

REVELATION AND INTERIORITY: THE CONTRIBUTION OF FREDERICK E. CROWE, S.J.

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The article invites a reconsideration of our reflection on revelation in the light of both Frederick Crowe's achievement in his Theology of the Christian Word and Vatican II's call for a pastoral and ecumenical theology. Crowe's text invites us to shift from a reflection on concepts of revelation to a reflection based on interiority. Such an approach opens new avenues for a hermeneutical reflection on revelation on behalf of ecclesial self-understanding and agency in history.

NOVEMBER 18, 2005, marked the 40th anniversary of the promulgation of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*). The significance of this document both with respect to the overall orientation of Vatican II as well as to subsequent theology cannot be overestimated. George Schner wrote "that the document *Dei Verbum* is the most fundamental of the council's documents. In asking for a reassessment of the basic rules of Christian discourse and action, involving a reappropriation of the place of scripture in the life of the Catholic Church, the Council Fathers were indeed taking seriously Pope John's request for a pastoral and ecumenical Council."¹ Given this appreciation, Gabriel

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¹ George Schner, S.J., "A Commentary on the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine

Moran's remark in his recent book on revelation is striking: "In recent years the question of revelation seems to have been relegated to a small band of philosophers."² The reason for this, he argues, is the foundational character of the question. Since revelation is a notion that refers to "a premise of Christian theology . . . the hope is that philosophy is taking care of it."³ Moran suggests that this situation is in some ways the result of how we speak about revelation.⁴ I wish to modify this suggestion and propose that the potential development of a theology of revelation will be a function of how we transpose the question of revelation itself. To develop this proposal, I wish to present a reflection on the contribution of the Jesuit theologian Frederick Crowe.

In 1978 Crowe published *The Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History*.⁵ In the literature on revelation, little reference is made to this book.⁶ However, many insights evident in Crowe's recent publications, *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* and *Christ and History* serve to remind us of the singular merit of his 1978 text.⁷ That merit consists in the way Crowe transposes the question of revelation from a focus on its conceptual form to a focus on acts of understanding that are the basis for the development of the concepts of revelation.⁸ The aim of this article is to explore how Crowe introduces this strategy and to show how it offers new avenues for a theology of revelation. In large part, his strategy is developed by appealing to Lonergan's notion of interiority.

I shall develop this article in three steps. First, I will clarify the significance of Crowe's approach to the question of revelation by situating it within a summary account, provided in a recent article by Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, of Roman Catholic approaches to revelation. Fiorenza's account will facilitate my initial comments on the import of Crowe's invitation to

Revelation—*Dei Verbum*," in *Essays Catholic and Critical*, ed. Philip G. Ziegler and Mark Husbands (Ashgate: Burlington, Vt., 2003) 31–43, at 41.

² Gabriel Moran, *Both Sides: The Story of Revelation* (New York: Paulist, 2002) vii.

³ Moran, *Both Sides* 5.

⁴ *Ibid.* 9.

⁵ Frederick E. Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History* (New York: Paulist, 1978).

⁶ A notable exception is the study by Neil Ormerod, *Method, Meaning, and Revelation: The Meaning and Function of Revelation in Bernard Lonergan's Method in Theology* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2000).

⁷ Frederick E. Crowe, *Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004); *Christ and History: The Christology of Bernard Lonergan from 1935 to 1982* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005).

⁸ Crowe characterizes the shift from Scholasticism as a shift from "a system of theology" to "a system for *doing* theology" (*Christ and History* 183, 89).

shift from an emphasis on the concepts of revelation to the sources of such concepts in operations of understanding. Second, I will elaborate the basis of Crowe's own transposition of the question in his appeal to interiority. In this context, I will refer principally to his text *Theology of the Christian Word* in order to present the significant transitions outlined by Crowe in his thematization of the Word of God. Finally, I will comment on the significance of Crowe's approach for our understanding of revelation and how it might assist us in an ongoing development of a theology of revelation.

TRANSPOSING THE QUESTION

In his overview of recent Roman Catholic thinking on revelation, Fiorenza underscores its theological diversity.⁹ In arguing his claim, Fiorenza refers to the approaches developed by Dulles, Rahner, Kasper, and Ratzinger, as well as by himself. In his overview, Fiorenza does more than simply describe the present diversity. The reference from one thinker to the next represents a broadening and deepening of an understanding of revelation. First, he recognizes Dulles's achievement in his *Models of Revelation*, in particular, his account of the diversity of models.¹⁰ Attempting to respect the best of each model, Dulles advanced a position that he called "symbolic realism."¹¹ It consists of an argument "based on the parallelisms between the properties of symbolic communication and of revelation."¹² More than simply providing another model, Dulles attempted to develop a more integrative approach that drew upon the category of symbol and symbolic communication.¹³ Still, what Fiorenza wished to emphasize was the issue of diversity itself, this reinforced by his own approach which refers to how Paul Ricœur has drawn our attention to the diversity of genres of language found in Scripture itself: "historical writings, legal writings, wisdom, and proverbial literature, as well as poetic and hymnic literature."¹⁴

One of the intriguing features of Fiorenza's account is the number of times he refers to the different "models" or conceptions of revelation. The

⁹ Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "A Roman Catholic Perspective on the Offense of Revelation—Response to William Abraham," *Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002) 265–71, at 268.

¹⁰ Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983). The models Dulles identifies are: doctrine, history, inner experience, dialectical presence, and new awareness.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 266.

¹² *Ibid.* 136.

¹³ *Ibid.* 127–28.

¹⁴ Fiorenza, "A Roman Catholic Perspective" 268. See Paul Ricœur, "Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation," *Harvard Theological Review* 70 (1970) 1–37.

very diversity of models and their relative emphases led Dulles to inquire whether there could be a further category that, while drawing on the best in each model, could offer an understanding of revelation in its underlying unity. The question of unity remains, therefore, since all efforts are in search of an understanding of the same notion, namely, revelation. Yet, in my judgment, there is still a deeper, more implicit, reason why Fiorenza continues to emphasize diversity. It concerns an idea about concepts and their role in shaping understanding. The concern is valid in the sense that a unity among diverse conceptual approaches will not likely be acquired by introducing another conceptual approach. It is important that this implicit issue be brought to the fore and addressed. A prior question, then, needs to be raised, one that refers to the role of concepts themselves and the genesis of such concepts in our attempt to identify a foundational strategy of reasoning.

In an article entitled “Linking the Splintered Disciplines: Ideas from Lonergan,”¹⁵ Crowe identified the difficulty and, I would suggest, the way through it. First, he referred to how Scholastic thinkers themselves resolved certain conceptual difficulties by naming not only specific categories but also transcendental concepts. This effort led these thinkers to move from one class of particular things (individual cats) to a genus (cat) and then on to the notion of being, which further generalized the notion of genus. Each concrete living thing and its genus was understood to express what exists. Given this observation, Crowe then turned to Lonergan’s own recent strategy that called for a further transposition that shifted from the categories and concepts—even the transcendental concepts—to the operations of the mind based on a desire to understand, that is, “to what produces the categories.”¹⁶ With this shift, Crowe effected a basic transposition in the question of revelation. It will no longer be a question of how one can hold in conceptual unity the diversity of conceptual efforts. Rather, the question of revelation will become, how do such concepts as the experience of revelation, the truth of revelation, the historical development of doctrines, and so on, emerge on behalf of an understanding of revelation. Further, these questions do not emerge arbitrarily. There is an intelligibility to the very sequence according to which such questions emerge. With this approach, Crowe invites us to shift from a conceptualist approach to one guided by interiority.¹⁷ Our awareness of the realm of interiority will invite us to attend to the basis of our questions about revelation in “the

¹⁵ Crowe, “Linking the Splintered Disciplines: Ideas from Lonergan,” in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 252–66.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 261.

¹⁷ Frederick E. Crowe, “Lonergan’s Search for Foundations, 1940–1959,” in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 164–93. “If we look to interiority for the added foundation we need in order to formulate our doctrine today, shall we not look to

basic operations of human intentionality.”¹⁸ As Crowe himself put it, the main point or purpose is “where . . . the organization is not systematic but genetic, and the ideas are not theoretical but historical.”¹⁹

Consequently, Crowe’s observation bears significance for another key notion at play in recent theologies of revelation: historicity. To explore this, I return to Fiorenza’s overview. Once he has presented both Dulles’s and his own efforts, he then turns to the contributions of Rahner, Kasper, and Ratzinger. Fiorenza further radicalizes the conceptual tension of the unity and diversity of a theology of revelation by referring to Rahner’s notion of revelation that insists on “God’s grace-given self-communication in history.”²⁰ Rahner’s approach relates salvation history to the inherent *telos* of God’s own desire for the fullness and goodness of creation. Fiorenza underscores how Rahner’s contribution also involves a conceptualization of the church’s mission and role. He then expands his analysis with a comment on Kasper and Ratzinger. While Rahner’s account is more christological in form—“the church as a sacrament of Christ”—Fiorenza argues that for both Kasper and Ratzinger the church is a “sacrament of the Holy Spirit.”²¹ By drawing on a pneumatological perspective, Kasper and Ratzinger overcame the neo-Scholastic appeal to a two-source theory (partly in Scripture, partly in tradition—a formulation rejected by the council fathers at Vatican II in their response to the first draft on revelation) and promoted a healthier understanding of revelation that related it to the living tradition of the church.²²

interiority also to account for the transitions from one formulation to another in the past, and even to account for the original formulations of the sources themselves?” (ibid. 191–92).

¹⁸ Crowe further remarks: “It is a matter of discovering our own interiority, the basic operations of human intentionality, their levels and the interrelations of the levels: experience, understanding, judgment, existential decision” (Crowe, “Linking the Splintered Disciplines” 263). While Ormerod and I both emphasize the role of interiority, he focuses on the notion of revelation in Lonergan, whereas I will focus on how Crowe refers to the realm of interiority in order to identify the genetic sequence of transitions that have defined the history of a thematization of the Word of God.

¹⁹ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 3.

²⁰ Fiorenza, “A Roman Catholic Perspective” 269.

²¹ Ibid. 270.

²² Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 77. The first draft with its two-source language was rejected by a majority of votes, yet by less than the two-thirds required for a formal rejection. The second draft (of ultimately four to be presented) written by a newly structured mixed commission changed the terminology to emphasize, as had the Council of Trent, that the gospel is the “one source of all salutary truth and discipline of life” (Gregory Baum, “Vatican II’s Constitution on Revelation: History and Interpretation,” *Theological Studies* 28 [1967] 51–75 at 56).

These remarks on the role of history underscore the practical dimension of a reflection on revelation. They elicit a sense of the church's own self-understanding as an agent in history. Parenthetically, in recalling the comments of Rahner, Kasper, and Ratzinger, Fiorenza reminds us that the contrast often drawn between the neo-Scholastic propositional view of revelation and *Dei Verbum's* own emphasis on the more scriptural and existentialist features does not do justice to a narrative account of 19th-century Roman Catholic theology. Significant here is Fiorenza's linking of Kasper's and Ratzinger's own thinking to the Catholic Tübingen School which stressed "the primacy of the Word of God."²³ Given this parenthetical comment, the point here is that a reference to history and its existential dimensions has emerged. Consequently, a further question can be asked, namely, how does one relate an emphasis on history to a notion of revelation without succumbing, once again, to the limits of formulating simply a new conceptually organized model? Again, Crowe's invitation to transpose the basis on which we approach the question of revelation is helpful.

The question will not be whether one or the other emphasis, models or history, deserves priority. That is a question still bound to a conceptualist approach. Just as Crowe invites us to transpose the question from a focus on conceptual efforts to a focus on the basis for the emergence of the concepts, so too does he invite us to shift from reflecting on history to attending to how historicity is intrinsic to our theological efforts to understand and thematize, that is, to objectify the stages and transitions in our understanding of the Word of God. Indeed, more than a notion, historicity is an expression of our sense of agency. It is a moment integral to an act of self-understanding that has transformed the hermeneutical form of our theological questions.²⁴ Crowe himself will argue that currently we are

For good overviews of the documents, including references to the language used by both Trent and Vatican II, see René Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1966) and Bernard Sesboüé and Christoph Theobald, *La Parole du salut*, vol. 4 of *Histoire des dogmes*, dir. Bernard Sesboüé (Paris: Desclée, 1996).

²³ Fiorenza, "A Roman Catholic Perspective" 270. See also Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., "Revelation and History: Schelling, Möhler, and Congar," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 53 (1987) 17–35.

²⁴ For an interpretation, in this regard, of the import of Paul Ricœur's work for theology, see John van den Hengel, "Paul Ricœur's *Oneself as Another* and Practical Theology," *Theological Studies* 55 (1994) 458–80. In his own approach, Crowe draws our attention to Lonergan's account of the four levels of consciousness: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, and be responsible. The emergence of historical consciousness has brought to the fore the import of the fourth level for our form of theological reasoning. "The most revolutionary aspect of the new theology of the word could be put succinctly in terms drawn from Lonergan's intentionality analysis: It is a shift from the third level of consciousness to the fourth, from the cognitional to the affective" (Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 80).

engaged in a shift in the form of our question of revelation from a cognitive to a practical form. This shift is consistent with Vatican II's appeal for a pastoral and ecumenical reflection to which I referred earlier in the context of this 40th anniversary of *Dei Verbum*.

CROWE'S THEMATIZATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

I have attempted to describe certain challenges confronting our present theology of revelation and to give an initial indication of why Crowe offers a way through these difficulties. These difficulties relate, first, to reexamining the way we ask the question of revelation, that is, a reconsideration of the meaning of foundations, and, second, to the import of the church's own sense of historical agency in formulating a contemporary direction. Crowe's own efforts on behalf of transposing our question and adverting to its present nature are not intended to undo previous efforts; for previous conceptual efforts themselves belong to and reflect a commitment to understand. As simple as this relationship may seem, it bears enormous implications, as it allows us to distinguish between two different sets of data. First, we have the data related to the specific notion of revelation itself and its categories.²⁵ (It is interesting in this respect, that the notion of revelation itself did not appear as a specific topic for study prior to the 16th century.)²⁶ Second, the act of understanding also has its own set of data, the data of consciousness. These refer to how questions intend meaning, how such intentionality possesses its own set of operations, and how this set of operations is appropriated at different levels of intentional consciousness.

Crowe has drawn upon this heightened awareness of ourselves as we objectify ourselves as knowers in acts of understanding. He has brought this awareness of our own intentionality to bear on a reflection on the Word of God and on the effective history of our thematization of the Word of God. Following Lonergan, he does so by adverting to the realm of interiority. Given the fundamental significance of this notion as the basis on which he has invited us to transpose our question, I wish to say a word about Crowe's appeal to interiority. This will set the scene for exploring how he brings further clarification to the specific references and topics in a theology of revelation, to an understanding of our present questions

²⁵ Noteworthy are: Avery Dulles, *Revelation: A History* (New York: Herder, 1969); René Latourelle, *Theology of Revelation* (New York: Alba House, 1966).

²⁶ Dulles, *Models of Revelation* 4. Contrast, though, emerging theological reflection and doctrinal teaching. "Explicit Catholic doctrine on divine revelation as such is a late development; it did not occur until the nineteenth century" (Frans Josef Van Beeck, S.J., "Divine Revelation: Intervention or Divine Self-Communication," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991) 199-226, at 224).

about revelation, and to the direction we are invited to follow in the light of *Dei Verbum's* own response to a pastoral and ecumenical reflection.

INTERIORITY

In this section, I will first address interiority and how Crowe appeals to this notion to identify a structured pattern of differentiated consciousness. Then I will discuss Crowe's application of this notion to history. Drawing on Lonergan, Crowe refers to interiority to acknowledge our heightened awareness of ourselves as subjects.²⁷ However, our awareness is based neither on an introspective intuition nor on a sense of the immediacy of the self to self. Rather, interiority is a distinct realm of meaning that gives rise to a reflexive and critical moment. The reflexive moment refers to experience, but in so far as it is an experience of experience. The critical moment recognizes that experience is a structured pattern and that the data for this pattern are found in an analysis of consciousness. Such an analysis directs our attention to how our own consciousness is at work, that is, how in acts of understanding we engage certain operations of consciousness: experience, understanding, and judgment. Thus, as a critical moment, it is also empirical. For example, a question is not simply an undifferentiated openness on the part of the subject toward an unknown to be known. Each discipline that enjoys a place in our institutions of learning has earned that place because each represents a disciplined way of asking questions. A theory in any science is recognized as a valid way of asking a question that anticipates a probability for success. A set of theories is the way a scientific community organizes its total set of interrelated questions. Given that such knowing has a proven track record, it is possible to reflect—as did Lonergan in *Insight*—on the acts of understanding and to identify empirically the cognitional operations engaged in any subject's act of knowing: experience, understanding, judgment. These operations, while distinct, function as a structured and dynamic pattern. Thus, we can speak of the dynamic unity of a differentiated consciousness.

It remains important, therefore, to emphasize that our awareness of interiority is the result of a heightened self-awareness. This self-awareness is mediated in the way we catch ourselves engaged in acts of our open and unrestricted desire to know. Since our awareness of interiority invites us to attend to ourselves as we catch ourselves engaged in such acts of understanding, our understanding of interiority is intrinsically related to conversion. A critical key in Crowe's understanding of interiority is that the awareness of ourselves as subjects in acts of understanding is not reached by adding one concept of experience to another concept of experience. It

²⁷ Crowe, *Christ and History* 71.

is reached by a sudden leap, a conversion, that attends to our efforts to understand, a dynamism prior to the formulation of concepts that define our findings.²⁸

Just as Lonergan identified a pattern of distinct cognitional operations, so too did he identify the appropriation of cognitional operations within distinct levels of consciousness.²⁹ These levels account for how the self relates to one's own self, to other selves, and to the world around us. Knowledge of these levels arise when "applying the operation as intentional to the operations as conscious."³⁰ Worth noting is how Lonergan scholars refer to the breakthrough effected by Lonergan between his writing of *Insight* and *Method in Theology*, whereby Lonergan broke from the faculty psychology of neo-Scholastic thinking.³¹ Reason was one thing, the will another. What Scholastic psychology considered to be two distinct orders with two distinct ends, Lonergan now recognized to be distinct levels of consciousness integrated within the self-transcending dynamism of the subject. Knowing, while distinct, is still a function of the subject's own sense of responsibility and action. Both knowing and responsibility contribute to a fuller understanding of the subject's self-transcendent openness. Thus, while cognitive operations are intentional, they are understood to function at different levels of consciousness: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible. This attention to different levels of consciousness will be critical for Crowe's own thematization of the Word of God. For example, John XXIII's intention that Vatican II be a pastoral and ecumenical council was decisive in the rejection of the commission's first draft on *Dei Verbum*. It was not that issues of doctrine, dogma, and authority were considered unimportant. But more significant for Vatican II, according to Crowe, was the shift from a cognitive to a responsible level of consciousness evident in John XXIII's appeal for a pastoral and ecumenical council.

Crowe's appeal to interiority allowed him to view an understanding of revelation, or the Word of God, as the integration of distinct sets of ques-

²⁸ Thus, for Crowe, Lonergan's emphasis on method whose foundation "lies . . . 'in a particular, concrete, dynamic reality generating knowledge of particular, concrete, dynamic realities'" (*Christ and History* 199).

²⁹ "We describe interiority in terms of intentional and conscious acts on the four levels of experience, understanding, judging, and deciding" (Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1972] 120). There are ongoing discussions, interpretations, and debates among Lonergan scholars regarding the precise number of levels and their meanings. For present purposes, I simply follow Crowe's own reference to four.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 14.

³¹ On this development see, Kenneth R. Melchin, *History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society, and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987) 227–33.

tions with respect to distinct questions for understanding. The basis of this integration is an attention to intentionality itself. It calls us to advert to our own experience of understanding and, just as fundamentally, to our own experience of learning. Just as significant, however, is the fact that in Crowe's strategy, an appeal to interiority is the foundation not only for the development of personal understanding but also for the development of an understanding in history. We turn, then, to the import of interiority for a study of history.

Crowe introduces his thematization of the Word of God by outlining stages and transitions in Christian tradition.³² Each of these transitions (which I shall identify in the next section) corresponds to a question raised and a response developed on the basis of an interpretation of the exigencies of the act of understanding itself. What is critical for our own reading of Crowe's account is that we avoid either a purely chronological reading of these transitions, identifying each transition as if it occurs on the same level of meaning. Crowe himself speaks of his "genetic" reading.³³ He reminds us that history is not simply an unfolding of a seamless line of progress, nor does it consist of one event following upon the other. At critical moments, we are invited to pause, stop, examine the flow of history, as it were, and reflect back on what has gone forward. Those familiar with Crowe's writings will remark how often he advances his reflection only by pausing in the course of his reflections, by raising a new question and, in its light, by rereading earlier data already traversed to discern the potential intelligibility in the original sources. For Crowe, this pause for reflection represents a determined and conscious strategy that "inverts the ordinary procedures of the theology manuals, for they would start with our beginnings in history and move forward through the centuries to the present; our way is the opposite: to start with the present and move back to our beginnings."³⁴

Each new question invites us to reconsider earlier events and earlier understandings, and to see in these events and understandings a potential for new meaning. But such reflective moments, if they are to be truly reflective can only read the earlier movement in light of a new and deepened understanding. In our present situation, this does not simply involve the recognition of new concepts. Rather, it involves the structured and recurrent pattern of cognitive operations that direct the very dynamism of our acts of understanding. Otherwise, new readings remain purely descriptive. Thus, when Crowe appeals to interiority, he appeals to the basis on which we recognize the force of a new question, a question born of a

³² Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 1–2.

³³ *Ibid.* 121.

³⁴ Crowe, *Christ and History* 201.

heightened awareness of distinct stages of meaning, the ground of such awareness in our own appropriation of acts of meaning, and the genetic relationship in history among such acts of meaning. In this respect, when thematizing the Word of God, Crowe refers to the “Odyssey of the Gospel,” an Odyssey whose intelligibility is defined by the structured pattern of understanding itself. For this reason, the questions in the history of theology that advance the thematization of revelation are not arbitrary. Understanding reflects a structured pattern of inquiry, and over the course of history there exists a genetic intelligibility to the sequences of questions raised for understanding. In light of these remarks I wish to turn now to a more direct reading of Crowe’s interpretation of the thematization of the Word of God. In this section, I shall refer principally to his book, *The Theology of the Christian Word: A Study in History*, for this text specifies the distinct set of questions that has contributed to our thematization of the Word of God.

TRANSITIONS IN A THEMATIZATION OF THE CHRISTIAN WORD

The fundamental question in this section is how does Crowe’s appeal to interiority shed light on his thematization of the Word of God? My response is twofold: First, interiority redirects the way we ask the question about revelation. Our focus now becomes understanding at work and how such understanding gives rise to a specific set of questions. The order and sequence of these questions define the “ongoing path of history” that has shaped not only the history of our reflection on the Word of God, but also how that history of reflection contributes to the current shape of our own questions. Second, interiority involves our own self-appropriation as theologians. At the end of his *Theology of the Christian Word*, Crowe argues that the pattern of questions that he has identified mediates a “methodically presented option.”³⁵ Such an option invites the theologian to advert to his or her own stance, a self-understanding with respect to a horizon of meaning and value.³⁶ This, to be sure, is not the immediate focus of Crowe’s reading of history. Nonetheless, an understanding of the prior order and sequence of questions sets the stage for our own encounter with history.

Such an approach implies that historicity will become constitutive of the very form of our reflection on theological doctrines. If some light can be shed on this ongoing path—and I believe Crowe’s thematization does

³⁵ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 148.

³⁶ Note Lonergan’s own account of the existential dimension involved in the task of interpretation. Authentic interpretation of the other calls for “a radical change in himself” (*Method in Theology* 161).

this—then the contemporary options confronting the theologian in his or her own stance toward history are themselves elucidated. Crowe's appeal to interiority, therefore, places us in a hermeneutical relationship to history, but it is a relationship whose reading is based on our own appropriation of acts of understanding. Such an appropriation allows our own attention to be directed to ongoing acts of understanding in history that give rise to a structured and dynamic pattern of questions. In this light, I turn to Crowe's own account of this structured pattern. My aim in this part is to identify the concrete and emergent, *genetic* sequence that has defined the history of the thematization of the Word of God.

Seven stages and six transitions define for Crowe the history of the thematization of the Word of God.³⁷ The first three transitions involve a set of questions grounded in cognitional issues. The fourth transition will raise the question of the relevance of change in history and act as a pivot on which Crowe moves from the cognitional to the affective level of meaning. The affective will bring us into the present, to our own participation in this ongoing path of history, and raise the question of how revelation invites us to become responsible. I shall take up the major divisions of these transitions in turn.

The first three transitions involve three distinct questions whose ground, for Crowe, is cognitional. The first transition names the communication of a message and the proclamation of a kerygma by the first disciples to be the very Word of God. Prior to further questions for understanding, there is the *event* of insight. The nature of this event needs to be appreciated in its full measure and scope. A fundamental transposition occurs at the level of meaning. The early message and the kerygma of the life, death, and resurrection, namely, what is proclaimed, is itself identified to be the status of Word of God and assumes all the characteristics associated with the role of the living and effective reality of this Word. Crowe relates this first transition to a "giant leap," a "revolutionary" insight that "will give direction to our history as we move forward."³⁸ This experience that the kerygma is the very Word of God becomes the basis and foundation for further acts of understanding. At the origin of theologically mediating acts of understanding is the experience of religious conversion. Naming, therefore, is but the first moment that invites further understanding. It is a foundational reference that engages communities in a relationship between their self-understanding and horizons of meaning and sets the stage for further understanding.

Just as we desire to affirm the truth of our insights, so does the Christian

³⁷ However, since a stage is basically what precedes and follows a transition, it is sufficient for present purposes to work with Crowe's six transitions.

³⁸ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 26, 27, 42.

community, in the history of the thematization of the Word of God, reach a point where certain questions concerning the interpretation of the Word of God and the status of this Word need to be resolved. A second transition occurs. We reach this point with the Council of Nicaea and its question: "Is the Son God in the same sense that the Father is God?"³⁹ The response takes the form of a dogmatic statement. In many ways, this kind of expression will play its own role in shaping the ongoing path of history. However, once reached, this transition does not supersede or supplant the import of the previous transition. This oversight has led to many of the historical difficulties associated with the emergence of a dogmatic form of theology. So steadfastly do we begin to emphasize the judgment rendered, that the experience of insight which is the foundation of the judgment is pushed to the periphery. Subsequent generations of theologians are then called to reexamine this forward movement, to identify its basis in acts of understanding, and to identify its contribution within a longer trajectory of historical understanding at work. At the same time, the dogmatic moment remains an exigence of understanding. As I shall emphasize in the next part, our present understanding of revelation has not abandoned questions whose intent is to affirm something.⁴⁰

The questions that define the first two transitions become fulfilling conditions for a further question and a third transition. This next question emerges, maintains Crowe, by virtue of the distance in time that separates later communities from the originary experience of the early Christian communities. A question latent but nonetheless operative from the very beginning becomes explicit: By what authority do we affirm a given teaching? This question defines the third transition. The question shifts from the objective side of the cognitional act to the subjective side.⁴¹ Who are the agents of the teaching? More specifically, to whom do the Scriptures belong,⁴² and to whom is the authoritative interpretation of these Scriptures entrusted? Once again the interpretation of the historical event in which the question becomes focused, the Reformation, is not foreign to our own experience of understanding. A question of meaning is engaged, one that involves the authenticity of my own word and its basis in understanding. To whom can I entrust the validity of the truth question? To be sure, the subject of the magisterium takes form. Worth mentioning here is how Crowe continues to demonstrate that with each question we return to the earlier sources and reread them in light of the new question. A wider range

³⁹ Ibid. 44.

⁴⁰ "For our need of the truth is also part of our experience and, when we are in doubt and sore perplexed, as the church was in the fourth century, the need can be very great indeed" (ibid. 57).

⁴¹ Ibid. 63.

⁴² Ibid. 56.

of data is identified and these data are taken up within the ongoing act of interpretation. With respect to this third transition, it is worth noting how Crowe rereads the entire tradition of writers, from Irenaeus on, who appealed in one way or another to a historical continuity with the apostolic communities.⁴³ Such an appeal to the historical and mediating role of communities is critical for elaborating a meaning of authority.

The next three transitions concern the emergence of historical consciousness. Drawing, as I indicated earlier, upon Lonergan's intentionality consciousness, Crowe relates the fourth transition to "a shift from the third level of consciousness to the fourth, from the cognitional to the affective."⁴⁴ We are living at a time when we are developing a heightened awareness of what it means to be responsible actors in history. First, we reach a point where the relevance itself of the Word of God becomes a question. How can original expressions, so rooted in one time and one place, speak across time and space and say something meaningful to us today? The topics of change and development come to the fore. John Henry Newman responded by crafting a theory of development. Increasingly, we recognize that just as earlier answers emerged in response to the needs of their own time, so too can we begin to ask whether our own times and our own challenges raise their own questions and answers on behalf of the development of meaning.

The final two transitions further radicalize this experience of history. The unique drama of our form of the question is not only how we see ourselves as responsible agents in history, but also how this invites us to ponder God's own concern for history. Crowe begins with a question about history itself: history as a whole. First, he invites us to explore the widest possible perspective, one that refers to "an absolutely comprehensive sweep that embraces the visible universe."⁴⁵ This is not a view that intends to explain history within one universal idea. Quite the opposite, it is a view whose focus is the total set of concrete events and concrete happenings of history. Does this history have meaning? Once our focus is retrained on this question, we can ask, Does the event of Jesus of Nazareth speak to us, as Crowe writes, "as a word that is meant?"⁴⁶ If so, how do we authentically interpret this event with the understanding that our authentic interpretations are also part of the self-communication of God's word in the event?

In his articles on contemporary systematic theology, Robert Doran has referred to the need to identify general and special categories. General categories identify structural features intrinsic to elements of intentional consciousness, while special categories identify their corresponding "terms

⁴³ Ibid. 72.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 80.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 107. See also *Christ and History* 218.

⁴⁶ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 122.

and relations in religious experience.”⁴⁷ If we transpose Doran’s framework to Crowe’s thematization of the Word of God, the general categories speak of the unity that fashions the present pastoral and ecumenical features of a hermeneutical question of our time—what is going forward in history and how do we interpret it? Corresponding to these two general features and their questions, Crowe raises the theological questions: “What is God doing in the divine economy?”⁴⁸ and, How do we authentically discern God’s divine counsel? The fifth and sixth transitions consist of an interpretation of this duality of God’s action in terms of the missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Just as there is a hermeneutical unity to the question of history and its interpretation, there is a hermeneutical (trinitarian) unity in our reflection, analogical in character, on both divine missions.

Significant for the question of revelation is how Crowe links this form of the question to the fourth level of intentional consciousness. “We are no longer reading a book written by someone else; we are writing our own.”⁴⁹ He brings us to the threshold at which we are invited to examine our own stances as theologians and our own stance as church. At its core, this question concerns the self-understanding and agency of the church in history.⁵⁰

Significant, in this light, is *Dei Verbum*’s emphasis on a scriptural mode of discourse.⁵¹ Though narrative is not the exclusive genre adopted by Scripture, it is one of its privileged modes.⁵² The reason for this is the way narrative resonates with a sense of action and agency in history. Crowe’s reading of the “ongoing path of history” invites us to reread what is going forward in the form of God’s own participation in human beings’ making of their own history.⁵³ Thus, far from drawing us simply into the past,

⁴⁷ Robert M. Doran, “Bernard Lonergan and the Function of Systematic Theology,” *Theological Studies* 59 (1998) 569–607, at 589–90.

⁴⁸ Crowe, *Christ and History* 218.

⁴⁹ Frederick E. Crowe, “From Kerygma to Inculturation: The Odyssey of Gospel Meaning,” in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 21–31, at 28.

⁵⁰ Crowe, citing Lonergan, “The meaning of Vatican II was the acknowledgment of history” (*Christ and History* 156).

⁵¹ “The study of the sacred page is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology” (*Dei Verbum* no. 24, *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott [New York: America, 1966] 127).

⁵² Paul Ricœur, “Toward a Narrative Theology: Its Necessity, Its Resources, Its Difficulties,” in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 236–48.

⁵³ “A divine revelation is God’s entry and his taking part in man’s making of man” (Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Theology in its New Context,” in *A Second Collection: Papers*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 55–67, at 62).

Scripture becomes once again a hermeneutical *Gestalt* that allows us to reread both the figure and history of God's love and to understand this love as the ground of our own open possibilities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR A THEOLOGY OF REVELATION

The transitions identified by Crowe, while developed in their historical sequence, are read from the perspective of interiority. This perspective has allowed Crowe to think the unity among these transitions on the basis of the operations of understanding and levels of intentional consciousness. Distinct features relate to different kinds of questions for meaning, and all features contribute to an enriched understanding and integration of the church's efforts to thematize the Word of God. Crowe's major study is entitled *A Theology of the Word*. Yet, it is subtitled *A Study in History*. The subtitle reflects not only a perspective for interpreting revelation. It also introduces an awareness that historicity must be integrated within the very structure of theological reflection. Crowe explicitly signals the structural significance of historicity in the development of Lonergan's own work.⁵⁴ "It is the addition of history, with its endless variety, to structure; it is not the steady framework, it is what happens within the framework."⁵⁵ The understanding of development in acts of understanding is transposed to an interpretation of what is going forward in history. In this way, Crowe will be able to look over the emergence of categories of revelation in history and identify an "ordered multiplicity of differentiations of consciousness."⁵⁶ For this reason, his answer to the question of unity and diversity raised at the beginning of this article is a genetic one that observes "a unity over time and not just the unity of a final organization."⁵⁷ In assessing Crowe's contribution I will explore two features of this relationship to history. First, I will consider the import of the first three transitions and their abiding significance for a *present* theology of revelation. Then I will elaborate the significance of our own participation in the final three transitions that involve our own ongoing interpretation of the pastoral challenges shaping our experience of history. This latter comment will refer to Crowe's interpretation of the theological significance of the duality and integral relation of the trinitarian missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁴ Frederick E. Crowe, "All My Work Has Been Introducing History into Catholic Theology," in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 164-93.

⁵⁵ Frederick E. Crowe, "The Future: Charting the Unknown with Lonergan," in *ibid.* 347-68, at 349.

⁵⁶ Crowe, "All My Work" 99. Crowe is citing Lonergan here.

⁵⁷ Crowe, "Lonergan's Search for Foundations" 192.

THE ABIDING SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLIER TRANSITIONS

The movement from one transition to the next does not mean that the questions for meaning raised in the first transitions are no longer relevant for the present. The first transitions are results of acts of understanding. But these acts of understanding are recognized for what they are because they resonate with our own acts of understanding and with our questions for meaning.⁵⁸ In this way, the achievements of the earlier transitions continue to contribute to our present questions for understanding. For example, the first transition in which the first disciples named the proclaimed message and kerygma to be the Word of God entailed an act of conversion. A sudden and heightened awareness of a new self, Paul's own testimony, emerged in relation to a new horizon of meaning.⁵⁹ Such acts change our entire perspective on the world and our own sense of self in relation to this world. But such an experience is not remote to us. Crowe writes with respect to our time, "We are coming to a major turning point in the theology of the word, comparable in its fundamental significance to the step taken when Saint Paul . . . came to realize and boldly declare that message to be the very word of God at work in the believer."⁶⁰

Interiority has made conversion a topic for our consideration in the present. But it is a topic that allows us both to identify earlier experiences in their own integrity and to understand the ongoing import of those experiences for present understanding. A similar resonance can be identified with respect to the second transition. Nicaea raised a question for truth, that is, a question to which it anticipated affirming either yes or no. We too raise such questions for affirmation in many different contexts. As Crowe suggests, "truth is also part of our experience."⁶¹ As the early church had to face these questions for meaning, so do we. These "cognitive" experiences continue to be part of our own reflection. Similarly, transition three raises the question of an authentic interpretation of the sources. Although this question emerges explicitly in the 16th century, Crowe draws our attention to its presence in the early church, for example, Irenaeus's own effort to develop a "rule of faith" for interpreting the Scriptures.

Further, once these questions for meaning are explicitly recognized, interiority, as a realm of meaning, allows us to reflect on their differentiation. That is, no one of these questions for meaning overtakes the other opera-

⁵⁸ "And if we can appropriate our own interiority, discover meaning in its very origin, then we have a key to other cultures and their meaning, be they cultures of the ancient world or the various subcultures of a modern city" (Crowe, "Linking the Splintered Disciplines" 261).

⁵⁹ Besides Crowe's own reflections on this, see Ben F. Meyer, *The Early Christians: Their World Mission and Self-Discovery* (Wilmington: Michael Glazer, 1986).

⁶⁰ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 57.

tions and questions for meaning. A unity abides in our theology of revelation, but it is a unity grounded in an understanding of differentiated consciousness, whereby we can advert to the different strategies of meaning and understand when we are engaged in one question in contrast to another. This awareness of meaning at work helps to shed light on some of the conflicts of interpretations with which we struggle today. For example, to affirm questions for truth and to recognize that answers to such questions adopt a dogmatic or doctrinal form is one thing. To presume that all questions for meaning adopt this same form is another. It would lead to an attempt to bring all relevant questions for meaning within a dogmatically defined conceptual form. We have recognized the limits of such an approach in the period from Vatican I to Vatican II. Such an attempt frustrates our efforts to enrich our understanding of revelation. At the same time, we do not jettison the significance of dogma or doctrine. Similarly, in the third transition there was a question with respect to the authentic interpretation of sources. Such a question led to the elaboration of a discourse on authority and the growing attention to the role of a magisterium. We raise questions for authentic interpretation. We seek authenticity in the credentials of the interpreters. At the same time, the authentic reception of revelation is a topic whose foundation, in many ways, is the authentic learning of the entire church and its experience of its own historicity.⁶² Just as dogmatic statements tended to overshadow other questions for meaning, so too can a one-sided theological emphasis on the teaching side of authority tend to overlook the intrinsic and binding relationship between learning and teaching as constitutive of acts of communication.

This is the first implication arising from Crowe's appeal to interiority. It refashions the way we refer to past achievements, the way we appropriate these achievements within current faith experience, and it qualifies the way we conceive of the relationship between the diversity of the features of a notion of revelation and its unity. The second implication concerns more directly our present challenge for a theology of revelation. A philosophy of interiority is a basis for identifying conscious and intentional acts, the relationships that link these acts and the integration of them within differentiated levels of consciousness. With the emergence of historical consciousness and the recognition of our own historicity, Crowe argues that we

⁶² On the history of the notion of magisterium, see Yves Congar, "Pour une histoire sémantique du terme 'magisterium,'" and "Bref historique des formes du 'magistère' et de ses relations avec les docteurs," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 60 (1976) 85–98, 99–112; Frederick E. Crowe, "The Responsibility of the Theologian, and the Learning Church," in Frederick E. Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1989) 172–92; and "The Magisterium as Pupil: The Learning Teacher," *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 283–93.

have shifted from the cognitional level, that is, the first three levels of consciousness that address cognitional questions, to the fourth level of consciousness, responsibility.⁶³

HISTORY AND RESPONSIBILITY: TRINITARIAN MISSIONS AND ENCOUNTER

With transition four, the meaning of the relevance of the Word of God in our time, Crowe also marks a transition that corresponds with a shift in consciousness.⁶⁴ History and the concrete events of history as a whole become a question for meaning. At the same time, this reference to history raises a question about our own participation in this history. It begins to mark the movement from the medieval world to our world.⁶⁵ This said, the next two and final transitions, will mark the radicalization of this turn to an appropriation of our own historical consciousness. The very historicity of the church, its self-understanding and sense of responsibility, came to the fore.⁶⁶ However, Crowe recognizes, as did Lonergan, that “in the light of faith, originating value is divine light and *love*.”⁶⁷

If we are to turn to human action, there we find God’s agency still theologically prior to human agency. Thus, in the ongoing thematization of the Word of God, Crowe shifts the focus in the fifth transition first to God’s own action and freedom, and proceeds to frame his account of the fifth and sixth transitions within the framework of God’s trinitarian action. Crowe will configure the thematization of the Word of God and a theology of revelation by developing an encounter between the meaning of history and God’s trinitarian missions, in particular, the duality of God’s action in the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit.

The originality of Crowe’s reflection resides in the way he holds the reference to both missions together. From Crowe’s perspective, there is first the unity in duality of God’s initiative on behalf of history. That is, the missions of the Son and Spirit are to be thought together, not one coming first and then the other.⁶⁸ We will soon see how this transposes an all too simple chronological reading of the divine missions, as if Christ comes first and the Spirit follows. Indeed, for Crowe there is the real presence of the Spirit acting from the beginning and throughout creation and history.⁶⁹

⁶³ Crowe, “From Kerygma to Inculturation” 28 and *Theology of the Christian Word* 80.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 97.

⁶⁶ “The meaning of Vatican II was the acknowledgment of history” (Crowe citing Lonergan, *Christ and History* 156).

⁶⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 116.

⁶⁸ “What is first in the order of understanding is not first from the side of God’s own initiative” (Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 142).

⁶⁹ “Then the two sendings are joined in the unity of a response to a single need” (*ibid.* 142).

Yet, given this integral unity of the duality of divine missions, we must still differentiate them.

First, Crowe relates transition five to an interpretation of the mission of the Son. Principally, this takes the form of the expression of God's primary word. This is God's outer word and expresses God's own desire that this creation be and that it have meaning. Crowe reminds us that this meaning comprehends two dimensions, "an intelligibility not just as creation . . . but understood as word that is meant."⁷⁰ We direct, then, our interpretation of the intelligibility of history to its concrete events.⁷¹ Does God speak through the events of history? But this expression remains God's outer word. Crowe, following Lonergan, cautions that we must be careful not to stop here. There is another side to this action—the outer word calls for interpretation. Crowe appeals to this relationship in light of the "built-in and unavoidable duality" in God's own action.⁷² In other words, God's outer word must be complemented by God's inner word. Were it not for this, revelation would remain purely "an objective figure or doctrine to be studied and discussed."⁷³ The outer word corresponds to a cognitive or objective moment that needs the affective, the subjective or inner, moment in order to interpret the outer word.

In this way, Crowe turns to the sixth transition and will invite us to consider this act of interpretation in relation to the mission of the Spirit. If the fifth transition raised the question of how God communicates through the concrete events of history, the sixth transition asks, how can we discern in the events of history an authentic reading of God's own self-communication? The ground of such an authentic interpretation, for Crowe, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Much theological work, Crowe acknowledges, remains to be done here, for our reflection on the Holy Spirit has been neglected and is underdeveloped. Liturgically and symbolically we have limited Pentecost to one Sunday evening.⁷⁴ To develop an interpretation of this mission, Crowe turns once more to Lonergan's reflections on interiority and their import

⁷⁰ Ibid. 122.

⁷¹ In his recent book on Lonergan's Christology, Crowe emphasizes how Lonergan's own work was preoccupied from the beginning with the meaning of the recapitulation of all things in Christ: "For I maintain that Lonergan's whole work is ordered in relation to Christ; not, then, a history of Christ, but rather Christ and history in a mutual relationship, perhaps one of identity" (*Christ and History* 21; see also 166).

⁷² "Again, a full Christology must relate itself to a Pneumatology" (ibid. 172). For this reason, Crowe avoids the theological debate about whether theology is Christocentric or theocentric, which overlooks both the Spirit's role and prior questions (ibid. 220).

⁷³ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 124, 123.

⁷⁴ Crowe, "The Spirit and I at Prayer," in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy*

for our time. He suggests that a “study of our own human interiority” may be a good “point of insertion for a systematics” and for our reflections on the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ The link is made by turning to the experience of conversion, a heightened awareness of ourselves in imagining (psychic conversion),⁷⁶ in knowing (intellectual conversion), in acting (moral conversion), and in accepting self as gift (religious conversion). Appealing to interiority comes with a heightened awareness of self and offers us a basis on which to differentiate our own inner experience. We thereby attune ourselves to our own inner gifts and the role they play in acts of interpretation. Theologically, for Crowe, we recognize that God’s own word entering into history calls for a genuine effort of interpretation. But such interpretation draws upon the gifts and charisms distributed by the Spirit.⁷⁷ The presence of the Spirit in us, as God’s inner word, attunes itself to the expression of God’s outer word. Is not, Crowe asks, the presence of the Spirit abiding in us, in the authenticity of religious conversion, that is, in the awareness of God’s gifts and charisms interiorly present, the guarantor of an ongoing authentic interpretation of God’s self-communication in the events of history? As such, the act of interpretation, grounded in the gifts of the Spirit, becomes itself constitutive of God’s own word acting in history. This said, it is critical that we keep in mind Crowe’s appeal to the duality of God’s action. If God speaks through the events of history in his primary word from the beginning of creation, and if such a word, both cosmically and historically, encompasses the meaning of the full sweep of history in its concrete events, then what is called for is a corresponding act of interpretation that accompanies *from the beginning* the initiative and expression of this duality of God’s action.

At this point we return to the intrinsic unity of the duality of God’s action. What is called for, says Crowe, is an awareness of an act of interpretation that has accompanied the expression of God’s primary word all along. The work and mission of the Spirit does not follow, chronologically speaking, the event of the mission of the Son. Rather, the presence of the Spirit is present from the beginning at the origin of history and throughout all history in an act of interpretation that attempts to attune itself to the self-expression of God’s love, the meaning God has chosen to effect and communicate in history. In other words, this work of the Spirit, the real

294–303, at 294–95. For a recent overview, see Achiel Peelman, “L’Esprit Saint comme fondement du pluralisme religieux: Quelques réflexions,” *Mission* 11 (2004) 255–81. Peelman refers to the originality and continued relevance of Crowe’s own contribution (272–73).

⁷⁵ Crowe, “The Spirit and I at Prayer” 298.

⁷⁶ I accept Doran’s introduction of this level of conversion.

⁷⁷ Crowe, *Theology of the Christian Word* 141. For a more detailed elaboration see, Crowe, “The Spirit and I at Prayer” 298–300.

divine presence, has abided with all humanity all along, and it continues to abide with all humanity.⁷⁸

Given this theological framework, we can now turn to its further implications for a theology of revelation and the intrinsic historicity of such a theology. Our reference in Crowe's reflections to the twofold mission of the Son and the Spirit has focused to this point on the form of God's own action. This does not imply, though, that God has a predetermined, worked-out plan for history nor does it imply that the course of history is determined before the concrete events of history occur. For the events of history and their interpretation are effected in the genuine freedom of concrete human responses.⁷⁹ Crowe explicitly cautions us against interpreting history in a purely logical or conceptual mode. He gives the example in which one may be asked whether such and such an event will happen tomorrow. The normal response, one may well assume, is either yes it will, or no it will not. But Crowe invokes Lonergan's third option: "the truth is still indeterminate."⁸⁰ The first two responses, if assumed to be the only two possible ones, are a function of a purely logical and determinist perspective. If something either will or will not happen, then implicitly the course of events is interpreted to be a function of what has to or does not have to occur. However, it is quite possible to respond that the outcome is still to be determined.⁸¹ This implies that there is a contingency to history and that the concrete events that will in fact occur are a function of how people will actually act. But does such a possibility lend itself to an intel-

⁷⁸ "But the potential of this fact for a theology of religion is widely disregarded" (Crowe, *Christ and History* 217). The full implications of Crowe's reflections for interreligious dialogue would be a subject for a further article. See Frederick E. Crowe, "Son and Spirit: Tensions in Divine Missions?" in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea* 297–314, at 304; Frederick E. Crowe, "Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions," in *ibid.* 324–43, at 329. "I need to go back to still more general considerations, for it is not primarily a question of religions and their relationship, still less of their competing claims, but one of God's direction of universal history" (Crowe, *Christ and History* 217).

⁷⁹ Joseph Komonchak argues the same with respect to interpretation of the action of the church. "But just as individuals become Christians in concrete circumstances and under the concrete conditions that define and distinguish their particular lives, so the Church is never generated except in particular places, at particular times, and in the face of particular historical challenges" (Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II," in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield*, ed. Peter Phan [Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2000] 69–91, at 90).

⁸⁰ Crowe, "The Future: Charting the Unknown" 367.

⁸¹ "Divine knowledge of an event does not exist except in simultaneity with the event; God does not 'know' the event unless the event exists." Crowe refers his elaboration to Aquinas who, writes Crowe, "was adamant on the point" (Crowe, *Christ and History* 226).

ligibility about history? Here Crowe returns to the full import of interiority for an understanding of history.

Interiorly differentiated consciousness adverts to the potential intrinsic to one's own freedom and to our heightened self-awareness of this freedom and its conditions. Potency is not arbitrariness. It implies direction. The course that life takes reflects schemes of relations that are the conditions for sustaining and promoting further life. An understanding of the intelligibility of such ordered relationships reflects a world order that Lonergan identified as "emergent probability." As Lonergan maintained, the known is not an object of observation, an "already out there now." The foundations for contesting this commonsense understanding are based on a turn to one's own self as an authentic subject, or to our selves in authentic communities whose truth and goodness are realized in the contingent decisions in which we attune ourselves to what is truthful and good. The same can be said about attuning ourselves, in the ongoing thematization of the Word of God, to the twofold action of God in the missions of the Son and Spirit. Where can the authentic interpretation of God's own outer and primary word exist? As Crowe has argued, the response is not simply a cognitive response. It will be a response given in the act of freedom. This freedom is encompassed by the duality of God's own action. The Spirit's work is interpretation, and the Spirit's effort resides in God's desire to attune our own self to God's own outer word. The question then emerges, Where do such acts of freedom occur? For both Crowe and Lonergan, the good is concrete, and so Crowe invites us to think through the significance of the meaning of encounter.

Crowe frequently refers to Lonergan's statement that affirms that encounter is where we test our history.⁸² We write history, Lonergan states, out of horizons. Prior to encounter, we engage who we are as subjects and our own acts of self-understanding.⁸³ Worth noting here is that the notion of self to which Crowe refers in encounter is both the personal self and the community or ecclesial self.⁸⁴ But this relationship between self-understanding and horizons of meaning involves dialectic. Encounter, then, in so far as it brings into play the tension inherent in the relationship

⁸² Crowe recurrently cites Lonergan's statement that "encounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon can be put to the test" (Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 247).

⁸³ For this reason, encounter and dialogue do not overlook inauthenticity and bias. "Historical causality," writes Crowe, "is not a matter of sweetness and light but the way of Christ in his example of suffering and death" (*Christ and History* 182).

⁸⁴ "The truth is that from beginning to end of his career it was the community that was central" (Frederick E. Crowe, "The Spectrum of 'Communications' in Lonergan," in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 53–77, at 64).

between self-understanding and horizon, mediates between dialectic and genuine dialogue. In dialogue, we are confronted both with the way we have integrated self-understanding and a horizon of meaning, and how the other has integrated this same relation between self-understanding and horizon. From the perspective of interiority and its import for authenticity, encounter does not then become a matter of debating who is right and who is wrong. Rather, it is a matter of the parties engaging in an effort of authentic learning. For Crowe, when such encounter and dialogue are engaged in mutual authenticity, those involved are already within the inner movement of God's Spirit as a real presence.⁸⁵ For this reason, Crowe refers to dialectic as one of the most fundamental, if not *the* fundamental issue, for history.⁸⁶ Dialectic brings to the fore and makes as a matter for study one's own conversion and authenticity. Dialectic attempts to discern where bias exists and how to overcome it. "The field of battle is one's own interiority."⁸⁷

Theologically, then, these remarks can also reframe our interpretation of the relationship between the work of the Spirit and the self-understanding of the church and the implications of this relationship for the thematization of the Word of God. The scene is set for rethinking the freedom and the responsibility of the church and bringing to the fore once again Vatican II's appeal on behalf of a pastoral and ecumenical ecclesial self-understanding. Specifically, Crowe draws our attention to what it means to be an ongoing learning church. As much as it is a cognitive act, it is also an act effected in the concrete conditions of encounter. Crowe invites us to discern in the present mission of the church something of the insight that gripped the apostle Paul's own sense of mission. What does it mean for the church, in the confidence of its faith in the risen Christ, to encounter the other? What does it mean for a theology of revelation to anticipate that, in the confidence of the Spirit working in all persons of good will, we can learn from the other something of the truth of the mystery of this very event of the Risen Christ? As Crowe remarks, "In the measure that such attempts succeed, they will, it seems to me, add a new dimension to the Pauline vision in which we grow to the fullness of the body of Christ."⁸⁸

⁸⁵ "The focus is no longer the possibility of salvation for all; that is now taken for granted and as a question is relegated to the margins" (ibid. 218).

⁸⁶ For an in-depth study of this relationship, see Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989).

⁸⁷ Crowe, "Rhyme and Reason: On Lonergan's Foundations for Works of the Spirit," in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 314–31, at 325.

⁸⁸ Here I have transposed to the import for the church's self-mediation in encounter remarks by Crowe in the context of his comments on feminism. See Frederick E. Crowe, "The Genus 'Lonergan and . . .' and Feminism," in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy* 142–63, at 162.

New Testament exegete Ben Meyer has written that “revelation is entrusted to a people defined as such by receiving it.”⁸⁹ In inviting us to shift from the third level of consciousness, a cognitive level, to the fourth level, that of responsibility, Crowe invites us to develop a theology of revelation whose viewpoint is defined by an enriched and heightened awareness of the church’s own agency and the role of this agency in helping us discern the act of God’s word in history. It was in relation to this level of responsibility and agency that John XXIII appealed for a pastoral and ecumenical horizon of meaning. And the council fathers responded: “The future of humanity belongs in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations reason for living and hoping.”⁹⁰

My aim in this article was simply to identify the significance of Crowe’s transposition of our question and its methodological import for a theology of revelation. Not by adding further concepts to already developed ones will a theology of revelation be advanced. Rather, as Crowe argues, it is by attending to the intrinsic historicity and the dialectical tensions inherent in an appeal to interiority and in our desire to understand. Such an approach may well shed light on why earlier conceptual advances were genuine achievements and why present challenges call for new resources of meaning that will, as Lonergan has stated, rise to the measure of our own age.

⁸⁹ Ben F. Meyer, *The Church in Three Tenses* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971) 75.

⁹⁰ *Gaudium et spes* no. 31 (Abbott 230).