inverse insights see: Lonergan, *Insight*, 43-50.

²⁶ See Lonergan, *Insight*, 251-267.

authentically, then we might be able to claim that progress was automatic or inevitable.

But we can not.

The problem with progress and the reason for cycles of decline is that people do not always deal with the barriers and obstacles that keep them from truly being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. Such a sustained effort is virtually impossible for us. Almost inevitably we participate in to a greater of lesser degree in the draw of unauthenticity, the mire and muck of laziness, the disinterest and inattention of mediocrity, the stubbornness of unreasonableness, and the complete abandonment of others, of irresponsibility.²⁷ Though not always immediately apparent, the inauthenticity leading to decline is dangerous, because it ultimately corrupts, distorts, and discredits real, active progress.²⁸ In post-conflict Bosnia there have been several attempts at reconciling the society through civil initiatives including youth centres, integrated schools and curriculum. However, the political system is entrenched in decline, forcing citizens to participate along ethnic lines. Keeping peoples separate politically has done very little, if anything, to promote reconciliation and a productive society both socially and economically.²⁹ It entrenches a sustained failure of human creativity and love that blocks

²⁷ See the section on the problem of liberation, chapter 18 of Lonergan, *Insight*, 643-656.

²⁸ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 54-55.

²⁹ In the fall of 2013 Bosnia conducted its first census since before its independence from Yugoslavia. The census highlighted the divisions of peoples, aggravated already tense ethnic relations, and has the potential to spark renewed conflict. See Katie Harris, *Bosnia's First Ever Census Sparks Heated Debate Over National Identity* Read more: *Bosnia's First Ever Census Sparks Heated Debate Over National Identity* | TIME.com <http://world.time.com/2013/10/14/bosnias-first-ever-census-sparks-heated-debate-over-national-identity/#ixzz2jvvrerVQ>, October 14, 2013, <http://world.time.com/2013/10/14/bosnias-first-ever-census-sparks-heated-debate-over-national-identity/> (accessed November 3, 2013).

authentic initiatives to heal separation. As Lonergan famously states: “A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency.” He goes on from here to say,

It [decline] cannot be argued out of its self-destructive ways, for argument has a theoretical major premiss, theoretical premisses are asked to conform to matters of fact, and the facts in the situation produced by decline more and more are the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness, and irresponsibility.³⁰

Danielle Bishop identifies the “brilliance of decline” in its deceptiveness.³¹ This deceptiveness is pervasive throughout decline. That which might seem like progress is not progress at all. The Dayton Peace Accord, which served to arrest violent conflict in Bosnia, constitutionalised the structure for the current tripartite power-sharing system, which essentially has left Bosnia in political gridlock. Within the cycle of decline what might seem authentic is indeed unauthentic, for those with power or authority may possess it for its own sake.³² Absurd judgments of fact and distorted meanings spawned by decline and miss-attention to the transcendental precepts create barriers to progress. Lonergan calls these barriers bias. To clearly identify decline we must uncover the biases that affect actions. Particularly within situations of conflict, understanding and identifying the biases as Lonergan explains them directly assists understanding the dynamics of the conflict.

³⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 55.

³¹ Danielle Elizabeth Bishop, *Feminist Theology, Christianity and the Problem of Patriarchy: Toward an Alternative Perspective*, MA Thesis, Department of Religious Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland (St. John's : School of Graduate Studies, 2010), 77.

³² See Lonergan “The Dialectic of Authority” in *A Third Collection*.

Now this does not refer to bias of one's position or worldview, although these do play a role. Bias in this case is more complex and involves individual, group and specialized stories, feelings, and values that work against the four transcendental precepts. Lonergan identifies four types of bias that work together to distort, twist, and restrain our understandings so that we are unable to act authentically and out of authentic knowing. They include dramatic, individual, group and general bias. Each bias has distinctive characteristics, however, they all interact to produce decline. Lonergan describes *dramatic bias* as an unconscious effect rooted in one's biography that limits the desire and possibility for new insights and creative solutions. *Individual bias* is the undisputed rule of the ego, which listens and acts to satisfy individualist desires without regard for the consequences to others. *Group bias* is similar to individual bias but on a group level. It limits the possibilities for change and development and refuses to incorporate new insights that would require transformation of commonly held beliefs. It breeds oppressions between and within groups and between groups and periods of history. This brings us to *general bias*; general bias is a pervasive form of bias that prevents new ideas from taking hold. It insists on sticking to what we know and carelessly rips apart any ideas that threaten its consistency. It is obscurantism writ large, denying the validity of human curiosity that does stick to the world of pragmatic concerns. It opposes genuine philosophic, religious and long-term thinking as the wishful thinking of hopeless dreamers. When we make decisions, individually or collectively, from biased perspectives we contribute to cycles of decline that are not easily identified or corrected. If we do not know that we are in decline it is difficult to move forward into progress.

Shortly we will discuss the effects of decline as it occurs in the shorter and longer cycles, but first we will consider bias in more detail.

2.2.2 Four Biases

The first bias we will consider is dramatic bias.³³ This type of bias is pre-conscious. It involves the things we don't know we don't know. Dramatic bias results from events that we may not have caused whose cumulative result is our paying no attention or limited attention to insights and limiting the questions that would lead to insights. "To exclude an insight is also to exclude the further questions that would arise from it, and the complementary insights that would carry it towards a rounded and balanced viewpoint."³⁴ Lonergan relates dramatic bias to a scotoma, a blind spot. This scotosis happens on an unconscious level allowing certain insights and blocking others. This results in an incorrect assessment of situations, insights that may be corrected through further questioning and subsequent insights are accepted as correct or incorrect, whichever outcome favours the individual or group suffering the scotosis. Thus, dramatic bias limits some insights and advances others. The result is a distortion of personal development hidden from conscious access and, thus, difficult to identify. Repression of feelings, values, or meanings can manifest in peoples' actions. The effects of dramatic bias show up in conflict as an inability or unwillingness to understand another's actions or even one's own actions for reasons that are clearly unreasonable to the unbiased. For example, a racist does not understand the blindness of their own attitude, and is unable to

³³ Lonergan, *Insight*, 191-206.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 214.

understand or unwilling to consider how their attitudes and actions negatively affect their targets, a pattern that is taught by example and repeats itself for generations.

The second type of bias Lonergan discusses is individual bias, the bias of the egoist. Unlike the scotosis of the dramatic subject, individual bias is a conscious flight from understanding marshalled for the benefit of the self-centred individual.

Egoism is neither mere spontaneity nor pure intelligence but an interference of spontaneity with the development of intelligence. With remarkable acumen one solves one's own problems. With startling modesty one does not venture to raise the relevant further questions.³⁵

Egoists are not unintelligent; in fact they are skillful at using intelligence to achieve their personal goals. However, egoism is an incomplete development of intelligence³⁶ that neglects to ask further questions that may reveal the shortfall of their knowledge. Intelligence is directed by the egoist's self-interest. The egoist deceives herself, and the greater community by utilizing intelligence to further her personal goals at the expense of social order. He is not completely unaware of his self-deception; he sets himself up to observe the social order to determine the best opportunities to exploit its benefits while offering nothing, or very little to benefit the social order.³⁷ The intelligent egoist recognizes her shortcomings. He is unable to devise a justification of his actions. The normative pattern and unrestricted desire to know is functioning within him: "he knows its value, for he gives it free rein where his own interests are concerned; yet he

³⁵ Ibid., 245.

³⁶ Ibid., 244.

³⁷ Ibid., 246.

also repudiates its mastery, for he will not grant serious consideration to its further relevant questions.”³⁸ Unlike dramatic bias, individual bias acts on a more conscious level where the egoist rejects the desire to know. Egoists perpetuate conflict by rejecting cooperative solutions in support of their own benefits. For an egoist, devising how to maintain the upper hand in a situation ensures their own self-preservation and rejects and questions or insights about mutual thriving.

Next is group bias,³⁹ that is, group egoism. Just as individual bias is an incomplete development of intelligence, group bias is the incomplete development of common sense. Groups can be large and small, some with subgroups that are differentiated from others within a particular group. These groups share experiences, meanings, and values and, as a result, maintain a shared commonsense⁴⁰. “[G]roup bias operates in the very genesis of commonsense views.”⁴¹ Group egoism chooses its course of action based merely on what will benefit the group, often manipulating the social good to the detriment of other groups. In the same way that egoists build blind spots and resist questions for further understanding that may correct their bias, “Group bias alters this scheme because not all good ideas are operative. Some are inoperative because they will be resisted... necessary correctives are deemed impractical; because the development is one-sided, disadvantaged

³⁸ Ibid., 247.

³⁹ Ibid., 247-250.

⁴⁰ Lonergan differentiates four realms of meaning. Commonsense is the first realm where meaning is discussed in plain language and is accessible to members of a group. For more on this see *Method in Theology* Chapter 3 “Meaning”, 81-85.

⁴¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 247.

groups plot their revenge.”⁴² The deception of group bias is greatest in its perceived success. Although Lonergan ultimately finds fault with Marxist theory, Marx’s analysis of class struggle provides a good example of group bias. As the dominant groups seek to maintain control they reject new ideas that could jeopardize their position of dominance. Oppression results. Wanting to revolt against the dominant group, oppressed groups may coalesce around rejected ideas and plot their revenge.

“[G]roup egoism not merely directs development to its own aggrandizement but also provides a market for opinions, doctrines, theories that justify its ways and, at the same time, reveal the misfortunes of other groups to be due to their depravity.”⁴³ As long as group bias positively benefits the group and is met with minimal resistance, the group “feels itself a child of destiny and it provokes more admiration and emulation than resentment and opposition.”⁴⁴ The danger of this form of deception is clear. What is seen as success, or progress, is actually decline. The distorted success becomes the goal of disadvantaged groups and the pride of the dominant, successful group.

Further there is what Lonergan calls the general bias⁴⁵ of commonsense, a profound shortsightedness. General bias of common sense...

...systematically ignores long-term considerations in favour of short-term practical advantage, that prevents the emergence of further questions beyond its competence on the grounds that they are irrelevant and unpractical, and that

⁴² Shute, 47-48.

⁴³ *Method in Theology*, 54.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 250-263.

constantly adjusts what ought to be to concur with what happens to be done.⁴⁶

General bias focuses its attention on the immediate practical situation. A long-term view seems like a waste of time. Questions of theory, theology, history, philosophy and ethics are at best a troublesome distraction. It is possible for specialists to get caught up in general bias, unable to see the importance and practicality of another discipline's interests. Common sense is helpful in arriving at quick decisions, and is useful in daily living, however it becomes an obstacle when general bias thinks itself omni-competent. The general bias of common sense is perhaps the most dangerous of all the biases that Lonergan identifies because it directs history as if it were the only rational probability. Lonergan writes:

For common sense is unequal to the task of thinking on the level of history. It stands above the scotosis of the dramatic subject, above the egoism of the individual, above the bias of dominant and of depressed but militant groups that realize only the ideas they see to be to their immediate advantage. But the general bias of common sense prevents it from being effective in realizing ideas, however appropriate and reasonable, that suppose a long view or that set up higher integrations or that involve the solution of intricate and disputed issues.⁴⁷

As general bias keeps people and groups content with the status quo, decline follows to the point that people are unable to “distinguish between social achievement and the social surd.”⁴⁸ Even those working to end conflict have been affected by this bias. Traditional

⁴⁶ Shute, 48.

⁴⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 253.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 255.

forms of conflict resolution negate any usefulness of religion in solving conflicts. Religion as a tool for peace is rejected based on the ‘common sense’ of a society who feels religion is divisive and reactionary. This limits the potential for the resolution of the conflict and the possibility of future conflicts. This thesis is an example of the field of religious conflict transformation standing up against general bias of conventional forms of conflict resolution and taking on a long-term point of view that includes contributions from alternative sources.

The deceptiveness of each of these forms of bias hides its effects from those involved by assuring people that bias is good, helpful, and promotes the best possible way forward. Decline actively seeks and weakens true forms of progress. “Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good.”⁴⁹ Whether we are dealing with the deep blindness of dramatic bias, the self-interested egoism of individual bias, protective policies of group bias, the short-sightedness of general bias, or a combination of two or more of these biases at work we know that whatever its solution it will not arise without coaxing. It is one thing to recognize biases at work, recognizing what might instigate its reversal is quite another. As Lonergan clearly points out “such aberrations are easy to maintain and difficult to correct.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Method in Theology*, 55.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

2.2.3 Differentiated Cycles of Decline: Long and Short Cycles

Just as the unimpeded and authentic cooperation of persons and communities leads to progress, so the operation of the four biases leads to decline. However, Lonergan distinguishes two cycles of decline: the shorter cycle and the longer cycle.

The main operator in the shorter cycles of decline is group bias. Group bias privileges dominant groups; it sets policies that favour their economic and social advance and provides their members positions of power and authority. Group bias has within it the seeds of its own reversal. Dominant groups impose policies that benefit themselves, while refusing alternative, possibly progressive policies. Meanwhile, depressed or oppressed groups coalesce their resistance around alternative policies and plans. The result can be of two varieties: (1) the formerly oppressed group may promote an alternative biased agenda resulting in revolt and violent revolution; or (2) it may gravitate to policies born of authenticity resulting in progressive new situations. We can locate Marx's preoccupation with the class struggle in the context of the shorter cycle of decline. Marx however, mistook the class struggle for progress and failed to recognize that simply changing the class in power did not address the fundamental problem of the longer cycle of decline.

The shorter cycle of decline can be turned around when minority/depressed groups are able to authentically evaluate the destruction of the dominant group bias and promote progress, which undermines the oppressive group bias. We can briefly differentiate the shorter and longer cycles are as follows:

The shorter cycle turns upon ideas that are neglected by dominant groups only to be championed later by depressed groups. The longer cycle of decline is characterized by the

neglect of ideas to which all groups are rendered indifferent by the general bias of common sense.⁵¹

General bias of common sense restricts the long-term view. Common sense disguises that which is chance or illusion as fact and reality. The long-term view becomes impractical and superficial for common sense. The longer cycle of decline results in a deteriorated social situation where progress creeps to a bitter crawl. This slowing of progress blocks the detached and disinterested desire to know. Wonder becomes a barrier to practical business of daily life and the neglect of the long-term view results in missed possibilities.⁵² Eventually, Lonergan believes, the longer cycle of decline will lead to totalitarianism and mass conflict. “This cycle is long because it teaches a lesson of utmost difficulty, namely that the needs of human living are not adequately met by common sense, not even by a combination of technology, economics, and politics. What humanity needs is a ‘higher viewpoint’.”⁵³ As Lonergan himself writes “there is a convergence of evidence of the assertion that the longer cycle is to be met, not by any idea or set of ideas on the level of technology, economics, or politics, but only by the attainment of a higher viewpoint in man’s understanding and making of man.”⁵⁴ That higher viewpoint is what necessitates Lonergan’s third approximation: recovery.

⁵¹ Ibid., 252.

⁵² Shute, 51.

⁵³ Mark T. Miller, *Why the Passion?: Bernard Lonergan on the Cross as Communication*, PhD Dissertation, Department of Theology, Boston College (The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2008), 122.

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 258.

2.3 Recovery

Although we may be able to recognize the barriers that result from the biases, and the breakdown of progress that results, there is still the problem of the social surd – the cumulative brokenness and damage caused by bias. Recognizing the problem, then, is but a first step to solving it and solving it requires that we convince others of the needed solution. One ally in the struggle however, is the very structure of human knowing, which is progressive in its very nature. We are born with the unrestricted capacity to wonder, to reach for the stars, as it were. We can seek to understand why we are the way we are. We can wonder why there is evil and decline and, in the face of it, we can seek the higher viewpoints, and the ultimate perfection that would reverse the evil of the social surd. This for Lonergan is the striving for God, the unrestricted known unknown that keeps our minds wondering, and our selves ever searching for improvements in how we live. Our native transcendent orientation is a conduit to the higher viewpoint that for Lonergan constitutes the source of redemption, the third element in his dialectic of history.

2.3.1 The Problem of Reversing Decline

The problem we face is that whatever philosophy we come up with, whatever strategy for reversal of bias we can manage to lay out, we are still faced with the same problem. Bias of one sort or another will affect the living out of that new philosophy or strategy. We are held in position by our incapacity to foster sustained development, the detached and disinterested unrestricted desire to know.

It is impossible to find in oneself the motivation required in order to implement fully the five basic precepts: be

attentive, be intelligent, be rational, be reasonable, be in love. Not only are the psyche and the will inadequate to the task, but the intellect, having absorbed a lot of false ideas during the process of its socialization, easily falls prey to a wrong estimation (or sometimes even denial) of ethical issues, of sin, and of moral impotence.⁵⁵

Moral impotence, and incomplete intelligence measured by the gap between one's effective and essential freedom,⁵⁶ keep us from ultimately reversing decline. Reversal of decline is impossible because of "the facticity of the human inconsistency between knowing and doing."⁵⁷ The difference between effective and essential freedom is like the difference between game plan and what actually was done during game time.

Man is free essentially inasmuch as possible courses of action are grasped by practical insight, motivated by reflection, and executed by decision. But man is free effectively to a greater or less extent inasmuch as this dynamic structure is open to grasping, motivating, and executing a broad or a narrow range of otherwise possible courses of action.⁵⁸

Our effective freedom is conditioned by external circumstance, an individual's cognitional and intellectual development, and a person's willingness. Essential freedom is the potential for freedom. Bias and decline restrict effective freedom.

⁵⁵Louis Roy, "Moral Development and Faith: A Few Suggestions from Bernard Lonergan," *The Lonergan Institute*, http://www.lonergan.org/dialogue_partners/roy/Moral_Development_and_Faith.htm (accessed October 29, 2013).

⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 650.

⁵⁷ See lecture by Patrick Byrne, "Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 11, Part II: Chapter 18: "The Possibility of Ethics", " *Insight Course* (Boston: Boston College, 2010), <http://bclonergan.org/wp-content/docs/111sp2.pdf>.

⁵⁸ Lonergan, *Insight*, 643.

This barrier to reversing decline does mean the fact of social surd is the final world. In a world of emergent probability⁵⁹ given sufficiently large numbers and long lengths of time even remote probabilities become actual. In other words, the higher viewpoint that would reverse decline is within the domain of the universe as it is. For Lonergan, then, there arises the question of the existence of a universal good, which is for Lonergan the question of the existence of God. Our transcendental intentionality directs us to ponder the nature of the universe, what Lonergan understands as the question of God.

For Lonergan, the existence of God is a matter of fact. The fact of our unrestricted desire to know, supposes a complete unrestricted intelligibility that is the ground of matters of fact. As Lonergan states, “We can point to the fact that our assumption is confirmed by its fruits. So implicitly we grant that the universe is intelligible and, once that is granted there arises the question whether the universe could be intelligible without having an intelligent ground.”⁶⁰ That intelligent ground is the absolutely unconditioned: it is God. And because the order of the universe suggests that it is good, God is ultimately good.

The order of this universe in all its aspects and details has been shown to be the product of unrestricted understanding, of unlimited power, of complete goodness. Because God is omniscient, he knows man’s plight. Because he is

⁵⁹ Emergent probability is Lonergan’s notion of world order. All things maintain an intelligible order, which flows in predictable patterns. See chapter 4 *Insight*, 144-151.

⁶⁰ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 101.

omnipotent, he can remedy it. Because he is good, he wills to do so.⁶¹

Redemption is the restoration of authenticity that comes with the unrestricted falling in love with the absolutely unconditioned, intelligible universal, God. The key to tapping into the unrestricted falling in love is faith, and faith is a matter of grace. Falling in love with God is falling in love with a higher intelligibility, yet it is intelligible nonetheless. Lonergan famously states, “Faith is the knowledge born out of religious love.”⁶² The knowledge of faith is different from self-constituted knowledge which we generate ‘from below upwards, that is from wonder to knowledge’.⁶³ The normative pattern of human knowing moves from experience to understanding, from understanding to judgments of fact and judgments of value, and finally to decisions. The knowledge of faith comes, as it were, from above, downwards; following a similar yet inverse pattern neatly encapsulated in Augustine’s famous line ‘we believe in order to understand.’ With faith, knowledge precedes understanding.

Being in unrestricted love with God and so having faith is not without consequence. “Faith recognizes that God grants [people] their freedom, that he wills them to be persons and not just his automata, that he calls them to the higher authenticity that overcomes evil with good.”⁶⁴ The higher authenticity that Lonergan is talking about happens through the process of personal displacement or transformation, which he calls

⁶¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 716.

⁶² Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 115

⁶³ See Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, 141.

⁶⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 116

conversion.⁶⁵ “As the question of God is implicit in all questioning, so being in love with God is the basic fulfillment of our conscious intentionality.”⁶⁶ This being in love with God has the ability to transform evil into good. It overcomes decline through transcendent being in love.

...Redemption regards sin, it presupposes sin, and it is the transformation of the situation created by sin. Consequently, in a consideration of the redemption one has to have in mind the existence not of a simple intelligibility but of the transcendent intelligibility of God meeting the unintelligibility of sin.⁶⁷

The experience of the transcendent intelligibility of God is found through authenticity in self-transcendence, through conversion.

2.3.2 Recovery as Conversion

The key to meeting the effects of bias and the cycles of decline is conversion. For Lonergan the process of conversion is a transformation of a subject and of the world around him. While conversion occurs over prolonged periods of time, conversions can be manifest in a single act or emerge gradually. Conversions completely change the direction or orientation of a person. “It is as if one’s eyes were opened and one’s former world faded and fell away.”⁶⁸ The world that one came to understand previously is no longer a reality and the convert lives differently in the new horizon she finds herself in.

⁶⁵ See the “Structure of the Good” diagram in *Method in Theology*, 48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶⁷ Bernard Lonergan, “The Redemption,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, 3-38 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 12.

⁶⁸ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 130.

Conversion enriches understanding, guides judgments, and reinforces decisions.⁶⁹ “[It] is not merely a change or even a development; rather, it is a radical transformation on which follows, on all levels of living, and interlocked series of changes and developments.”⁷⁰ Conversions change the way we live; they change the way we apprehend and value our world. The effect: Our relationships change.

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan identifies three kinds of conversion: intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. Each of these conversions is distinct yet ultimately they are integrally connected to the other. Lonergan writes: “The three dimensions are solidary. Conversion in one leads to the conversion in the others, and relapse from one prepares for relapse in the others.”⁷¹ Intellectual conversion is conversion oriented toward knowing. Intellectual conversion is the movement from understanding knowing as seeing to knowing as adequately self-appropriated. The movement away from “the myth is that knowing is like looking, that objectivity is seeing what is there to be seen and not seeing what is not there.”⁷² The unconverted experience treats reality by the criterion of the world of immediacy. What is given in experience is the real. Whereas the intellectually converted live in a world mediated by meanings; they understand knowing through self-appropriation, as experiencing, understanding, and judging. Knowledge is correctly understood experience and all knowledge is knowledge of the real. When one is

⁶⁹ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁰ Bernard Lonergan, "Theology in its New Context," in *A Second Collection*, ed. F.J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrell, 55-68 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 65-66.

⁷¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 86.

⁷² Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238.

intellectually converted she is “liberated from that blunder”, that occupies “long-ingrained habits of thought and speech”⁷³ that limit the self-transcendence natural to the process of human knowing. Overcoming interpersonal conflict often requires a self-reflective process. Intellectual conversion is part of the self-reflective process that opens up new possibilities and meanings for those involved. People who are intellectually converted are better able to understand themselves and others allowing for more complete insights and the curiosity to ask questions for further understanding.

Like intellectual conversion moral conversion is rooted in self-transcendence. While intellectual conversion concerns what we *know*, moral conversion concerns what we *do*. Our ultimate concern to do what is truly good is at the heart of moral conversion and it is manifest at the fourth level of cognition, that is, in our deliberation. “Moral conversion changes the criterion of one’s decisions and choices from satisfactions to values.”⁷⁴ When one discovers that she is a moral being she recognizes the importance and reality of judgments of value, and that she is responsible for the decisions and actions she takes.⁷⁵ Personal actions of the morally converted are motivated by values. The morally converted are able to distinguish between ‘actions of satisfaction’ and ‘actions of value’. This is not to say that one is ever completely morally converted, the process of

⁷³ Ibid., 239. Lonergan provides a discussion on philosophic orientations providing illustrations of various philosophical horizons (empiricism, idealism, and naïve realism) that fail to understand intellectual conversion because each follows, to some extent, that knowing is like looking. Only what he refers to as critical realism, a philosophic leaning that recognizes the process of knowing (experiencing, understanding, and judging) as a process of self-transcendence can be converted to understand the real world as mediated by meaning. See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 238-239; 263-265.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 240.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 38.

conversion takes time and one must continue to scrutinize ones values from moment to moment.⁷⁶ The acting out of values takes years of practice; consistency requires development of self-transcendence, that is: heightening one's judgments of value to the point of transformation of values, transformation of judgments of fact, and transformation of understanding. Moral conversion pushes individuals and communities to uncover the implicit biases complicating deliberation. The morally unconverted do not seek ultimate freedom and authenticity, instead "the morally unconverted person feels secure in identifying the good with that which satisfies."⁷⁷ Without moral conversion one tends to pursue what is only apparently good and not what is truly good.⁷⁸ Freedom to make the good decision based on value is the primary concern of someone who has experienced moral conversion. The promotion of authenticity and freedom⁷⁹ are conditions of the truly, and not just apparently, good. But as complete moral development is a perhaps unattainable goal in this life, the morally converted person continues to develop in the 'pure detached desire for freedom.'⁸⁰The morally converted will have to struggle and develop skills that promote the desire for freedom understanding that complete conversion has not taken place.

The positive effect of the morally converted in situations of conflict is irreplaceable. Without it, the situation is hopeless. When subjects are morally converted

⁷⁶ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁷ Michael Rende, *Loneragan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1991), 182.

⁷⁸ Lonergan, *Third Collection*, 248.

⁷⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, Chapter 17 and 18.

⁸⁰ Rende, 182.

they act differently because they value differently. Morally converted individuals will understand that their actions must reflect what is in reality truly good, not merely what seems good for them in the moment. For a business that extracts resources from the earth their immediate good may have been simply profit. However, a morally converted business has reflected on its extractive processes, seen the environmental damage and attempts to change its practices to eliminate its destructive effects. What appeared to be the primary good (profit) through reflection and transformation becomes less significant and the truly, long-term, actual good (care for the planet) becomes the primary concern.

Intellectual conversion is rooted in the unrestricted desire to know; and moral conversion is concerned with the unrestricted desire for transcendence, authenticity and freedom; religious conversion is concerned with ultimate value and mystery. It is the unrestricted, unconditioned, transcendent, otherworldly falling in love. The Christian God offers an unconditional love and gift of grace that supersedes desires for justice and transforms the heart of the sinner. For Christians, religious conversion is the understanding that God's love for us gives us meaning and value beyond measure. "Religious conversion is the discovery of ourselves as worthwhile and significant because we exist in God's love."⁸¹ Religious conversion, however, does not have to occur in a traditional religious context. "Properly understood, one surrenders not oneself or one's personal moral autonomy, but one's illusion of absolute autonomy."⁸² We are not alone.

⁸¹ Michael Rende, *Loneragan on Conversion: The Development of a Notion* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1991).

⁸² Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), 31.

Religious conversion is the being-in-love that directs our actions not for our self but for the other. “Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfilment of that capacity.”⁸³ This love transforms our values, priorities, and knowing. This dynamic love given in religious conversion is a mystery. We experience this transcendent love but are unable to know it, that is, understand and judge it. We consciously give and receive unrestricted love, not on the level of experience, understanding or judging but on the level of deliberation.

It is the type of consciousness that deliberates, makes judgments of value, decides, acts responsibly and freely. But it is this consciousness as brought to a fulfilment, as having undergone a conversion, as possessing a basis that may be broadened and deepened and heightened and enriched but not superseded, as ready to deliberate and judge and decide and act with easy freedom of those that do all good because they are in love. So the gift of God’s love occupies the ground and root of the fourth and highest level of man’s intentional consciousness. It takes over the peak of the soul, the *apex animae*.⁸⁴

Conversion on this level changes the movement and actions on each other level of conversion as well as level of cognition because all types of conversion are pushing toward self-transcendence.

But that capacity [the capacity of moral and intellectual conversion] meets fulfilment, that desire turns to joy, when religious conversion transforms the existential subject into a subject of love, a subject held, grasped, possessed, owned through a total and so an other-worldly love.⁸⁵

⁸³ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 106.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

An unrestricted being in love provokes one to act responsibly and in doing so judges more reasonably, understands more intelligently and experiences more attentively. Religious conversion mysteriously, yet intelligibly, reaches above the evil and shortsightedness of bias and the effects of decline, and opens up new possibilities to live out the good and move forward into progress. The same is true for conflict. Whether between individuals or groups, systems can move forward in certain progress however the biases of the conflict must be overcome through a process of conversion in order to heal the past wrongs and disable the effects of decline.

2.4 Summary

This chapter detailed Lonergan's dialectic of history. As we have discovered the effects progress, decline, and redemption in the context of history, it has become apparent that these three approximations are also present in conflicts. Uncovering the consequences of bias reveals the points of tension within conflicts that cause many conflicts to seem insurmountable. Yet the possibility of conversion allows for the reversal of bias and the opportunity to overcome the surd of bias is revealed through an other-worldly falling in love that transforms hearts and minds. In the following chapter we will see how scholars infused Lonergan's dialectic of history into the process of conflict transformation.

Chapter 3 Reconciliation: Understanding and Overcoming Bias

The previous chapters have situated the field of conflict resolution and provided an introduction to Lonergan's method and philosophy of history. Only recently have scholars managed to integrate the two areas of study. This chapter looks at two such studies. *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* by Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard and *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Bias, Decline, and Conversion Based on the Works of Bernard Lonergan* by Cyril Orji. After a brief introduction to each, I link these works to Lonergan's dialectical theory of history primarily through a consideration of how bias works in conflict situations. Next, I highlight how each study uniquely addresses the problem of bias. Finally, I integrate the approaches of Melchin and Picard with Orji. Bringing together the two approaches provides a framework for addressing interpersonal, intergroup, and international conflict.

3.1 Situating *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, and *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*

In *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard discuss mediation as a method of conflict resolution that creates an environment of learning. The notion of learning in the midst of conflict, or during the process of conflict, is what inspired the development of Insight Mediation, the model of mediation developed and practiced out of Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. Melchin and Picard use Lonergan's cognitional theory, with its emphasis on the occurrence of insights as a basis for their approach. The book is short, yet it is dense with theory and replete with concrete

examples of the Insight Mediation process. The first half of the book situates the reader within the current literature on conflict resolution and mediation methods, and introduces the reader to Lonergan's Insight Theory. In chapter 2 the authors give a brief literature review of conflict resolution theories. The theories that they highlight create the setting for their contribution to conflict resolution through Insight Mediation. Chapter 3 follows with an account of Insight Mediation that they developed on the basis of Lonergan's cognitional theory. The chapter offers a non-threatening introduction to what is an admittedly dense philosophical theory.

In the second half of the book Melchin and Picard offer examples of Insight Mediation. They suggest their approach not only provides an alternative approach to mediating interpersonal and small group conflicts but can also be an invaluable tool for mediating more complex social conflicts in a democracy. Chapter 4 walks the reader through the process of Insight Mediation and shows how it is connected to cognitional theory. This application relies on basic steps, principles, and unique tools that focus on meaning and values to resolve conflict relationally. For example, the authors show how the exploration of past narratives can be valuable sources of insight for mediation participants. In Chapter 5 Melchin and Picard provide two examples of alternative conflict resolution strategies in personal and communal healing contexts. The concluding chapter connects Insight Mediation to the task of fostering democratic societies. Conflicts are of course not unique to democracies, however democracies involve citizens in a unique way where conflicts must be worked out through corporate learning. In Canada, for example, diverse people, cultures, and values exist in close proximity and conflicts

invariably arise. A means must be found to communicate and resolve differences among diverse personal and communal contexts, including, perhaps especially, religious contexts. Picard and Melchin ultimately go beyond the conflict resolution context, to offer a new way to think about the democratic processes.

Transforming Conflict through Insight has a unique potential to inform and influence the way that we address conflict and practice mediation. It is not that a focus on ‘learning’ is somehow novel to conflict resolution. Lonergan’s method of self-appropriation however offers the possibility of a precise, unified, and empirically verifiable account of the learning process. In this respect Lonergan’s recognition of the extension of ‘empirical data’ to include the data of consciousness as well as the data of sense is of special methodological significance. To quote Lonergan directly:

Generalized empirical method operates on a combination of both the data of sense and the data of consciousness: it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not treat of the subjects operations without taking in to account the corresponding objects.¹

This approach has the potential to greatly expand and integrate the available data. As such, we can well appreciate the extent to which *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* can only address so many of the themes relevant to the field of conflict resolution. So for example, Melchin and Picard do no more than superficially address how Insight Mediation might apply to large-scale conflicts that involve multiple groups, intra and

¹ Bernard Lonergan, “Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge”, *A Third Collection* (New York, Paulist Press, 1985), 141.

interstate violence that might persist for generations. While they are aware of these kinds of complex conflicts, their focus is on the small-scale conflicts of democratic societies and so they do not address international violence, such as war and genocide. Nonetheless, they hope that their research leads to future research that deals with these kinds of difficult conflicts.² However, if Insight Mediation strategies are to address large-scale conflicts, the problem of bias in conflict resolution must be addressed more fully.

Along with Melchin and Picard there has emerged within the field of conflict resolution, scholarship influenced by Lonergan's philosophy. Of particular relevance to the current project is Cyril Orji's *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa: An Analysis of Bias, Decline, and Conversion Based on the Works of Bernard Lonergan*³ Orji examines the history of ethnic and religious conflicts in Africa, identifying in particular how ethnic and religious allegiances are misused and abused to promote one group at the expense of another. Relying on Lonergan's dialectical theory of history, Orji discusses and analyses the conflicts of Sub-Saharan Africa and comes to the conclusion that the net effect of the history of these conflicts is decline. He suggests that Lonergan's theory with its foundational elements of progress, decline and redemption, provide resources for overcoming conflict and re-establishing a progressive path in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Unlike Melchin and Picard, Orji did not write a book based on the practice of conflict resolution. Melchin and Picard wrote their book in order to promote a new way of

² Kenneth R. Melchin and Cheryl A. Picard, *Transforming Conflict through Insight* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 6.

³ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*.

doing mediation in the hopes that others would take up the study of Lonergan's work as it could be applied to conflict transformation. Orji's approach begins with Lonergan's theory and applies the notions of bias, conversion, dialogue, and dialectic to analyze and understand ethnic and religious conflict in Africa. These books were published at the same time and they serendipitously complement each other. While Melchin and Picard are concerned with interpersonal and small group conflict, Orji expands the application of Lonergan's theories to large-scale group conflicts where the complicated dynamics seem at first sight insurmountable. Nonetheless, both Melchin and Picard and Orji are interested in communicating insights about conflict to practitioners and academics that seek an understanding of the complex arena of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. While their situational contexts differ, both begin their analysis out of the context of Bernard Lonergan's methodology, and both are especially reliant on Lonergan's notion of cognitive process, and in Orji's case on Lonergan's account of the biases. Melchin and Picard are aware of Lonergan's account of bias but do not stress it. They prefer to accentuate the positive elements of human curiosity and acts of insight that follow from it.

As we have seen in the last chapter, bias plays a significant role in the conflict of our world. This chapter will examine how each of these books addresses the problems of bias and encourages a holistic and healing view of moving through conflict.

3.2 Bias in Conflict

In this section we will explore the role bias plays in conflict in these two works. As Orji's subtitle suggests, he approaches the matter explicitly. While Melchin and Picard do not directly address the problem of bias directly, it is clear they have a deep understanding of it. As we shall discover, the focus of the Insight Mediation approach is actually on the transformation of bias.

3.2.1 Understanding Bias in Transforming Conflict Through Insight

Whether in large group conflict like civil war or resource ownership, or low-level conflict between a manager and an employee, all successful conflict resolution depends on the willingness of participants. Melchin and Picard take a fairly positive view of the inherent willingness of participants in the mediation process and so they do not deal at any length with the difficulty of getting parties to the table in the first place. They start with situations in which participants have at least a minimal willingness to work out the conflict. In these situations Insight Mediation is an especially good approach, as it helps participants discover and transform the habitual meanings, feelings, values, and past narratives dramatically affected by bias that have prevented the prior resolution of a conflict. As we go through life we also develop assumptions and attitudes that distort our ability to relate to experiences. These distortions have the effect of blocking new experiences and closing us off from other people. They cut off new lines of thinking and questioning, and limit our ability to differentiate and integrate new ideas. When new experiences challenge our meaning perspectives, our resistance to change is not simply

the result of the comfort zone created by our frames of reference; it is also the result of distortions at work within them.⁴

For Melchin and Picard getting insight into the meanings, feelings, values and narratives that inform a conflict is central to the transformation of the conflict. Biases are often woven into these meanings and narratives and coming to terms with them are part of the challenge of getting the parties to the point of mediation in the first place. They also are at play in the mediation itself for as we discovered in the last chapter, bias is a tricky and pervasive influence that blocks potential solutions. It is, as Lonergan claimed, ‘a flight from understanding.’⁵ As the flight from understanding plays a significant role in conflict, Insight Mediation emphasizes the need to understand feelings as indicators of the disvalues that lead to conflict.⁶ As we grow from childhood to adulthood, our meanings and values shift. Our world is transformed from a world of immediacy of an infant to a childhood and then adult world mediated by meaning and motivated by values.

The world mediated by meaning is the world revealed through the memories of others, through the common sense of various communities through the pages of literature, through the works of artists, scholars and scientists, through the experience of holy people of every culture, and through the reflections of philosophers and theologians.⁷

⁴ Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict through Insight*, 19.

⁵ Lonergan introduces the concept of ‘flight from understanding’ in *Insight*, 5-6 and is a common theme throughout his work. It is the act of bias, of incomplete inquiry.

⁶ Cheryl A. Picard and Kenneth R. Melchin, "Insight Mediation: A Learning-Centred Mediation Model," *Negotiation Journal*, January 2007: 48-49 and *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*.

⁷ Carla Mae Streeter, *The Glossary Project*, Concordia University, December 12, 2001, <http://lonergan.concordia.ca/glossary/glossary.htm> (accessed October 29, 2013).

People carry with them these meanings and values that are apprehended in feelings. They are woven into narratives that inform social relations. Past narratives create established expectations of an “other”; established expectations assign default meanings and values in present and future events. They often increase feelings of vulnerability and anticipated threats.

We can easily understand how bias is at work to inform the feelings, meanings, values and narratives in ways that make it difficult to overcome conflict. Let us take the example of a mother and daughter. A daughter was upset with her mother for asking her to organize a dinner party for the mother’s co-workers. The daughter got very upset, feeling overworked and undervalued. She believed that her mother was not interested in spending time with her but simply wanted to use her time. When the daughter arrived to help, she immediately took the offensive informing her mother of how she was busy and that she could not always rely on her help. After a bit of discussion she realized that the thing she valued most was spending one-on-one time with her mother and that she was feeling threatened by replacing this time with other tasks and people.

Recalling Lonergan’s four kinds of bias, we can identify a compound form of bias at work in this example, in this case a compound of dramatic and individual bias.⁸ We begin with dramatic bias. People in conflict will often be unaware of the underlying motivations that affect their feelings and actions or the past narratives informing assigned meanings. The daughter in this case did not know that her mother wanted to spend time

⁸ See previous Chapter 2 Lonergan’s Dialectic of History, 41-46.

with her preparing for a fun evening where she could ‘show off’ her daughter’s talents to her co-workers. Individual bias informed the daughter’s response to her mother. She was tired from a long week of work and did not see the suggested activity as any benefit to her. She wanted to spend quality time with her mother but her feelings were wrapped up with past-narratives leading her to believe that her mother was focused on entertaining and did not care about the time they spent together. The mother wanted to spend time with her daughter but also wanted to throw a party for her co-workers. By asking the daughter to help her she decided on a short-term solution to a more complex, deeply rooted issue. The daughter did want to spend time with her mother but knew that the quality of the time spent together would be diminished by the nature of the work. The mother did not recognize the difference and as a result did not ask further questions about the hopes of her daughter for the time they shared, resulting in hurt feelings. Feelings, meanings, values, and narratives are interwoven into the biases as described by Lonergan. It is important to recognize these elements of conflict in order to ‘get to the bottom’ of bias, and by default to the bottom of conflicts. It is this kind of in interpersonal and small groups settings, whether in families or the workplace, for which Insight Mediation is particular well-suited.

While group and general bias are relevant to small group dynamics, it is the dynamics of ethnic conflicts, often infused with religious identifications that bring out more fully the dynamics of group and general bias. We turn now to the larger arena of group conflicts, as illustrated by Orji’s *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*.

3.2.2 Understanding Bias in Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa

Bias is the central focus in Orji's *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*. Orji notes that Lonergan "offers an analysis of bias that addresses a root cause of conflict in the human person and society."⁹ Specifically, Lonergan's analysis provides strategies that result in a richer understanding of the ethnic and religious conflicts prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. Orji argues that politicians and military leaders in Africa have manipulated ethnicity and religious differences for their own, often self-interested, ends. Orji notes that much of the current analysis of conflicts in Africa focuses on the legacy of colonialism and its effects on the history of tribal relations. This approach, however, is incomplete.

While the various levels of authority we examined seemed to agree with each other's analysis of the remote cause of the conflict, they differ significantly in their treatments of immediate cause of the conflict. More significantly, they offer no analysis on why the human person is prone to acts of prejudice...that make the human person prone to behave in a manner that is not only detrimental to himself or herself, but also to his or her peoples.¹⁰

In other words, typically the colonialist explanation begins from a sociological concept, colonialism, and applies it to whatever particular situation without addressing the broader questions about *why* human conflicts occur in the first place. Certainly the colonialism narrative offers a rich vein for the analysis of African conflicts. However, there are further questions: We can ask, what is it about human beings that results in the

⁹ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

sad history of tribe against tribe, culture against culture? This is the missing dimension that Lonergan's analysis of bias adds to analysis.

Religion and ethnic differences certainly heighten conflicts.¹¹ To address inter-group (ethnic/religious) conflict, Orji offers a detailed study of Lonergan's notion of bias as it applies to conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. Orji identifies *dramatic bias* as one of the roots of prejudice relevant to conflict in Africa.¹² "At the root of ethnic and religious conflicts are blind spots and deep-seated scotoma that lead to ethnic exclusivism and religious bigotry, which leaves a harmful and lasting impression on the social order."¹³ While religious and ethnic differences do not automate intolerance for other ethnicities and religions, bias can perpetuate and ingrain such intolerance. *Group bias*, evident in ethnocentrism and tribalism, presents as frustration, bitterness, resentment, and hatred between groups in Africa.¹⁴ Group bias provides a collective context for the expression of the blind spots created by dramatic bias and, in turn, dramatic bias provides deep emotional glue for sustaining the hatred manifest within groups for each other. This is commonly manifest in the nepotism and the exclusion of people based on tribal/religious lines. Such strategies often stall progress and contribute significantly to economic, social and political decline; the common good is sacrificed to the narrower group interest of

¹¹ Ibid., 94.

¹² He does this with the help of scholars like Melchin, Copeland and Doran. See Kenneth R. Melchin, *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics Based on Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 1998); Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the dialectics of history* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); and, Shawn Copeland, *A Genetic Study of the Idea of the Human Good in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan*. Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, (Boston: Boston College, 1991).

¹³ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* , 54.

¹⁴ Ibid., 96.

those in power. Further, what Lonergan refers to as general bias of common sense distorts the community's ability reach an integrated understanding of what constitutes the common good. Ethnicity, class, religion, and nationality encourage the primary identity to be with one's own group.¹⁵

Religious prejudice aligning with ethnic pride is the general bias of common sense conspiring with group bias and this accounts for the tendency of the dominant group or privileged groups to exclude from their consideration any fruitful ideas from the less influential groups, and thereby to distort the good ideas of these groups by selfish and expedient compromise.¹⁶

Thus, it is no surprise that we see evidence of the shorter and longer cycles of decline at work in Africa. The shorter cycle, with its origins in group bias, results in deteriorating tribal and ethnic relations. The longer cycle of decline, with its origins in the failure to understand the exigencies of the common good and the long-term view, results in deepening and widespread social disintegration that affects all groups.

3.3 The Possibility of Reconciliation

Acknowledging the bias at work in conflicts is the first step to positively transforming it. We turn now to strategies for overcoming bias.

¹⁵ These connections are not unique to the African context, regions with conflict such as the Former Yugoslavia, India, Cambodia have been divided similarly. In the cases that Orji is discussing much of the division is a result of the effects of colonialism, which continue to separate and exclude based on past inequalities.

¹⁶ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 96. Summarizing Copeland.

3.3.1 Overcoming Bias in Transforming Conflict Through Insight

Insight Mediation focuses on facilitating transformative learning in the mediation process. Although mediation theories and methods are not formulaic and they may not work in every instance, it is clear that mediation strategies often lead to positive outcomes for participants. There is often a turning point in the mediation process, ‘the magic moment.’ when parties have breakthroughs, and attitudes and perspectives shift. Insight Mediation was developed to facilitate those magic shifts brought about through transformative learning, through insights.¹⁷ Insight mediators believe that conflicts occur primarily because of a perceived experience of threat.¹⁸ As we discovered earlier in this chapter, values are connected to feelings and past narratives, often distorted by bias. Current conflicts are viewed in the context of this history and this feeds the perception of threat. The Insight Mediation approach believes that apparently conflicting cares and values can coexist without any fear of threat. As “parties gain insights into values and cares behind actions, overcome barriers imposed by feelings of threat, [parties] come to realize that both sets of cares can coexist.”¹⁹ The role of the Insight Mediator is to encourage the curiosity that leads to the occurrence of the helpful insight.

This insight follows careful attention to the problem itself and then enables the learner to move beyond an understanding of the problem to an understanding about the underlying relationship. Insight transforms feelings, alters

¹⁷ Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, 76-77.

¹⁸ Ibid., 82. Based on Insight Mediation’s principles, other principles include: People are social by nature; Peoples actions are not solely self-interest; and, Understanding values of all parties can change the experience of conflict and help to resolve conflict. 81-84.

¹⁹ Ibid., 80.

perspectives, and, creates new possibilities for relationships.²⁰

All of this fosters a place for learning about oneself and the other and transforms the nature of a conflict. They are the magic moments all mediators hope for. Like other methods of mediation, Insight Mediation does not instruct participants to mimic the mediators' analysis but instead focuses on encouraging parties' to reach their own conclusions together.²¹

Insight Mediation employs three unique techniques: linking, de-linking, and verification. Each assists mediators in helping participants overcome the effects of bias that trap them into believing that there is no possibility of reconciliation. Linking²² is about gaining direct insights. "This is the 'aha' event that, transforms us from confusion to understanding, and gives rise to the meaning that enrich our experience."²³ Linking connects current feelings to past events. The mediator encourages the participants' to ask questions about feelings and in this way to discover the underlying narratives that are projecting expectations of fear and threat. The mediator directs attention to the feelings that are connected to underlying values. "Feelings of value that shape our lives end up becoming a curious intermingling of our own feelings and feelings evoked by our

²⁰ Melchin and Picard, "Insight Mediation: A Learning-Centered Mediation Model", 38.

²¹ Insight Mediation is a five-step process. These steps are not linear and often will loop back until parties are able to imagine new possibilities for the future and make decisions together. The five steps of Insight Mediation are: 1) Attend to Process, 2) Broaden Understanding, 3) Deepen Insights, 4) Explore Possibilities, 5) Make Decisions. Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, 79-81.

²² *Ibid.*, 90-94.

²³ *Ibid.*, 62.

reactions to the feelings of others. Untangling these webs of feeling almost always plays a significant role in the resolving of conflicts.”²⁴ As parties gain direct insight into these links it exposes the bias and distortion tied up in feelings and expectations about the current situation. The insight gained about the complex ‘web of feelings’ creates a space where the participants can imagine life where their cares and values are not threatened.

De-linking²⁵ challenges the expectation of threat through by identifying inverse insights. Inverse insights²⁶ acknowledge that the current line of questioning is a dead-end and open up an opportunity to transition into new lines of questioning. Inverse insights do not answer our questions, “what they do is discover something inadequate in the questions we have been asking.”²⁷ Our lines of questioning are often loaded with particular expectations related to past experience. Inverse insights de-link these expectations. “The road to resolution and healing requires challenging these expectations of inevitability. Achieving the inverse insights necessary for getting out of these patterns can be extremely difficult.”²⁸ This is why mediators, in aiming for insights, must be especially attuned to the workings of bias. Bias is pervasively, intricately and smoothly interwoven into past narratives. Uncovering the distortion is a time consuming process, but shifts can take place. The shift itself does not have to be enormous, just enough to

²⁴ Ibid., 71.

²⁵ Ibid., 94-98.

²⁶ On inverse insights see Bernard Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 43-50. “While direct insight grasps the point, or sees the solution, or comes to know the reason, inverse insight apprehends that in some fashion the point is that there is no point, or that the solution is to deny a solution, or that the reason is that rationality of the real admits distinctions and qualifications” Lonergan, *A Third Collection*, 44.

²⁷ Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, 95.

²⁸ Ibid., 97.

allow parties to move from apparent certainty of their fears to some comfort with the uncertainty that occurs from genuine questioning.

As long as we remain certain that a course of action contains a threat, we cannot give ourselves over to authentic questioning. To explore requires admitting we do not already know. Uncertainty about answers is the condition of possibility for genuine questioning. De-linking aims at establishing this posture of uncertainty that is needed for parties to be genuinely curious about what matters to them in the conflict.²⁹

Transformative learning requires that we meet bias head on so that we can shift attention to genuine concern about their own and other's cares and threats. It is the power of the inverse insight that opens one up the possibilities of this shift.

Insight is not enough. There is an exigency in human knowing for evaluating the accuracy of insights, that is, verification.³⁰ The demand for verification forces the mediator (and the parties involved) to determine if our question and insights line up with the relevant experiences. It is very important that the mediator pay particular attention to discrepancies, and this requires that they confirm the insights and understandings with each of the parties. When insights are verified they become knowledge. When all parties can agree, they grasp new possibilities for the future *together*: the conflict has been transformed. Fear of threat and anger are redirected and the focus shifts to how the participants can live and thrive together.

²⁹ Ibid., 98.

³⁰ Ibid., 98-100.

3.3.2 Overcoming Bias in Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa

In many African conflicts, ethnicity and religious differences deeply influenced by the biases have been strategically used as a divisive tool. In *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* Orji identifies the overcoming of bias with acts of conversion.³¹ We turn now to that discussion.

Orji identifies disparities among religious traditions with respect to the meaning of conversion and attempts to provide a general understanding of conversion applicable to all those who profess to be religiously converted (i.e. Christians, Muslims, and members of African Traditional Religions). At the same time, in order to move toward living out an inclusive common good, dialogue and a re-envisioning of moral order requires at least some participants have experienced conversion. Orji addresses conversion as a ‘solution’ in two separate chapters. In chapter three he focuses on the possibility of self-transcendence, which he understands as essential to the process of conversion. In chapter four he considers the historical context of conflict.

The process of conversion liberates individuals from the ‘flight from understanding’ that is bias. In terms of Melchin and Picard’s Insight Mediation approach, the personal transformation of dramatic and individual bias in participants then can occur through insight, and its verification is a conversion.³² In order to deal with the African

³¹ For the most part, Orji’s analysis relies on Lonergan’s analysis of threefold conversion, intellectual, moral and religious, in *Method in Theology*. See in particular, *Method*, 238-244.

³² Given the primarily secular context of their intended audience, Melchin and Picard prefer the term transformation to conversion. The underlying reality is however the same. See for instance Kenneth Melchin *Living with Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics Based on Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: Novalis, 1998).

situation riddled with ethnic and religious conflicts, Orji enlarges the discussion of the ‘flight from understanding’ to include in depth analysis of the impact of all four biases, dramatic, individual, group, and the general bias of common sense. He writes, “what Lonergan says about bias and its corrective, conversion, can be correlated to the African situation where years of ethnic division and religious polarization have necessitated the call for change of heart and attitude.”³³ Authentic conversion provides the change of heart required to transform and liberate the practice of both those in power and the general populace. “Lonergan reminds us that one can lay claim to an authentic, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible existence only in so far as that person has been converted from his or her biased orientations that are inimical to the existence of the other.”³⁴ Conversion is a break with routine, yet distorted, patterns of experience. It brings to light the biases that infect patterns. Conversion provides a transformed space for building new relationships with the ‘other.’ It shifts the probabilities for the occurrence of helpful insights, creative strategies for improvement, true judgments of fact and value, and responsible actions. For Orji, the solution is not to separate or forcefully integrate³⁵ conflicting groups based on religious identification. Neither is the solution to increase

³³ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 202.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁵ Orji discusses various policies for ‘ethnic arithmetic’ or ‘ethnic or regional balance’, policies that have been implemented to curb violent conflict in some countries, such as Nigeria and Zimbabwe. See Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 132.

adherents³⁶ to a particular religion. Orji desires that conversion as he understands it, be realized by adherents within their own particular ethnic and religious contexts.

Although Lonergan never made it explicit, Orji believes that the levels of conversion correspond to kinds of bias. Intellectual conversion becomes a corrective to individual bias. Moral conversion is a corrective to group bias. Religious conversion transcends all bias by replacing it with love. In the same way that biases work together to create unintelligible situations, the various kinds of conversion are interconnected. Intellectual, moral, and religious conversion work together.³⁷ For example, individual bias influences group bias just as group bias informs individual bias.

In Sub-Saharan African countries...membership in the community is primarily determined by one's tribal affiliation. Each tribe has its own mores, values, culture, and even prejudices which often leads to spite or hatred of people outside of the tribe. An individual belonging to any one of the tribes...who suffers a distortion in the development of his or her own experiential and affective orientation provides a good example of the relation between individual and group bias. To undo this one needs intellectual, moral, and religious...conversion.³⁸

Conversion as the corrective for bias liberates its subjects, transforming their actions, worldviews, feelings and values. Conversion opens up the possibility for self-

³⁶ I am avoiding the term converts specifically to highlight that religious adherents are not necessarily religiously converted.

³⁷ When Lonergan refers to sublation he refers to it as a growth or shift that does not destroy or diminish what was previously understood but instead it is brought into a more fuller, clearer reality. For more on sublation see *Method in Theology*, 241-243.

³⁸ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 131-132.

transcendence where the subject is transformed into an authentic subject who loves and has the capacity to love their (former) enemy.

Orji next moves the discussion from a focus on interpersonal relations to focus on the social and historical context of those relationships. Orji's goal is to make social the intimate process of conversion. As he repeats several times: Conversion although extremely intimate, is not so personal as to be solitary.³⁹ Self-transcendence and conversion do not happen outside of community and so the impact of biases is not simply on individuals but is manifest in communities. Personal shifts and changes can go on to transform families and societies.

Lonergan argues that what can become communal can become historical, implying that the social process of overcoming bias can be ingrained in a group's history, which in turn can be passed from generation to generation, from one cultural milieu to another, and can also be adapted to changing circumstances while confronting new situations.⁴⁰

From this comes the hope that communities and civil societies can be transformed and live out a commitment to the common good of all and so reverse the cycle of decline.

Orji pays particular attention to Lonergan's discussion of dialectic (and, its natural partner, dialogue) in *Method in Theology*.⁴¹

³⁹ Orji reiterates this point at various points throughout ERCA. Without the personal act of conversion, positive social transformation seems unattainable. See *Ibid.*, 102, 140, 181, 227.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁴¹ In *Method in Theology*, the discussion of dialectic is in the context of functional specialization. While my discussion in this dissertation is preliminary to the a discussion of conflict resolution in terms of functional collaboration, I note that functional specialist methodology would prove a further and fuller context for this thesis.

Dialogue and dialectic serve as curative to bias, ensuring that in intellectual conversion one renounces the myriad of false philosophies, in moral conversion one keeps oneself free of individual, group and general bias, and in religious conversion one loves one's neighbor as one loves God.⁴²

Dialectic and dialogue exists to clarify viewpoints and direct subjects to greater authenticity. Orji quotes Lonergan at length:

Human authenticity is not some pure quality, some serene freedom from all oversights, all misunderstanding, all mistakes, all sins. Rather it consists in a withdrawal from unauthenticity, and the withdrawal is never a permanent achievement. It is ever precarious, ever to be achieved afresh, ever in great part a matter of uncovering still more oversights, acknowledging still further failures to understand, correcting still more mistakes, repenting more and more deeply hidden sins. Human development, in brief, is largely through the resolution of conflicts and, within the realm of intentional consciousness, the basic conflicts are defined by the oppositions of positions and counter-positions.⁴³

In this way dialogue and dialectic are connected. Both seek to expose the oversights and encourage conversion, new possibilities for the future. Dialectic evaluates and organizes differences that cause roadblocks between the parties involved. "The import of dialectic lies in the fact that it can be used as an instrument for analyzing social process and the social situation."⁴⁴ Successful dialectic opens up the space for authentic dialogue where participants can safely expose feelings and viewpoints to one another. Dialectic exposes

⁴² Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 152.

⁴³ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 252.

⁴⁴ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 152.

the differences that are holding up progress; dialogue provides the environment where shifts in horizons are possible, where authentic conversion can take place.

The occurrence of conversion does not end the story. There is still the question of working out how groups should live. Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere around the world, are often divided along ethnic and religious lines, not because ethnicity or religious allegiances automatically mean intolerance of others, but because those in power encourage the differences in order to maintain the social suppression and exclusion they regard as integral to their political and economic success.⁴⁵ These divisions then seem insurmountable because the blame is assigned along ethnic and religious lines, even though religious doctrine and orthopraxy are often explicitly opposed to hatred and violence. The alternative narrative of inclusion is missing or ignored. The question of how people live together is ‘resolved’ through violent conflicts which seek social suppression of some groups or even genocide. Orji points to Lonergan’s discussion of the structure of the human good as a guide to adopting an integral approach to moving forward.

An understanding of Lonergan’s idea of human good is essential for our understanding of self-appropriation which Lonergan invites us to partake in, and by extension essential for our understanding of ... conversion, a curative to the four fold bias... In other words, Lonergan’s vision of the human good is a useful tool for developing a philosophy of action.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid., 191.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 175.

For understanding the context of Africa, Orji's main concern is whether it is possible to create a multi-ethnic, multi-religious vision of the common good.⁴⁷ Orji suggests bringing Lonergan's discussion on ecumenism together with Robert Schreiter's distinction between social and individual reconciliation as a guide. Lonergan's distinction between faith and belief provides the basis for discussing multiple religious experiences. Faith is knowledge that comes from God's love, from self-transcendence, or the experience of religious conversion. Belief is the doctrinal expression of faith in particular historical contexts. Faith for Lonergan is universal. Because it a universal phenomenon, it unites religious actors regardless of their particular religious identity.

Beliefs however change with context; when authentic they reflect the human effort to understand the mystery of faith. While religious beliefs have faith origins, they are nonetheless as susceptible to the affects of bias as any other human activity. This points us to the power of authentic religious conversion in the context of conflict resolution. Inasmuch as one has been religiously converted, beliefs may be adjusted and reinterpreted to take into account the fuller reality. So it is that "beliefs differ, but behind the differences lay a deeper unity."⁴⁸ Faith and religious love provide the fuller context for a dialogue that promotes unity among the challenges and differences that belief creates.

Like conversion, reconciliation involves individual, social elements, and interpersonal elements.⁴⁹ Orji relies on Schreiter to provide insight on the process of

⁴⁷ Ibid., 182-183.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 182.

⁴⁹ See the chart of the Structure of the Human Good, Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 48.

reconciliation. He says that individual reconciliation happens when the damaged humanity in the person is restored, while social reconciliation requires that reconciled individuals participate in the process. For meaningful dialogue to take place true reconciliation must be experienced (at least in part) on the personal level. The presence of the reconciled individuals is essential for social reconciliation to take place, although the priority may shift back and forth between the personal and the social poles of the process as it unfolds in real time.⁵⁰ In any case, the social reconciliation is a vital component in creating a multi-ethnic, multi-religious common good. Social reconciliation requires that the past be confronted and truth verified.

Unless we accept wholeheartedly and unreservedly that we are each other's keeper, unless we accept our common humanity and put into practice the belief that everyone, regardless of race or ethnicity, is created equal and is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, then our faith will remain an escape from reality.⁵¹

Social reconciliation promotes the concern for the welfare of others, and this is the intended goal of the common good.

It is clear from this that Orji's view of overcoming bias includes both a personal and a social process. Individuals must experience self-transcendence and multiple conversions. These individuals who are morally, intellectually, and religiously converted, and who have experienced and understand individual reconciliation must be present in the social process of overcoming bias. Dialogue and dialectic uncover the imbalances and

⁵⁰ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 182. From Schreiter, 111-112. Also see Orji, 183.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 185.

inequalities present within conflicts but provide an opportunity to dialogue in non-threatening environments. Specifically in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, authentic religious conversion - not simply converts - can be an excellent starting point for enacting social reconciliation that would heal groups in conflict.

3.4 Getting to Reconciliation: Integrating Melchin and Picard with Orji

Both Melchin and Picard and Orji use Lonergan's method to better understand conflict and to develop tools for resolving conflict. Although each approaches conflict resolution wearing Lonergan-lenses, they do so in different ways. In *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard's starting point is a transformative mediation practice. Lonergan's account of insight, rooted in a theory of cognitional process, sheds abundant light on to how learning plays a role in the process of mediation. They provide many examples of successful mediations in which Insight Mediation helped shape an understanding of what was happening during mediation as well as provide new strategies that when embraced help achieve more desirable solutions. In *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* Cyril Orji begins with Lonergan's general theory of history, which is rooted in his account of cognitional theory and includes in its analysis, the reality of bias. On the basis of this theory, Orji analyzes the ethnic and religious conflicts of *Sub-Saharan Africa*. Orji acknowledges the work that has been done to connect Lonergan's views of bias to social sins such as racism, oppression, ecological degradation, and sexism prior to his own work. Until then all efforts pertained to North American and European situations. In applying it to the African context, Orji takes unique

ownership of Lonergan's work. Orji does not situate himself within an already established method of conflict resolution but is developing a unique approach relying on Lonergan's philosophy.

What is of particular note here is that both works exist because their authors found deficiencies in current theories and methods of conflict resolution. Melchin and Picard find that most methods of mediation are weak in their account of what is actually happening during the mediation process, especially as it related to 'how we know what we know.' Orji is especially concerned with the religious context of conflict resolution, and is critical of approaches that fail to appreciate the multi-ethnic and multi-religious context demanded of the common good and reconciliation efforts. All acknowledge something special in Lonergan's work. Although approaches and contexts differ, each is indisputably linked to Lonergan's dialectic of history. Most notably, they each – to varying degrees – appreciate the three key elements of Lonergan's account of the dialectic of history: the destruction of decline, the power of insight, and the possibility of reconciliation.

As we know, the effect of continuous oversights is decline and conflicts fuelled by such oversights become a breeding ground for long-term decline. It limits possibilities, it stifles creativity, and turns oversights into 'truths' that are taken at face value and believed without verification. As Lonergan pointed out, and as discussed earlier, these oversights are rooted in the four biases that wreak havoc on relationships and societies throughout the course of history. Earlier in this chapter I sought to identify how each of the example texts used Lonergan's understanding of bias to deepen understandings of

conflict. For Orji, it was fairly overt. He directly identifies ethnic and religious beliefs and attitudes as potential by-products of the four biases. These all interact to perpetuate tribalism, ethnocentrism, nepotism, and religious prejudice in such a way that Africa is bound up in the short and long cycles of decline. Decline in Africa has made ethnic and religious conflict a mainstay, limiting the options for creating a multi-ethnic, multi-religious common good. The analysis Lonergan offers of the relation of intelligence to social and cultural progress and decline is particularly applicable to Africa where years of political, economic, and social stagnation in different parts of the continent underscore the shorter and longer cycles of decline, which are at the root of these political, economic, and social problems.⁵² On the other hand, Melchin and Picard never explicitly mention decline. It is clear, however, that Lonergan's discourse on decline influenced the development of Insight Mediation. In the section above I highlighted how narrative, feelings, values, and meaning are all affected by bias. When bias makes its way into narratives, decline becomes more probable and its effects can lead to protracted conflicts. "Sometimes parties' interpretations of others' values are distorted by value narratives from their own past. At other times, parties may be correct about others' values, but incorrect about whether pursuing these values must necessarily result in the expected threat."⁵³ This sense of impending threat to the parties' values is the scotoma that embeds its self within the psyche of each party, duly ensuring continuous inattentiveness, wrong judgments, and the bad choices that follow. The problem with decline is that it is not just

⁵² Ibid., 94.

⁵³ Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, 96.

a matter of few incorrect judgments that can be easily corrected; rather, it results in cycles that build momentum and seem unstoppable. We can point to the protracted conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland as examples. The destructive cycle of decline becomes a normal and accepted pattern of life and if not corrected would seem to lead to utter destruction. Lonergan says:

A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency. It cannot be argued out of its self-destructive ways, for argument has a theoretical major premise, theoretical premises are asked to conform to matters of fact, and the facts in the situation produced by decline more and more are the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility.⁵⁴

The hopeful truth is that decline is not the only possibility. Lonergan finds the corrective to bias and decline in the capacity of the human heart and mind. Insight is a powerful tool that allows us to change our viewpoints, heighten our horizons, and completely change the direction of decline. However, insight is not enough. The human mind and heart needs to be touched by the healing power of kindness and compassion that is the fruit of intellectual, moral and religious conversion. Both works highlight the importance of insight. Orji confirms the power of insight and the reality of self-transcendence in conversion. A person who seeks genuine insights subscribes to Lonergan's four transcendental precepts and moves toward authenticity (Lonergan refers to it as 'ever a movement away from unauthenticity'), self-transcendence and conversion.

⁵⁴ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 55.

The limitedness of our horizon that keeps us in the cycle of decline is overcome by conversion. While conversion is personal, its impact is profoundly social as when authentically converted individuals participate in dialogue. Dialogue brings people of difference together and develops “a non-threatening environment where dialogue partners are free to speak their minds.”⁵⁵

Above everything else Melchin and Picard highlight insight as the fundamental process that must be cultivated in order for mediation to be successful. Learning is central to transforming the way conflict is played out and insights are central to learning. Linking and de-linking are two strategies unique to Insight Mediation. They are strategies that seek to gain insights by asking questions and listening for information that can help redirect the conflict. By facilitating insights into cares and threats, mediators provide the space and direction for parties to transform how they understand the conflict. Throughout the Insight Mediation process the mediator focuses on developing the curiosity of the parties and following those curiosities to new insights into each other’s feelings and values. Learning in conflict is transformative, and Insight Mediation allowed Melchin and Picard to decipher how learning (gaining insights) “works to transform ideas, feelings, and attitudes towards each other.”⁵⁶ Insight Mediation follows the insights from surface issues to the cares and threats, feelings and value narratives that often remain hidden. Insight illuminates our feelings and values and helps us link (and de-link) our fear of threat from the cares of others.

⁵⁵ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 192.

⁵⁶ Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight*, 126.

Although Lonergan's theory provides understanding and insight into what is happening during conflict, for myself, and I believe for each of these authors, what is most magnetic about Lonergan's theory is the constant dedication to the possibility of redemption. Moving from destructive conflict to stable peace is no simple task, however, the task seems almost meaningless (or in the very least, fruitless) without providing a hope and tools for a better future together. When Orji shifts from discussing the individual process of conversion to the social process of conversion his intention is to set up the possibility of a newly imagined multi-ethnic, multi-religious future; a future where the common good is valued above individual and group interests. For Orji the process of reconciliation is connected to the process of conversion and the creation of an all-inclusive common good. Like conversion, reconciliation is an individual process that also happens on a social level. This serves to correct community biases, brings together people who hitherto have been separated by difference, and opens up the space where new possibilities of the future are imagined. "For truly reconciled persons concern themselves with the welfare of others and that of the larger society and promote the common good."⁵⁷ The good of order that Lonergan explains and Orji's desire to promote the good of order in *Sub-Saharan Africa* is the hope and belief in the possibility of reconciliation.

I would suggest that if Melchin and Picard fall short on any one issue it is that they neglect to include a conversation about healing or reconciliation. I recognize that the nature of their study is not very conducive to a topic that is often taken as idealist; and,

⁵⁷ Orji, *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa*, 187.

also that the authors were attempting to invite a wide audience into the conversation to discover what contributions Lonergan might offer the field of conflict resolution. It would be incorrect, however, to suggest that Melchin and Picard have no interest in the topic of healing and reconciliation. Their view of good conflict resolution, the working out of conflict resulting in positive solutions for all parties is analogous with Lonergan's view of healing and reconciliation. The authors focus on interpersonal context in democratic societies. Democracies must be diverse and provide space for inclusion and participation of all of its members. Insight Mediation is a tool that can be used within traditional and non-traditional⁵⁸ democratic institutions in order to promote positive outcomes of conflict. The unique strategies put forward by Insight Mediation help change perceived expectations and the inevitability of conflict always resulting in a win-lose scenario. The goal of Insight Mediation is a resolution that promotes healing in personal and community relationships.⁵⁹ For Lonergan this is the healing that comes from the being in love, it is an 'otherworldly' falling in love that moves us from concerns for ourselves to concerns for the human community. The pluralistic nature of democracies highlights the need for people with different values to understand the role of learning and cultivating insights during conflict. "Because learning is transformative, we can even learn from others from diverse traditions. Understanding this learning, we suggest offers a new dimension to the deliberative approach to conflict and democracy."⁶⁰ Melchin and Picard

⁵⁸ Chapter 5 in Melchin and Picard, *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* provides two examples of alternative dispute resolution in the criminal justice system.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

are, in fact, completely aware of Lonergan's third approximation, redemption for they believe that through authentic questioning and curiosity that insights will lead to further shifts in horizons to the point where one experiences love for love's sake, which brings them to the point that they also experience healing and reconciliation. In deference to the complexity of addressing a secular audience, their strategy in *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* is to mute their discussion of bias and redemption.

Chapter 4 Lonergan and Religious Conflict Transformation

Lonergan's cognitional theory and dialectical philosophy of history have promise as a fresh approach for understanding conflict and its resolution. In our examination of Melchin and Picard we discovered an obvious point of intersection between Lonergan's cognitional theory and the process of mediation. Orji's analysis of conflict in *Sub-Saharan Africa* provides a case study for applying Lonergan's approach in complex social conflict situations. Nonetheless, while the field of conflict resolution has exploded (sometimes quite literally) into the twenty-first century, Lonergan-inspired analysis and methodology has so far had minimal impact on the field. Among the multiple forms of conflict resolution being explored there is Conflict Transformation, specifically Religious Conflict Transformation. In this chapter my intention is to show how Lonergan's theory is compatible with and integral to the field of Religious Conflict Transformation. I will provide current situations and scenarios of conflict transformation where understanding conflict through Lonergan lenses could be helpful in promoting reconciliation and ultimately transforming negative conflict into positive relationships. I believe that one of major contributions of these Lonergan-inspired approaches to conflict resolution is in their capacity to direct all elements of conflict to the goal of reconciliation. Connecting Lonergan's framework of history and his understanding of insight to Religious Conflict Transformation will strengthen arguments for reconciliation as a central goal and, as such, promises to contribute a significant advance in the field.

4.1 From Conflict Resolution to Conflict Transformation

4.1.1 Situating Lonergan in Conflict Resolution

In the wake of the Cold War, and even more so in the years since 9/11, the question of religion has become a central focus for scholars of conflict. This has opened up a place for dialogue and has developed a more nuanced understanding of the religious dimension of conflict. Megan Shore engages in the history of religion and conflict resolution in the first chapter of her book *Religion and Conflict Resolution: A Study of Christianity's Role in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.¹ Along with her presentation of the history of religiously informed conflict resolution practice, Shore develops her own notion of alternative conflict resolution. She writes: "I have been using 'religious conflict resolution' as the name given to an alternative approach to conflict resolution, that is, an approach that incorporates religious thought, symbol, and ritual in conflict resolution mechanisms."² Shore prefers to use the phrase 'religious conflict resolution' because it suggests a strong connection to established theories of conflict resolution but she readily relates it to notions such as 'religious peacebuilding', 'faith-based diplomacy', and 'religious conflict transformation'. She lists four assets that religion can bring to the resolution process: (1) understanding religion's role uncovers 'the ambivalence of the sacred', the recognition that religion promotes tolerance and

¹ Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009).

² Shore, 9.

intolerance³; (2) religions promote strong ethical norms which can be used to promote and strengthen the effectiveness of resolution;⁴ (3) religions can act as a communication network and provide logistical support to the resolution process;⁵ and, (4) religious institutions can act as a support to the rebuilding of civil society.⁶ What we learn from Lonergan supports Shores conclusions.

Lonergan's description of bias helps explain what Shore (and originally Scott Appleby⁷) describes as the ambivalence of the sacred. Adherents develop biased views rooted within their faith traditions and meanings. Whether because of ignorance, lack of insight, or self/group preservation, biases also affect the actions of religious people. However, religions also promote conversion as understood by Lonergan, that is, they encourage the otherworldly falling in love with God that orientates us to the common good, and heightens our commitment to be responsible in our conflict management. Thus conversion and bias highlight the two poles of the ambivalence that Appleby describes.

Lonergan's philosophy also supports Shore's second asset of religion: support for positive ethical norms that support conflict resolution. In *Transforming Conflict Through Insight* and *Ethnic and Religious Conflict in Africa* applying Lonergan's work to conflict resolution centres around the ability to define and create ethical frameworks from where conflict can be resolved. As we have seen, neither Melchin and Picard nor Orji suggests

³ Ibid., 24-25.

⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁵ Ibid., 25-26.

⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁷ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000).

developing a universal ethical code or framework. Following Lonergan's lead, their approach is heuristic and oriented towards transformation. Nonetheless Lonergan's approach to ethics is normative, for concomitant with each of his cognitional levels are sets of general precepts: be attentive (experience), be intelligent (understanding), be reasonable (judgment) and be responsible (decision). Thus, concrete decisions will differ to take into account all the variations of the situation; nonetheless the deliberative process itself is always informed by the same set of normative precepts: it is both reasonable and responsible to follow norms and to adjust to the relevant facts in actual situations.

While Shore prefers the phrase 'religious conflict resolution,' for our purposes I prefer the name 'religious conflict transformation.' Religious conflict transformation serves to better connect realities such as insight and conversion to the discipline of conflict resolution. Finding a place for Lonergan within the field of conflict resolution is not difficult. As a theologian, Lonergan is rooted within a Christian anthropology that informs his understanding of human knowing and history, which include progress, decline, and redemption. Lonergan's religious worldview makes it easy to show his contribution as a form of religious conflict resolution. In particular, Lonergan's focus on self-transcendence and conversion relates well to the sub-discipline of conflict transformation and as such serves to promote the creative and constructive *transformation* of conflict.

4.1.2 Lonergan and Conflict Transformation

As John-Paul Lederach⁸ describes it, conflict transformation involves so much more than eliminating negative conflict, and developing strategies to avoid future conflict. Instead,

[c]onflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships.⁹

It recognizes that conflict is not something to be avoided or ignored but is an opportunity for constructive change. Although violence or negative outcomes do result from conflict, a transformed conflict can also preserve and improve relationships. Conflict transformation goes beyond conflict resolution; its goals are different and, as such, so are its outcomes. In general, conflict resolution is satisfied when conflict is no longer violent, when people's lives move along in a form of stable peace. Conflict transformation has higher hopes.

For R. Scott Appleby conflict transformation is at the heart of peacebuilding and religious conflict transformation is at the heart of religious peacebuilding.¹⁰ In *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* Appleby describes and develops a typology of religious

⁸ For many within the realm of religious conflict resolution and transformation Lederach is considered the father of conflict transformation. The term stems from his work facilitating and analyzing the process of conflict resolution.

⁹ John Paul Lederach, "Conflict Transformation," *Beyond Intractability*, ed. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, Boulder University of Colorado, October 2003, (accessed October 28, 2013).

¹⁰ R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 212.

conflict transformation involving three distinct parts: conflict management, conflict resolution, and structural reform. These three parts take place within three diverse socio-political circumstances: crisis mode, saturation mode, and intervention mode. Integrating Lonergan's perspective into Appleby's typology of religious conflict transformation could offer further tools for identifying instances of religious conflict transformation, while at the same time encouraging the work of religious actors in peacebuilding. Both Lonergan and Appleby are concerned with relationships and the issues that inform the perceptions of conflict. Appleby's typology identifies the strengths of religious institutions and actors working to transform conflict, while Lonergan helps us identify the process of conversion that gives authenticity to the strength of these religious actors.

Lonergan's understanding of the process of conversion parallels Appleby's understanding of transformation as moving towards reconciliation. For both, the process of reconciliation is a complete transformation of viewpoints, not in the way that the old viewpoint is forgotten, but corrected, seen for what it really was. Biases are exposed, and conversion transforms the hearts and minds of those involved. Appleby explores this in his second and third dimensions of Conflict Transformation. The second dimension, Conflict Resolution, attempts to remove inequalities and prejudice by involving dialogue and education. Whether through seminars or retreats on peacebuilding techniques, or formal mediations, Appleby sees the work of religious actors working to transform the way people act in and view the conflict.

The third dimension, structural reform, recognizes that the work of reconciliation is not done when active conflict ceases. There are long-term commitments and goals that

must be taken into account once a governing body has been ousted and past relationships have been damaged in order “for the restoration of productive social relations and political stability after a period of conflict and human rights abuses.”¹¹ The process of reform requires the recognition of the biases that sparked and fuelled the conflict. That means identifying conflict within the context of the shorter and longer cycles of decline that Lonergan discusses. Both are present within conflicts however longer cycles of decline are more entrenched within social structures and as such tend to be hidden within the routines of the social order. In order for structural reform to take place both short and long cycles of decline must be examined and transformed. However, a commitment to identifying and transforming long-term viewpoints is of primary importance.

Even Appleby’s first dimension of religious conflict transformation can incorporate Lonergan’s understanding of conversion. During conflict management religious leaders have the unique opportunity to speak truth and peace even where other leaders are unable or unwilling to do so. Often religious actors can be present to take account of and bear witness to the abuses perpetrated. This is the work of the people who have already experienced ‘religious conversion’. They are the people who are already concerned for the common good, who have experienced ‘being in love’ to the point where the ultimate concern is for the other. These are the people at the frontlines of conflict, working to reduce the chances of violent conflict and direct the conflict into the second and third dimensions that Appleby describes.

¹¹ Appleby, 220.

When we integrate Lonergan's understanding of bias, insight and conversion into Appleby's typology we come out with a fuller understanding of what is happening in conflict. This will (1) increase understanding of the elements of conflict resolution, which will help to improve outcomes for religious actors and (2) identifying these elements (bias, insight, conversion) will help classify and evaluate instances of religious conflict transformation.

4.2 Making Lonergan Relevant

Although I have primarily focused on understanding the philosophical aspects of Lonergan's work within the context of conflict resolution, it would be a failure to neglect to discuss places where integration of Lonergan's theory can be useful today. Although an entire case study exceeds the scope of this paper, I would like to draw attention to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools¹² (IRS) taking place in Canada. As Canada continues to develop as a progressive nation it is essential that we look back and address the fissures in our relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

4.2.1 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Truth Commissions have been held all over the world as a way of getting to justice. Commissions have been held in several countries such as Argentina, Cambodia,

¹² Indian Residential Schools were government sponsored and often church run schools that housed and educated hundreds of thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children between 1840's and 1996. This was a form of state legislated assimilation, where children were taken from their homes forced to cut their hair and remove any culturally significant clothing. The intention of the schools was to 'kill the Indian in the child'.

Chile, East Timor, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and others, most recently in Ivory Coast.¹³ Up until the Canadian Commission, TRCs were held during or soon after significant political transitions. As the first commission held in a developed democracy, the Canadian Commission is a trailblazing effort that has been and will continue to be examined by the international community. The success of the commission is essential if efforts of restorative justice can seriously be recommended to other democratic regions in need of reconciliation.

Several of the planned national events have already taken place in Winnipeg,¹⁴ Inuvik,¹⁵ Halifax,¹⁶ Saskatoon, Montreal, and Vancouver. Before its scheduled completion in 2014, the TRC will hold two more events in Edmonton, and Ottawa. These events are at the heart of what the commission is doing and are intended to “engage the Canadian public and provide education about the IRS system, the experience of former students and their families and the ongoing legacies of the institutions within communities.”¹⁷ Each event includes sharing circles, church listening areas with representatives from relevant denominations, workshops on reconciliation and education, expressions of reconciliation from individuals and organizations, and film screenings.

¹³ For a critical summary and evaluation of many of these Commissions please see: Beth Rushton, "Truth and reconciliation? The Experience of Truth Commissions," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 1 (2006): 125-141.

¹⁴ TRC, <http://www.trcnationalevents.ca/websites/trcevent2010/index.php?p=1>.

¹⁵ TRC, <http://www.trcnationalevents.ca/websites/Northern/index.php?p=213>.

¹⁶ TRC, <http://www.myrobust.com/websites/atlantic/index.php?p=362>.

¹⁷ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *FAQs*, 2011, <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=10> (accessed November 10, 2011).

Reconciliation in the context of the TRC of Canada has not been thoroughly defined by the Commission itself but is a constant focus of its work. Reconciliation is the central hoped-for and highlighted legacy of the commission.

The Commission views reconciliation as an on-going individual and collective process that will require participation from all those affected by the IRS experience. The commission will move towards achieving reconciliation through activities such as public education and engagement, commemoration and recommendations to the parties.¹⁸

Although there is no definitive definition of what reconciliation should look like, the goal of reconciliation remains a main focus of its mandate: “The TRC hopes to guide and inspire Aboriginal peoples and Canadians in a process of reconciliation and renewed relationships that are based on mutual understanding and respect.”¹⁹ The Commission recognizes reconciliation as a critical step for Canadians, highlighting the importance of learning and building of renewed relationships. However, the Commission also recognizes that it alone cannot achieve reconciliation but that reconciliation requires renewal and restoration of relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, organizations, and institutions.²⁰ By recognizing the importance of learning and transformation of relationships for reconciliation the TRC opens itself up to gain understanding and direction from Lonergan’s cognitional theory, Shore’s assets of religious involvement, and Appleby’s typology of RCT.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Interim Report*, (Winnipeg: Library and Archives Canada, 2012), 26.

There are three specific reasons why Lonergan's theory provides support for the Canadian TRC and for TRCs where Christians have been a part of the conflict. First, the Commission looks at past wrongs in order to locate truth, Lonergan's theory asks that people look at past events in relation to their values, meanings, and feelings. Second, reconciliation is the goal of a TRC. Reconciliation can be defined differently, however it always contains an element of rebuilding relationships. Lonergan's view of history provides a framework for reconciliation, conversion, which is based on gaining new perspectives and restoring relationships. Finally, the TRC welcomes all Canadians to participate in the reconciliation process including the Churches. Both as institutions and as individuals, Churches have been integral participants at Commissions and in the wider reconciliation process. As a Jesuit priest, Lonergan's words and ideas are completely compatible with a Christian worldview. Those who Lonergan would say have been truly converted will learn to pay attention to the stories, biases of the past, and injustices of the present in order to recognize entrenched biases. The participation of people of faith is evidence of this conversion and can work to transform the hearts and minds of indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians alike.

In the case of South Africa, it was clear that the church would play a great role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Megan Shore's book focused on the ambiguous role of Christianity in the South African TRC concluding that its role, although not without its limitations, was essential for the peaceful transition to democracy. As in South Africa, the Canadian TRC will benefit from the participation of religious actors. The churches were intimately involved with carrying out the oppressive

and racist policies of the Canadian government. Participating in state led policies that sought to ‘kill the Indian in the child.’²¹ Church-run schools became the centre of abuse and destruction of indigenous peoples and cultures for over 150 years. In recent years churches have taken responsibility and have recognized the violence in which they participated. Churches are now at the forefront of reconciliation efforts at the TRC and act in support of the TRC within their communities.²² This reflects Shore’s first asset, the ambivalent role religion has played in the context of Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Understanding religion’s role uncovers ‘the ambivalence of the sacred’, the recognition that religion promotes tolerance and intolerance.²³

Although Churches participated directly in the establishment and administration of most of the residential schools, in recent years Churches laid the groundwork for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. Ahead of any recognition from the Government of Canada, churches were the first groups to recognize the violence and residual affects of Indian Residential schools. They promoted a contrite attitude by offering official apologies followed by commitments to compensate survivors and develop healing opportunities through events, education, and funds. These actions

²¹ See Government of Canada, *Statement of Apology – to former students of Indian Residential Schools*, Statement (Ottawa: Government of Canada, June 11, 2008).

²² Christian Churches that were involved in the historical legacy of the Indian Residential School system have taken responsibility for unjust, oppressive, and colonial actions of their institutions. The Anglican Church of Canada, The United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada each participate in the TRC national events, engaging members of their communities as well as committing to listen to survivors of IRS. Each offered an official apology and affirmative action years before the Government of Canada did in 2008. Visit <http://www.anglican.ca/relationships/trc>, <http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/schools>, and <http://presbyterian.ca/healing/> to learn about reconciliation initiatives. Visit <http://www.anglican.ca/relationships/trc/apology>, <http://www.united-church.ca/aboriginal/relationships/apologies>, <http://presbyterian.ca/?wpdmdl=92&> to read the apologies.

²³ See Shore’s second assets of religion, 23.

were in effect paving the road to an official apology from the Canadian Government to survivors of Residential Schools and the development of the TRC. With humility Churches promoted higher values. And stronger ethical norms that helped lead to a fuller commitment to discovering the truth about the Residential schools and pursuing reconciliation among all Canadians.

Churches have functioned as one of the loudest voices calling its members and all Canadians to participate in the process of reconciliation.²⁴ They have communicated with one another, indigenous groups, and individuals and have provided financial support for individuals to participate in the reconciliation process. As Shore's third asset suggests, churches have used their networks to logistically support the reconciliation process.

Finally, church institutions have and will continue to support to the rebuilding of civil society through continued commitment to the process of reconciliation by maintaining reconciliation as a priority to the institutions and by actively supporting the self-determination of indigenous peoples. These commitments had been made on the structural level of certain denominations and are exemplified by the recent adoption of a new crest for the United Church of Canada. This new crest acknowledges the presence

²⁴ I had the pleasure of participating in a reconciliation workshop "Returning to Spirit", funded by the United Church of Canada. This 5-Day workshop was the first phase of a two-part program that seeks to help individuals transform relationships. From the website: "Returning to Spirit is a charitable non-profit organization that leads reconciliation workshops between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals across Canada. Our mission is to create a cultural bridge, and give everyone a chance to transform the negative legacy of the Residential Schools, to one of empowerment and possibility." See <http://www.returningtospirit.org/>.

and spirituality of indigenous peoples within the church by incorporating the colours of the medicine wheel and adding the phrase ‘all my relations’ in Mohawk.²⁵

However different or similar, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools in Canada has also included religious voices, individuals, denominations, dioceses, presbyteries on various levels. Just as Shore’s study of South Africa adds to the critical mass of case studies that help shape and legitimate Appleby’s typology of religious conflict transformation,²⁶ I believe that further study of the church’s role in the Canadian TRC could also show the importance and usefulness of religion voices and actors within the conflict transformation process; and beyond this be formational for including Lonergan’s analysis of the process of transformation that is central to the process of reconciliation.

4.3 Summary

As the field of conflict resolution gains breadth by including religious conflict transformation, new ways of understanding conflict and solving conflict will emerge. By ignoring religious elements conflict practitioners will fail to deal fully with the conflict, unable to transform the conflict and ultimately reform structures and attitudes that fed the conflict. Introducing Lonergan to religious conflict transformation adds understanding to conflicts and the process of reconciliation as well as provides more insight to a typology of religious conflict transformation.

²⁵ The United Church of Canada, *United Church Crest- History*, March 28, 2013, <http://www.united-church.ca/history/crest> (accessed November 3, 2013).

²⁶ See Shore 178, Appleby 212, n. 10.

The example of the Canadian TRC is a hopeful place to start using and understanding Lonergan's contribution to religious conflict transformation. Religious actors and institutions are deeply involved in the work of reconciliation within the context of the TRC and within their communities. The churches have taken account of the past, recognizing biases and the affects of short and long cycles of decline on their direct communities and within Canadian society. They are taking the opportunity to listen, dialogue, and respond to survivors of residential schools, all of which through authentic questioning brings about new insights of the past and future. Finally, the churches are encouraging their own communities to participate. Providing opportunities for hearts and minds to be changed, for the possibility of conversion to take place. It is at the centre of this that we find the possibility of reconciliation.

Epilogue

Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard and Cyril Orji provide the first efforts to connect the work of Bernard Lonergan to conflict resolution. Lonergan's dialectic of history provides the framework from which to understand conflict and suggests tools and steps necessary to transform conflict into new possibilities for relationships. The primary purpose of this thesis was to show that the possibility of reconciliation is real. Lonergan's dialectic of history directs us towards this end by focusing on the transformative process of conversion and the effects of religious conversion, unrestricted being in love, supporting a common good.

Religious Conflict Transformation (RCT) is the perfect entry point for Lonergan's dialectic of history. RCT is gaining traction within the realm of conflict resolution. It is bringing together people from various disciplines, including clergy and lay people, mediation practitioners, and artists.¹ People are looking for alternative ways to deal with conflict. Lonergan provides the deep connection and framework that RCT is looking for. RCT lacks a theory that connects religious experience to the process of conflict resolution and the dialectic of history provides the essential framework that RCT requires.

Experientially supporters of RCT have recognized the need and effectiveness of religion and religious actors as strategic components of conflict resolution. Examples of

¹ I am thinking specifically of a project that is bringing together Lonergan inspired Insight Mediation and Dramatic Arts, TE'A Project Theatre, Engagement & Action. TE'A produces "interactive, documentary-style performance pieces undergirded by the Insight approach to conflict transformation that build and strengthen communities on the key issues that threaten to divide or polarize them". See <http://www.intersectionsinternational.org/tea-projects>.

religious actors promoting effective positive social change, relieving suffering, or standing up against moral opposition are not in short supply. Scott Appleby goes to great length to offer examples of religious peacebuilding and develops a typology of religious conflict transformation to suit. Supporting the work of Appleby, there has been great work done to bring together examples of religious peacebuilding from various faith traditions and regions around the world.² What Lonergan brings to the table is something that is beyond observation.

Providing a framework that (1) offers insight into the structure of conflict and its resolution, and (2) moves from within a religious context, Lonergan does something new for Religious Conflict Transformation. Although rooted in the Christian faith, Lonergan's dialectic of history is not restricted to those within the western-Judeo-Christian context. Lonergan's philosophical concepts about history, knowledge, and faith are relevant to all cultures and religious expressions. As such Lonergan's concepts are not exclusive but are designed to relate to as many people as possible. Because Lonergan's dialectic supports an understanding of conflict as a religious actor, and deeply rooted in this understanding are religious concepts (conversion, redemption, decline/sin) one can quickly conclude that an effort of religious conflict transformation would be vigorously supported.

The benefits from integrating Lonergan Studies with Religious Conflict Transformation are not one-sided. Lonergan Studies (although extremely welcoming from

² See Megan Shore, *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009). For a collected work of examples of religion and peacbuilding see Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004).

individuals within the discipline) is at first intimidating and terribly confusing for those entering the field. As has happened with other disciplines such as mathematics and economics, this integration will provide new pathways to Lonergan Studies and draw more attention to Lonergan's work outside of the usual Catholic theological and philosophical crowds.³ Learning from alliances like Kenneth Melchin and Cheryl Picard Lonergan studies can become more approachable.⁴

Already there are programs and university departments who are devoting resources to study the practical contributions of Lonergan Studies for conflict resolution including Insight Mediation being taught out of Carleton University's Department of Law and Legal Studies⁵ and George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution.⁶ Students completely unfamiliar with Lonergan or theological studies are being introduced to Lonergan's Insight theory. As students discover more of what Lonergan has to say about conflict through an understanding of cognitional theory and the dialectic of history other topics of interest to Lonergan may also contribute to conflict studies. For example Lonergan's categories of functional specialization can be applied to Appleby's typology of religious conflict transformation. Even Lonergan's work in

³ Michael Shute has recently published two articles dealing with the problem of collaborative study and practical applications to current problems, in effect moving Lonergan studies outside of its usual confines. See: "Functional Collaboration as the Implementation of 'Lonergan's Method' Part 1: For What Problem is Functional Collaboration the Solution?" *Divyadaan: Indian Journal of Philosophy and Education*, volume 24, No. 1 (2013), 1-34; and, "Functional Collaboration as the Implementation of Lonergan's Method, Part 2: How Might We Implement Functional Collaboration?" *Divyadaan: Journal of Philosophy and Education*, 2013, volume 24, No. 2 (2013), 159-190

⁴ Kenneth Melchin has been firmly rooted in Lonergan Studies throughout his academic career and Cheryl Picard comes from a mediation and conflict resolution background. The development of Insight Mediation began with their collaboration.

⁵ <http://www1.carleton.ca/ccer/insight-approach-to-conflict/>

⁶ <http://www.insightconflictresolution.org/>

political economy could be applied to economic justice issues that influence conflict and affect the common good.⁷

The future of Lonergan-Conflict Studies has many possible trajectories, both within and outside of a religious context. As the world changes, the face of conflict also changes. The potential for Lonergan's dialectic to be applied to conflict involving subjects that are more removed from religion is very possible. Environmental crisis instigated by climate change is projected to affect the global food supply and access to fresh water. This is likely to displace large populations from coastal and southern climates, with Ioane Teitiota and his family from Kiribati seeking recognition in October 2013 as the first climate refugees.⁸ It is difficult to predict what kinds of conflicts will front the affects of climate change, however, an analysis of conflict based on Lonergan's dialectic of history can inform the management of conflict, whether religion is a contributing factor or not. Lonergan's complete works represent a vast landscape of untapped potential scholarship from which to draw ethical and relational conclusions.

The scope of this work however was simple. The belief in possibility of reconciliation is very well the largest barrier to reconciliation itself. Like the Christian anthropology, Lonergan's dialectic of history points toward a redemptive end. The possibility of reconciliation is not limited to any one people group, ethnicity, religion, or

⁷ See Shute, *Functional Collaboration as the Implementation of Lonergan's Method, Part 2: How Might We Implement Functional Collaboration?* for practical implementation of Lonergan's functional specialties.

⁸ Jonathan Pearlman, *Man from Kiribati seeks recognition as world's first climate refugee*, Telegraph Media Group, October 16, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/australiaandthepacific/kiribati/10383018/Man-from-Kiribati-seeks-recognition-as-worlds-first-climate-refugee.html> (accessed November 3, 2013).

class. While, Lonergan never applied his thought directly to conflict resolution, it is accessible to all who seek to live authentically, open to conversion and transformation.

The most logical point of intersection into the realm of conflict resolution is via Religious Conflict Transformation. RCT also seeks transformation as its central goal to peacebuilding involving religious actors, tools, and commitments. Lonergan assists RCT in negotiating an understanding of conflict that sees religious actors at the very centre of the resolution process. Most importantly it places the possibility of reconciliation at the centre too. The belief in the possibility of reconciliation is the condition of the process for reconciliation.⁹ I believe in possibilities.

⁹ This is an idea that grew from a statement by Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 91. “Belief in the possibility of justice is the condition of the struggle for justice.”

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