

## Volume 1 Preface to the Series

Why in the world would anyone take up such an apparently fruitless and non-rewarding task such as this? And then I remembered Hillel the Elder's famous questions:

If not you, who?  
If not now, when?

### Cultural Shifts

The first important contribution to answering Hillel the Elders questions came from the cultural shift in moving from a small town small c society into the reality of a confused and confusing globalist post-modern world where no single appreciative system reigns, where increasingly might make right as natural law takes a back seat to personal privilege and group entitlement. Who then does one trust? Who to give one's allegiance to? A post-modern world made no sense; in fact, it lowered the possibility of reasonable and responsible action to next to nothing. Living in such a world was an abomination. But what could be done about it?

Growing up in the Canadian loyalist province of New Brunswick along the major transportation route of the St. John river/railway line on the outskirts of a town of 5,000 or so was always problematic for an intelligent creative with an explorative attitude. So upon graduation from high school I was off for a year in a Jesuit novitiate in Ontario, an important transitional year in which much of my rural background was shed. But not all. It turns out that summers spent exploring the forest behind our house, growing up with friends whose fathers ran farms, and a father who ran the high school industrial shop (built his own house twice) left me with a feeling for both highly skilled trades and the realities of living on the land. Combine this with a highly visual rather than verbal mode of thinking and the allure of post-modernism and all the other isms of the day were exposed as little more than bait dangled by those who seek to control over others.

It also provided the critical experiential reality for understanding catastrophic climate change for the scam it was. As part of a migration through various universities in the search for . . . whatever, two years in a graduate program in Environmental Studies at Toronto's York University exposed me to the ecological realities of human existence. But with the technical knowledge of ecosystems came an underlying assumption that overpopulation and the end of the Holocene interglacial period brought an urgency to our work that in retrospect turned out to be a means of justifying and rationalizing our attempts to fundamentally transform society. Talk about self-aggrandizement on the part of an entire discipline.

## ii Objectifying Subjectivity

But probably the most formative educational shift came with the realization that university did not provide the explorative and creative space I needed in order to live, while design programs did. So after two false starts in mathematics and communication arts, my undergraduate degree ended up in Communication Design from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. At the time this was an experimental program that drew upon communication skills ranging far beyond that of graphic design. Over forty years later, this design mentality still guides my outlook. In fact, that approach underlies all five volumes of this work. *The Long Haul* is not an academic study per se, although a certain intellectual rigor is part of it; it is the result of a design process that started with a problem and sought to create a solution to deal with it.

By the way, the phrase “The Long Haul” has a dual meaning: the work itself has been a long slog with many detours and dead-ends, and to take up the challenge will itself involve a century’s long dedicated process to bring it all to fruition. Both are truly “long hauls.”

The initial stage of any design process involves identifying the core problem. Eventually the tensions and conflicts arising from egotism and group bias were set aside to focus on the fragmented world of meaning resulting from the collective effort of millions of intelligent people of common sense who brook no constraints on their ability to act as they saw fit. Unfortunately, the cumulative impact of hundreds and thousands and millions of such self-justifying plans and policies was the creation of a fragmented public sphere. No more could people of common sense rely on a communal appreciative system that provided a common orientation, evaluation, and diagnosis of whatever problems they faced. To make the problem worse, according to Lonergan there exist no inbuilt solution to such a long-term type of problem that left unchecked could only lead to disaster represented so graphically in the image of the Tower of Babel.

9/11 saw the beginning of yet another shift when it came to understanding the nature of the problem. It was incomprehensible for a nation that had fought and won against both the fascist democratic socialist’s government in Germany and the expansionist Japanese empire’s co-prosperity scheme to not only seek to appease the aggressors but to justify such terrorist actions as being the natural reaction to a tyrannical Western aggression during its colonialist period. But what would motivate 19 men to carry out a highly sophisticated “black ops”? And what about the support organizations that had to have provided money and other resources for the operation?

That was only the beginning of an inquiry into Islam as “religion” and the cultural norms characteristic of Muslim countries. Was 9/11 an aberration or the tip of a far larger iceberg? What I found suggests a real existential threat for Western civilization, which led to a second set of questions: Why did the university, media, economic, and political elites downplay the event? Or in many cases, blame Western society for the actions of not only this black op team but the entire supporting culture that made their work not only possible but highly likely?

Clearly something had gone seriously wrong with Western culture, for within a matter of months the outrage was overwhelmed by a barrage of media messages that it was our entire fault, the fruits of Western colonialization that had debased the vital cultures of other civilizations to the point that they had no choice but to fight their oppressors. This was such a radical change from previous generations that it demanded an explanation. The Frankfurt school combined with the Gramscian long march through institutions had clearly influence the appreciative system of Western culture.

The final cultural shift came over the last few years when it became obvious that what had gone wrong lay within the actions of a global progressive elite that had in effect gone insane, if by insanity we mean a fundamental disconnection from reality where “reality” itself was only a social construction. This elite is raised in the rarefied atmosphere of progressive universities, sharing a group identify that bade them be the anointed rulers of all they surveyed, yet curiously inept when it came to practical action as if they suffered from a trained incapacity to deal with the world as it is and not how in their utopian vision they felt it should and could be. Members of this global initiative may envision themselves as the great saviors of the world but in fact only seem to adopt counter-positions that only degrade the situation on the ground. And they are determined to make their presence felt with all the hubris and hypocrisy of any royal dynasty whose members flaunt their belief that they themselves are above the law. But they are perfectly willing to lay down the law for others, in the people’s best interest of course. They are saved from the need to question their own decisions since they are in a position where they can protect themselves from the consequences of their utopian-driven actions. This self-isolation leaves them vulnerable to self-generating bubbles of value-signaling, delusions, and collusions all maintained by a strong group bias. No wonder their plans and policies fail to work as expected.

It came as quite a jolt to realize we are at war. It is not a war of our own making, for it is imposed upon us by an meritless “elite” who would willingly subjugate us to their “peace” through the exercise of brute political and economic forces spilling over into the promotion of such groups as antifa, doxing, legislating against hate language, and unseemly irrational ranting and raving over the least little thing that disturbs them. In a sense, this is not the first time this has happened; nor will it be the last. Thomas Müntzer, the protagonist in this volume, faced a similar dilemma in his own time. In Müntzer’s day, the group bias of the elite created the Peasant’s Rebellion. In our own, it is the rise of a combative “populace” uprising increasingly upset with the destruction of their own way of life. In both cases, rulers lost the trust of the ruled. It is a bit more complicated in our times due to the existence of a bureaucratic deep state with all its rules and regulations designed to limit freedom of action, but the underlying dynamics are the same.

What is more important is that elites have to justify and rationalize their position for their very survival if they are not to be overthrown from their eagle’s perch. The key difference is that they are driven for power not based on the desire to do what is

right but in the drive for child-like omnipotence subject to no one. It is not to govern wisely but to rule as they would rule without constraints of any kind.

We need to make sure that such rationalizations do not pervade our culture, distorting our understanding of human history. When that happens, intelligence wonders around an imaginary world dimly seen through cataracts, limping on legs weakened through the lack of exercise, suffering under an unsettling deluge of unexpected consequences creating a chaos that only serves to undermine reason itself.

## Ongoing Conversion

The second part of my response to Hillel the Elder lay in adjusting to the radical change in orientation that took place when the question of the existence of God was answered not only in the affirmative but with the distinct flavor of Christianity heavily influenced by Judaism. This brought into being a whole different set of challenges, ranging from this new person I had to get to know to the realization that what I thought was going on may well fall short of the universal perspective of the Divine—an understatement at the best of times. It was one thing to state the truth; quite another to assimilate the implications of such truths.

It is interesting that the question of the existence of God arose only when I took a graduate course in *Method in Theology* under Sean McEvenue at Concordia University in 1989. Although I had gone to the Jesuit novitiate for a year, it turned out that there was no actually religious involvement behind it (which is why I was only there for a year). After that the affairs of getting an education and raising a family took over and religious practice soon disappeared in a welter of practical concerns. But one thing about *Method* is that it all hinges on the existence of God.

Readers might find it interesting that the moment of conversion was due not to any evidence one way or another. It was after two weeks of intense focus on trying to collect and weight evidence that I realized that any evidence collected could only come from a mind that had already made a commitment one way or another. The moment I realized that it was not a judgment that was required but a decision that the still small voice within left me in disgust with a reality that could only be imposed by human force, a brutish world where might made right, and a certain attraction to a unified perspective grounded in the existence of God (ethical monotheism) that the decision was made that God existed.

That radical change in outlook necessitated an adjustment to new self to understand and a new community to join. Probably the most radical change was a shift to trying to understand what I wanted to trying to understand what God wanted. For among the various lessons *Method* had to offer was the realization that all human knowing was proportional to the human species; the only true universal perspective could only be found within the transcendental realm of the Divine. This intentional shift would take years to play out, and in fact is still doing so today.

Unfortunately, or fortunately as it may turn out, the pious route to joining a religious community was not open for me. Creatives like myself find it hard to fit within the boundaries of any stabled community as part of us always seeks to go beyond the constraints such community establish as part of their very existence. Couple this with a relative lack of skill when it came to personal relationships compensated for by a highly theoretical mind, then the only route lay through theology. But theology itself is highly fragmented, offering neither community nor solitude in the Divine. Luckily enough, through the transcendent acting deep in the human imagination, Lonergan had worked out a method that would start with the current mess and gradually—like the hard sciences—would lead to a better understanding of the unity of the Divine. The culmination of this was a M.A. in the Theological Studies department at Concordia University, Montreal, where it was possible to combine both the study of theology with the methodology of Bernard Lonergan, S.J. The outcome of this was a thesis on objectifying my own subjective foundational stance, a work replicated in Volume one of this series.

But there is another consequence of this shift, one that has taken years to work itself out in my mind. And that is, What would the world be like if Judeo-Christian ethics never came on the scene? The result is that the essentially pagan nature-worshipping cultures would continue on as they always had: the powerful lord it over the weak as is their right, slavery is both normative and common practice as the powerful exercise control over the powerless, child molestation and pre-puberty marriage is accepted as normal, hypocrisy and corruption run rampant as there are no “natural law” constraints on human behavior, lying is accepted practice in the defense of oneself and one’s group, and values change according to the way the wind is blowing. In short, it would appear that all major cultural advances in civilization from the abolition of slavery to universal human dignity, from wealth creation to civil society, have occurred in Western countries with a strong Judeo-Christian background.

His resurrection demonstrated that there is more to life than our physical well-being; there is something greater, something transcendent to which we owe our allegiance. His life affirmed a radical value shift for any human hierarchy, where the great are to be humbled and the humbled elevated. That lesson, when combined with the first, has lead believers to break free of pagan chains and seek to create a world whose control mediator is spiritual.

As Western civilization sheds its Christian roots the old pagan mentality rises to fill the power gap. But these “new” modes of being, grounded as they are in very old pre-Judaic conditions, spark a resistance on the part of those who still seek to hold on to the ethical stability of monotheism. So the battle is on between those who have inherited over two thousand years of Christian impact on the development of society and those who seek to return to the old substantially degrading ways of living that, except for some sense of noblesse oblige, frees those in power from any responsibility other than value-signaling their position as a member of the elite. But when those ruled are considered somewhat less than human (the “deplorables”), the

unwritten obligation of those of noble ancestry to act honorably and generously to others falls by the wayside

Jeffrey Epstein's sexual proclivities would be considered perfectly normal in non-Western societies, as Mohammad's multiple wives and child marriage, Mao's extensive range of concubines for an evening's entertainment, and even Bill Clinton's escapades in the White House attest. So is assassination, unjust persecution, torture, and "disappearance" on the part of a regime that brooks no opposition to its own right to rule. In fact, the growing "insanity" of a progressive Post-modernist mentality with its belief that "reality" is only man-made "narrative" when combined with a drive for power, for dominance over others, has resulted in a barrage of attacks on traditional Judeo-Christian morality. There are only two possible responses to such a barrage of outrage against us "deplorables": submission or confrontation. This is Lonergan's group bias taken to the extreme.

However, we are not interested in the dynamics of group bias; such situations have their own way of working things out for better or for worse. We are more concerned with the distortions in our collective worlds mediated by meaning brought about by power seekers and holders that in this case are using post-modernist thinking to rationalize and justify their own right to rule. It is those deeper distortions that are of greater long-term importance, for left uncorrected they lead to dark ages in which all civilization collapses.

In the eternal dialect between good and evil, submission is easy, even comfortable at first. But it makes for a very poor choice in the long run. The problem is that the "Devil's Pleasure Palace" makes for a beautiful image to play about in one's mind, but any attempt to make it real runs into the reality that it is a house based on deceit and manipulation so as to destroy what is best in humanity. For we are like children setting out to create the perfect meal plan without adult supervision: the results are likely to be less than optimal.

## Methodology

The third element in responding to Hillel the Elder's questions involves a combination of the work of Otto Friedman and Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J. that offered not only the possibility of entering into an entirely new organum that could over centuries add a highly significant and reliable appreciative system capable of attracting the trust and allegiance of many but a way of being in the world dedicated to the long-term correction of history. History has shown us what an empirical heuristic structure can accomplish if carried out for several centuries. Could the same be true if Lonergan's transcendental methodology was taken up with the same zeal? Perhaps it was time to start such an experiment.

It seems that I had acquired a set of mutually enhancing conceptual tools not available to the vast majority of people. It would be irresponsible of me not to pass what I had been given to others. In fact, it is highly likely that these tools had been given to me not for my benefit but for others.

Lonerger's notion of a cosmopolis was an attractive one if only for the truly substantial demands that it made upon both individuals and groups. But to attempt to give a practical form to such a notion required something more than theological theory; it required a certain practical institutional skill. That I found as a graduate student in Environmental Studies, York University, Toronto, where I had the good fortune of being a T.A. for Otto Friedman. Friedman was a visiting professor whose specialty was organizational trouble-shooting. As part of his profession he had developed not only a methodology for working out what needed to be done to restore trouble organizations to health but a transdisciplinary framework grounded in the social science paradigm of social interaction as the foundational set of variables useful in carrying out such work. At the center of his program was the idea of professional practice not as the exercise of specialized knowledge and skills according to the needs and demands of the client but as a responsible practitioner with his or her own professional responsibilities that took precedent over the client's wishes and desires.

It is interesting that combining Friedman with Lonergan it became possible to accomplish the design objective of finding a way to give practical form to the only way we had to reverse long-term decline due to common sense bias: Lonergan's cosmopolis.

Perhaps most of all, I have a passion for reason—and this while acknowledging that the vast majority of people do not share this obsession. No, for most feelings reign supreme, passions disconnected from reason, gut level "intuitive" responses to meet a call for truth. The most dangerous of such passions is a desire to rule over others, hence an ever expanding governments with its tendrils in all sorts of pies, regulating now this, now that, is a steady stream of laws and rules that binds instead of frees. Reason, in public affairs, is only one element of four patterns of common sense experience that come into play. Any attempt to engage with the world at large means taking into account biological realities such as male/female distinctions or the courting demands of reproduction, aesthetic forms such as awe, mystery, or distain, dramatic elements that make up the stories we like to tell about ourselves and others, and only then the application of intelligence. In fact, if we have to live by reason alone we would be in a poor position indeed; it is the formation of our emotional selves that really guide us in carrying out our daily concerns.

The Enlightenment shed religious "natural law" in favor of pure reason, with the rather predictable result that reason came under the influence of passions that used reason to justify and rationalize all sorts of behavior. Shoving Christianity outside the pale did not rid society of religion; it only sowed the field with new man-made systems of thought that played the same role as religion without either religious trappings or appeal to a transcendent power. Reason without a Judeo-Christian ethos to give meaning to its use can only lead to a multitude of conflicting often irreconcilable positions that can only be resolved through the naked application of power.

No, reason is not sufficient to itself. It is useful only when employed in the service of the Divine, the Triune God of Christianity. It is a tool, not an end in itself.

## **In Search of a Normative Ethics**

In retrospect, this entire five volume work could be considered an exercise in normative ethics. Since my radical change in direction, a “conversion” to Christianity as a result of facing the question of the existence of God full on in a graduate course in Lonergan’s *Method in Theology* in the fall of 1989, there has been a need to understand the implications of such a falling in love with ultimate meaning.

The decision to follow Christ did not solve the problem of how the Triune God operated in human history. Pious belief in following one of the confessional systems of belief provided a normative ethical structure, or at least promised such a structure. Given my own familiarity with the sciences combined with an over-reliance on knowing rather than personal piety, the Church had little to offer me other than platitudes and absolute truths. As valuable as faith is, when expressed in this way, it brought me no comfort. Besides, they suffered from their own search for relevance and meaning in an increasing secular Western world that sought to diminish if not remove any form of religion other than their own from the public sphere.

It was a question belonging to the functional specialty of Systematics where fundamental doctrines were judged real and now needed to be understood in explanatory terms. But Systemic depended upon Doctrines, and Doctrines judged real depend on Foundations. So it was only reasonable to start with objectifying my own subjectivity, my own foundational stance that included key concepts, important operations, and a horizon bound by my own interests now expanded to include – as best one might – the universal perspective of the Divine.

There was only one core doctrine, namely the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. From this came the notion of the Triune God, and from the Triune God came the notion of being invited into the Body of Christ, that communion of Saints in which human beings can join in Christ’s hypostatic union and through that union enter into the Kingdom of God.

However, our judgment concerning the reality of such doctrines depends on our foundational stance. And the study of such belongs to the functional specialty of Foundations. Lacking, or at least falling short of the demands of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion (in Lonergan’s sense), mean one’s formation and the discernment that comes with it was always incomplete, always deficient in one way or another. But how could one find such weaknesses? The only answer was through an encounter with another person, a process of mutual self-mediation whereby something greater and deeper could emerge.

In many ways, *The Long Haul* represents not only my own quest for meaning and purpose but a search for ways to bring the conditional understanding associated with being human with the universal perspective of the Divine. It’s only near the

end of this initial investigation did the underlying structure and direction begin to emerge. At the time, not knowing the final outcome, it was a matter of doing what needed to be done at the moment, all the while trying to listen to that still small voice within that would hopefully provide clues at a time when my ability to understand what was going forward was limited.

*The Long Haul* is my first attempt to bring well over 30 years of on-again off-again work – more if one includes the preliminary changes that needed to happen – into a single more or less coherent perspective. In this the process is probably more important than the results, for like most theological work of our time the body of knowledge far exceeds the capability of any one person to grasp more than a small fraction of what is known.

The key is to rely not upon existing normative structures, be they cultural or hard science, but on a methodology for progressive and cumulative progress. The invitation is to join in a common adventure, a third organum based on Lonergan's work, that like the development of the hard sciences may well end up in places very strange to us today and yet positions having a closer fit with reality.

This series has but one primary objective: to lay out a complex dynamic non-linear system of recurring schemes of operations that provide a universal image whereby individuals might join together in a cooperative intentional effort to bring wisdom into the world of men. In other words, How could we make Lonergan's notion of cosmopolis a living and breathing reality? In the same way that the image of a classical concert of orchestral music brings into one framework the work of composers, arrangers, conductors, musicians of all sorts, impresarios, producers, music distributors, recording technicians, stage managers, ticket sellers, advertising agencies, and many more, so too does this image of a "Cosmopolis Institute" bring together scholars, producers, administrators, students, and other interested people together in a common enterprise.

And the initiative? The difficult if not impossible effort without Divine help to correct the multiple distortions intelligent people of common sense have created as individual efforts to justify and rationalize their endeavors without the constraints of long-term, philosophical, or theological considerations. Our understanding of ourselves has been fragmented beyond the capabilities of any one culture or appeal to hard science methodologies to repair. For this, we need a shift to a higher perspective on what it means to be human.

## Why?

All five volumes that make up this series constitute such a shift, and they do so in a sequence in which each builds upon its predecessors. Volume one takes up that philosopher's injunction to "know oneself", but does so within the specific context of Lonergan's functional specialty of foundations; this is a case of deepening one's awareness of one's own foundational stance, of what one stands for and to whom one gives one's allegiance. Volume two takes up the task of developing a common

professional language required by any organization if people within it are to communicate with each other, something that requires a common image of what it means to be human as well as what framework is to be employed in understanding fundamental institutional change. Volume three creates the specific mission statement of such a universal cosmopolis institute, laying out the core functions of such an intentional community as well as its relationships to the transcendental realm, universities, and the general populace. Volume four considers the specific elements of such an intentional community in terms of different tasks such as creating and maintaining a specialized library, etc. The final volume, volume five, deals with the specific output of such an institute as product design that not only helps people to come to grips with the issues of the day in a fruitful and productive manner, but brings in the resources necessary to create and maintain such a specialized organization.

Why might one carry out such detailed work? Take for example the case of a stove fire flaring up in the kitchen. You quickly grab the baking soda and pot lid to put it out, but already it has started up the wall. Through foresight, there's a fire extinguisher close at hand and soon everything is brought under control.

But is it? While you were paying attention to the immediate threat, a dam burst and wipe out not only your house but the house of your neighbor. If you were not caught up in coping with a fire but instead were aware that the rushing grinding noise indicated that the dam, already a risky business, had finally given away. But by then it was too late. The time spent putting out the fire came with an opportunity cost, i.e., running out the back door and up the embankment to higher ground. You and the fire are about to be extinguished and by this time there is absolutely nothing you can do about it.

Now there will always be black swan events that no one could predict, or at least predict their exact configuration. But that is not the point of this story. The problem is that we can define our world in terms of the proportionate understanding of our own species without taking into account that there is more to reality than common sense would suggest. Perhaps this is best understood over the course of a human life-cycle, where each individual starts off as pure animal but may as time goes on turn to a spiritual control mediator to guide his actions.

The first is a decision to take on responsibility for one's life. Now one can be "responsible" solely for one's own wellbeing, but egotism has its own flaws—the primary one being that what may be of personal advantage may be found by destroying the good of order of society, something any dictator would be glad and proud to do. Another equally devastating decision is to elevate one's own group to near divine status while ignoring the well-being of any other group, something that pricks people off and usually results in a rebellion among the "masses" at their "superiors." But what if the entire culture has gone off the rails? What if the need for movers and doers to justify their own actions only serve to emphasize certain features over others, perhaps even totally ignoring long-term consequences of plans and policies formulated to deal with immediate concerns, or failing to take into

account deeper philosophical and theological issues that when ignored open up vast blind spots in the body politic.

How then do you know that you are doing the right thing when your very being is off track? How can you avoid wasting all your resources on plans and policies that seem obvious but are in fact so loosely grounded in reality that they might as well be illusions and delusions? Why waste your life on inconsequential goals and objectives when reality is beckoning?

Now, this is not for everyone. For most people the immediate tasks of working and raising families is quite enough; indeed, such challenges are in themselves important to take on and depend on a sense of responsibility and clear-headedness that takes time and effort to develop. But regardless of these immediate concerns there are also the kinds of fundamental institutional changes taking place that span history, changes that—like the breaking of a dam—will have local consequences. It is perhaps best that we keep a watchful eye on such historical shifts lest they reduce our tidy lives to rubble.

But there is a deeper problem. If you have no control over meaning—if you are restricted only to normative cultures or hard science methodologies—then you have no control over setting priorities, especially those involving decisions of terminal value. If your conceptual map, your world mediated by meaning no longer corresponds with reality then it is worse than fighting a pan fire—for the pan fire itself might not be real.

Note that by control we do not mean the application of brute force as in determining what is wanted and forcing things to go that way. Instead it is the form of control that comes from truly and deeply understanding the phenomena at hand and using these insights not only to set constraints on what can and can't be done but to expand one's scope for action. But now these plans and policies are grounded in reality, not fantasy, illusion, and delusion.

What we offer is a strategy for dealing with an existential crisis of our own times that involves five distinct steps: objectifying one's own foundational stance, working out a common technical language, creating a mission statement to deal with the problem, identifying the key tasks involved, and finally offering a "product" to the community at large.

And the key word is "community." It is useless to be a community of one, an individual within a collective that is no longer based on shared values but on identity politics. Like tribal societies where one is recognized not as an individual but as part of the family, tribe, or clan, the current reality is that exercising personal responsibility for future generations is next to impossible for the simple reason that the individual as a concept does not exist. In retrospect, it is a remarkable form of social and political controls that removes the possibility of individual creativeness upsetting the divide and conquers dynamics of pitting one victimized group against another.

But that is not the point I wish to make. One becomes who one can become as part of a group that shares a common appreciative system exercised through deeply

personal long-term encounters that strengthen each against an increasingly insane and conflict ridden world. Perhaps the deep appeal of such a cosmopolis institute is that it would provide a communal intentionality within which each individual can flourish. Certainly it would fill a void, now that “diversity” has brought about the destruction of any sense of common community at even the local level. But the need to belong to something greater than oneself still exists; perhaps a cosmopolis institute could fulfill such a need not only to belong to an intentional community but to do so in a way that challenges one to go beyond what may be deemed possible.

But the real challenge at this point in history resides at the global level. It has nothing to do with Catastrophic Climate Change, Globalization, or the rise of secular religions, but with the long-term fundamental institutional changes arising from an emerging conflict between the U.S. and China. China’s communist party rules with a heavy hand. In such a totalitarian state, they have no choice but to manipulate information to save themselves—but this comes with the price of banning entrepreneurial risk-taking. The U.S., under the “progressive” movement of the Democrat Party is destroying any meritocracy under the banner of equality, i.e., equality of outcome. This too requires the manipulation of information via a change in the narrative that bans entrepreneurial risk-taking, a price that Western leaders seem fully willing to pay. In both cases, information is destroyed.

As long as both parties could remain in their own cocoon they were free to do as they will. The problem driving current institutional change came about when the two roughly equal institutional systems faced off against each other in a struggle for dominance. The dilemma for both parties is the same: ultimately who-ever wins will dominate on the basis of superior excellence. And such excellence will depend on establishing a sound method of controlling meaning that will counter the ongoing flow of corrupt information on both sides. Who in the end will pay homage to the facts?

Personally, I would prefer a world in which Western civilization once again emerged as a vital and creative force in the world. All that follows is designed to do just that.

That we can offer such a thing is the result of many people who have made such a work possible. If it wasn’t for Otto Friedman and Bernard Lonergan, none of this would have even been conceivable. If it were not for the support of Christine Jamieson at Concordia University we would never have had the ongoing work of a small but dedicated group who worked on this material over a period of 12 years. For this I have to thank the current practitioners: Heather Stephens, Milton Dawes, Luc Lepage, Alcida Boissonnault, and Mickey Takacsy.

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