

## **Lonergan on the Edge Proposal: Understanding of the Preferential Option for the Poor within Bernard Lonergan's Historical-Theological Framework**

The most famous criticism of so-called transcendental method's agnosticism towards history is perhaps J.B. Metz's evaluation of Karl Rahner's work, that he 'wins the race without running it'. Perhaps in the same vein, Latin American theologians have explicitly commented on Lonergan's work. At a 1975 congress in Mexico City, the proceedings of which were published as *Liberación y cautiverio*,<sup>1</sup> Lonergan's work on method was heavily criticised. Hugo Assmann contended that Lonergan's theology does not lead to history.<sup>2</sup> José Comblin made two negative assessments one of which was glib, whilst the other was scathing. The first claimed that if medieval theologians had to engage in the task of theology as Lonergan envisaged it, they would not have stuck at the theological task for even fifteen minutes.<sup>3</sup> The second suggested that Lonergan's thought was made to order for the task of supporting the ideologies of Latin America's juntas and dictatorships.<sup>4</sup> In the light of these criticisms—and I am sure there are more—I intend to present an investigation the understanding of the preferential option for the poor that is possible from within Lonergan's broader historically sensitive theological framework. I suspect that his stance is in fact incredibly potent, and I would like to use this conference to gain feedback on this suspicion with an eye to more fully treating the issue in my dissertation. I anticipate that I would draw a focus on Lonergan's notion of foundations, and also his understanding of history. In pursuing my investigation, I would use Lonergan's *Method in Theology*, but also draw on Robert Doran's two major works *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, and *What is Systematic Theology?*

---

<sup>1</sup> E. Ruiz Maldonado (ed.), *Liberación y cautiverio: Debates en torno al método de la teología en América Latina* (México Cita: Comité Organizador, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 518.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 517, 519.