

VATICAN II ON REVELATION—FROM BEHIND THE SCENES

JARED WICKS, S.J.

The article presents interventions by certain expert-consultants (periti) just before and during Vatican II's opening weeks in 1962. Discovering mediocrity in passages of the prepared schemas on God's revelation, Joseph Ratzinger, Pieter Smulders, Karl Rahner, and Jean Daniélou formulated criticisms and framed alternatives that this article reviews. In time, several key conceptions of their alternative texts, such as the soteriological centering of revelation, found a place in Dei Verbum nos. 1-6.

ENRICHED UNDERSTANDING OF VATICAN II can come from studying the writings of the *periti* who assisted at the council; work with texts prepared by these expert-consultants can lead to a fresh appreciation of particular teachings of Vatican II.¹ Today we can follow some of the main

JARED WICKS, S.J., received his Th.D. from the University of Münster. After many years on the faculty at the Gregorian University, he is now writer-in-residence at John Carroll University, Cleveland. His special interests include Luther, sacramental life, theological anthropology, Vatican II, and ecumenism. His recent publications include: "The Eucharist in Ecumenical Dialogues: Advances and New Tensions," in *L'Eucharistie: Don de Dieu pour la vie du monde* (2009); *Doing Theology* (2009); and "Cardinal Willebrands as Exponent of Catholic Ecumenical Theology," *Pro Ecclesia* (forthcoming). He is drafting texts for the U.S. Lutheran-Catholic dialogue on eschatology, and mining the papers of Johannes Witte, S.J., on the foundations of ecumenical engagement in Vatican II's Preparatory Theological Commission.

The article published here originated in the address given upon the author's reception of the Johannes Quasten Award at The Catholic University of America, School of Theology and Religious Studies, December 3, 2009.

¹ I draw on work by doctoral students I directed at the Gregorian University and on my own publications on the *periti*. My studies include five articles under the general title, "Pieter Smulders and *Dei Verbum*," in *Gregorianum* 82 (2001) 241-97 and 559-93; 83 (2002) 225-67; 85 (2004) 242-77; and 86 (2005) 92-134. Also, "Dei Verbum Developing: Vatican II's Revelation Doctrine 1963-1964," in *The Convergence of Theology: A Festschrift Honoring Gerald O'Collins, S.J.*, ed. Daniel Kendall, S.J., and Stephen T. Davis (New York: Paulist, 2001) 109-25; "Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus* before and during Vatican Council II," *Gregorianum* 89 (2008) 233-311; "De revelatione under Revision, March-April 1964: Contributions of Charles Moeller and Other Belgian Theologians," in *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council*, ed. Doris Donnelly et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2008) 460-94; and "Theologians at Vatican Council II," in *Doing Theology* (New York: Paulist, 2009) 187-223 (Appendix 5).

periti in their day-to-day experiences of the council, since the diaries of Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Umberto Betti, and of the little-known but highly influential Louvain theologian Gérard Philips have recently been published.² To argue this point I will below take the case of *Dei Verbum*, prologue and chapter 1, on revelation itself.

The *periti* contributed all along the timeline of Vatican II, beginning in 1959 with scattered cases of future council members consulting theologians and taking over their ideas to respond to Pope John XXIII's request for suggestions about council topics. During the preparation of the council, 1960–1962, senior theological scholars such as Hubert Jedin and Gérard Philips were members of preparatory commissions, while some 200 consultants of the commissions worked out draft texts, redrafted them in accord with the members' preferences, and then polished them to the point where they could be distributed to all the members as the council's initial schemas on doctrine and on the renewal of the Church's worship, ministries, and relations *ad extra*. During the four working periods of Vatican II, 1962–1965, the bishops, both as individuals and as groups in their national or regional conferences, learned much from the *periti* whom they heard lecturing, who circulated texts, and who composed many of the bishops' oral and written evaluative comments on the schemas. During and between the four working periods, many *periti* rendered a hidden but essential service to the commissions made up of council members, as these theologian assistants culled the interventions, discovered convergences, weighed their cogency, and formulated revised texts of the draft schemas, with the aim of bringing back to the council members emended texts in which many members would be satisfied to find results of their previous comments and proposals.

² Yves Congar, *Mon journal du concile*, 2 vols., ed. Éric Mahieu (Paris: Cerf, 2002), which I presented in "Yves Congar's Doctrinal Service of the People of God," *Gregorianum* 84 (2003) 499–550; Henri de Lubac, *Carnets du concile*, 2 vols., ed. Loïc Figoureux (Paris: Cerf, 2007), which I treated in "Further Light on Vatican Council II," *Catholic Historical Review* 95 (2009) 546–69, at 546–62; Gérard Philips, *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips, Secrétaire adjoint de la Commission doctrinale*, ed. Karim Schelkens (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), which I presented in "More Light on Vatican Council II," *Catholic Historical Review* 94 (2008) 75–101, at 76–80. Umberto Betti was personal *peritus* for the influential Archbishop Ermenegildo Florit of Florence, and for the Doctrinal Commission. Betti worked with Congar and Rahner in Spring 1964 on the major revision of chapter 2 of *De revelatione*. From Betti, we have *Diario del concilio, 11 ottobre 1962–Natale 1978* (Bologna: EDB, 2003), as well as an account, with appended documents, of the genesis of *Dei Verbum* chapter 2 in *La dottrina del Concilio Vaticano II sulla trasmissione della rivelazione* (Rome: Antonianum, 1985).

Regarding this many-sided service by theologians at Vatican II, Congar's diary challenges our understanding of the council. In three places Congar jotted down, on different days in 1965, huge claims about the theologians' labors as essential to the council's production of its documents and to the depth and freshness these texts would be giving to Catholic teaching and attitudes.³ These claims might seem Congar's *apologia pro vita sua*. Or do they represent an accurate perception by one deeply immersed in the council who is pointing out an aspect that should be emphasized in accurately understanding "what happened at Vatican II"?

Another witness to the impact of the theologians is Dom Hélder Câmara, bishop of Recife, Brazil, in his 293 letters from the council during its four working periods.⁴ The letters record how much Câmara gained from the late afternoon lectures on conciliar topics given by the *periti* for the bishops during the four working periods. The letters also pass on his insights from reading on liturgy, the laity, ecumenism, biblical theology, and spirituality, in books (mostly French) by theologians, both those at the council and those exerting influence from afar. Câmara also observed that the episcopates with most assurance in their council work are those who brought their own conference-*periti* with them to Vatican II. Now to a case-study of different *periti* at work behind the scenes at the council.

VATICAN II'S TRANSFORMATION OF CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON REVELATION

In April 1870 the First Vatican Council issued the Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, which then deeply influenced the notion of God's revelation that was held by generations of Catholic theology teachers and students.⁵ I would characterize this teaching as terse and correct, but in its presentation as really concerned less with what God says to humankind and more with aspects that qualify and surround God's revelation. The text said that it pleased God's wisdom and goodness "to reveal to the human race Himself and the eternal decrees of His will."⁶ God did this (1) in a *supernatural manner*, conveying some truths beyond the reach of our reason, but this fits with our supernatural calling. The giving of this revelation has been (2) *accompanied by the outward signs* of miracles

³ Congar, *Mon journal du concile* 2:81, 421, 465.

⁴ Dom Hélder Câmara, *Lettres conciliaires (1962–1965)*, ed. José de Broucker, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 2006), which I presented in "More Light on Vatican II" 81–86.

⁵ In its original Latin *Dei Filius* is available in Heinrich Denzinger and Adolf Schönmetzer, eds., *Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum, et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, 33rd ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1965) nos. 3000–45. I treat this document in my *Doing Theology* 17–20, and provide an English translation of the paragraphs on revelation, faith, and faith/reason at 172–79.

⁶ *Dei Filius*, chap. 2; *Enchiridion symbolorum* 3004.

and prophecies showing revelation's credibility as God's word. The content, although supernatural, is still, once given and received in faith, (3) *open to believers' rational inquiry and investigation* for gaining beneficial insights into its meaning. Thus God's revelation of himself and of what he has decreed is qualified by its supernatural character, credibility, and penetrability by intellectual investigation of its meaning. On actual revealed content, Vatican I stated the bare minimum, while emphasizing three qualities that mark God's revelation—whatever it might say about himself, and whatever might be the eternal decrees of the divine will about which revelation informs us.

But *Dei Verbum*, issued by Vatican II on November 18, 1965, is much different. It gives in its prologue and chapter 1 an account of God's revelation, which *in its ample content* is soteriologically focused on God-with-us, in Christ, to liberate human beings and lead them into communion with himself. The apostles' witness, in no. 1 (following 1 John), gathers hearers into *koinonia* with the apostles and so with the Father and the Son. In its unfolding across history, God's revelation combines deeds and words, for it is history narrated and proclaimed, with events of "mystery" anchoring the linguistic communication and doctrinal meaning. Jesus himself is God's Truth for us, mediating it and summing it up (no. 2), by recapitulating all that God reveals (no. 7). Christ shows God to the human family, in his presence and epiphany, in words and works, in signs and miracles, and especially in his death, resurrection, and sending of the Spirit—all of which reveal God to the human family as Emmanuel, with us to free us from sin and death and raise us to eternal life (no. 4). Such revelation can and should be more deeply understood under the benign care of the Holy Spirit, who fosters and deepens the yes of faith through which revelation comes to its term and finds a dwelling place in believing hearts and minds.⁷

Vatican II stated revelation's evangelical content in its opening six paragraphs. One can argue that in the overall logic of the council documents, this passage stands first, since the gospel that it states is the word by which the church is assembled as *congregatio fidelium* and priestly people for

⁷ The last sentence goes beyond the text itself of *Dei Verbum* no. 5 to state the insight voiced by Cardinal Julius Döpfner on September 30, 1964, that faith is primarily God's work in humans to make his word of revelation effective, so that in faith revelation's essence completes itself. Beyond a dialogue, faith is *participative* of and in what God reveals. See Vatican II, *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (hereafter *AS*), 32 parts in 6 vols. (Vatican City: Typis polyglottis Vaticanis, 1970–1996) III/3, 146. See Gianluca Montaldi, *In fide ipsa essentia revelationis completur: Il tema della fede nell'evolversi del Concilio Vaticano II; La genesi di DV 5–6 e i suoi riflessi su ulteriori ambiti conciliari* (Rome: Gregorian University, 2005) 355–60. Note 12 below indicates that in the 1950s Joseph Ratzinger had found in Bonaventure just such a concept of revelation and faith.

worship. This is the gospel that all church ministries and apostolates serve and promote. The same gospel creates the horizon of understanding within which Catholic Christians view the world and its structures for the unfolding of the human vocation. Because of this, Vatican II's Doctrinal Commission once said that the constitution on revelation is in a certain way (*quodammodo*) the first of all the council's constitutions.⁸ Some editions place *Lumen gentium* at the head of the Vatican II constitutions, but would not the conciliar ecclesiology be better contextualized if it were placed *after* the council text starting with "hearing the word of God reverently and proclaiming it confidently . . ." and ending with "the word of God . . . stands forever," as does *Dei Verbum*?⁹

EARLY CONTRIBUTIONS BY *PERITI* TO VATICAN II'S REVELATION DOCTRINE

This is not the place to trace the itinerary that led from the Preparatory Theological Commission's schema *De fontibus revelationis* of 1962 to *Dei Verbum* of 1965, but a few selected moments of early influence by the *periti* can be theologically enlightening about the council and about this important teaching.

(1) Vatican II formally opened on October 11, 1962. But some six weeks earlier, Josef Frings, the cardinal archbishop of Cologne, received his copy of the just issued booklet of the first seven official draft schemas. The Cardinal was nearly blind, so he sent the book to his theological *peritus*, Joseph Ratzinger, who at the time taught in the Catholic Theology Faculty of the University of Bonn, just south of Cologne. Frings had already taken critical positions on some of the texts in the booklet when earlier drafts had come before the Central Preparatory Commission in 1961–1962 for evaluation and possible emendation before being sent on to Pope John XXIII for his *nihil obstat* and distribution to the bishops of the council. Now Frings wanted help from Ratzinger in formulating reactions to the initial batch of official texts, so that he, Frings, might respond to a request by the papal Secretary of State for a letter, due in the Vatican by September 15, giving an initial evaluation of the seven texts. This evaluation would help in

⁸ The commission said this in its *relatio* accompanying the late 1964 revision of *De revelatione*. The commission was defending the formulation of no. 1's final clause, which expresses the grand intention of promoting faith, hope, and charity in the whole world. This ambitious claim can stand here, so the commission argued, because it is introducing not just *Dei Verbum* but also the whole body of Vatican II's main documents. See *AS* IV/1, 341.

⁹ Here I am differing from the position that the Constitution on the Liturgy has not only a chronological but also a theological priority in the corpus of Vatican II documents, as Massimo Faggioli recently advances in "Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Meaning of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 71 (2010) 437–52.

selecting the first text or texts to put on the council's agenda for deliberation in the *Aula* of the transformed Basilica of St. Peter. Frings asked Ratzinger, first, to read the texts and note which of them had been modified in response to the observations of the Central Preparatory Commission. Also, which of the schemas should simply be rejected as council texts? And further, for which parts did Ratzinger have suggestions for revisions to improve the texts?¹⁰

Ratzinger, realizing that time was short, composed and typed a Latin letter evaluating the seven schemas. When Frings received Ratzinger's letter, he found the contents helpful; he simply added the date, the proper salutation to a fellow cardinal, and his signature and sent the letter to the Vatican.¹¹ The letter judged that only two of the seven texts were fit for conciliar deliberation, namely, the schema on the liturgy and another on ecumenical openings to the Orthodox churches. The other five texts did not measure up to the standards of conciliar teaching, nor were they likely to attract the "separated brethren" to seek unity, as John XXIII had been emphasizing among the Vatican II aims and purposes. One schema in the booklet, the Preparatory Theological Commission's draft text "On Preserving the Purity of the Deposit of Faith" is so diffuse that it had to be set aside, with some parts possibly considered for transfer to other schemas. Also, its many censures of theological positions allegedly held by Catholics did not fit with the aims of the council as Pope John had stated them. The first text in the booklet, "On the Sources of Revelation," treats Scripture and tradition, biblical inspiration and inerrancy, and the Bible in the Church. This, according to Ratzinger, had to be revised to avoid speaking authoritatively on issues of dispute between Catholic theologians in good standing. Ratzinger added that the text on the sources also needed to have an initial chapter added, on the nature and processes of revelation itself, that is, on the Word of God, of which Scripture and tradition are then formulated means of transmitting and communicating to us what God has revealed. Revelation had to come first.¹² For this needed first chapter,

¹⁰ Norbert Trippen relates this Frings-Ratzinger exchange in detail in his biography, *Josef Kardinal Frings (1887–1978)*, 2 vols. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005) 2:308–13. A photographic reproduction of Frings's letter to Ratzinger requesting his evaluation of the initial schemas is given in the yearbook, *Mitteilungen des Institut-Papst Benedikt XVI*, ed. Rudolf Vorderholzer, Christian Schaller, and Franz-Xavier Heibl (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2009) 177.

¹¹ The Frings-Ratzinger letter is in *AS*, *Appendix* 74–77; English trans. in my "Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *peritus*" 264–68, introduced at 239–41.

¹² In 2010 we are able to know more about Ratzinger's thinking on revelation at the time of Vatican II. The newly available source is Joseph Ratzinger, *Offenbarungsverständnis und Geschichtstheologie Bonaventuras und Bonaventura-Studien*, vol. 2 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Gerhard Ludwig Müller (Freiburg: Herder, 2009), which contains, with other texts, the first complete edition of Ratzinger's

Ratzinger mentioned that some ideas could be taken over from chapter 4 of the otherwise inept text “On Preserving the Purity of the Deposit.”

As a matter of principle, Ratzinger stated that the conciliar texts “should not be treatises in a scholastic style, as if they were taken over from textbooks of theologians, but should instead speak the language of Holy Scripture and the holy Fathers of the Church.” Furthermore, the council had to speak in ways that would attract separated Christians and give fresh witness to Jesus Christ in a world in which many people find Christian faith an alien reality.¹³

Thus, a letter penned by *peritus* Ratzinger and signed by Cardinal Frings was an early call for Vatican II to give to the Church and to the world an updated account of Catholic teaching on God’s revelation.

(2) Joseph Ratzinger had suggested taking ideas from the schema “On Preserving the Purity of the Deposit,” that is, from its chapter 4, on revelation and faith. However, another *peritus*, Pieter Smulders, a Dutch Jesuit professor at Maastricht, had already composed serious criticisms of that passage. In August and September 1962, the same booklet of schemas that Ratzinger evaluated for Frings was also being studied by Smulders who had been asked for his views by the papal nuncio, Archbishop Giuseppe Beltrami, then serving in The Hague.¹⁴

In chapter 4 of the schema on preserving the deposit, Smulders perceived such a one-sided insistence on revelation as *locutio divina* that the schema leaves divine works, God’s *opera magna*, outside revelation itself. The works serve only to show the credibility of the message or doctrine given in words. According to Smulders, the drafters of this chapter were not in tune

1955 *Habilitationsschrift*, in which the opening section sets forth Bonaventure’s conception of revelation. Because of criticisms by Michael Schmaus, the full *Habilitationsschrift* was withdrawn and not published until now. On this episode, see Joseph Ratzinger, *Milestones: Memoirs 1927–1977* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998) 106–13, which also indicates the relevance of the Bonaventurian insights at Vatican II. The main insight is that revelation is real only in the duality of God’s action and that action’s term and outcome, that is, in faith, which is a graced enlightenment (*Offenbarungsverständnis* 88–102, 218–21). Faith comes from hearing, an interior hearing *per aurem cordis* (153–55). Revelation itself is always more than its formulation in Scripture. Scripture gives a fixed and normative witness, but this remains the material principle of revelation, which itself exists as a vital reality in living subjects (*Milestones* 108–9).

¹³ Wicks, “Six Texts” 266. Later, on October 10, 1962, the day before Vatican II opened, Ratzinger addressed the German-speaking bishops on *De fontibus*, mounting an incisive critique of its account of revelation and of Scripture/tradition. I provide this lecture in “Six Texts”: in the German original, 295–309, and in English, 269–85.

¹⁴ See my “Peter Smulders and *Dei Verbum*: 1. A Consultation on the Eve of Vatican II,” *Gregorianum* 82 (2001) 241–97, which on 288–97 gives Smulders’s critique of *De deposito fidei* on revelation. I studied these texts in the Smulders Archive in the Katholiek Documentatie Centrum, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

with recent biblical theologies of revelation that highlight the combination of works or events with words or doctrine. The schema opposed what was being written by authors like Josef Rupert Geiselmann, Romano Guardini, Karl Rahner, Jean Daniélou, Jacques Dupont, and Jean Mouroux, who held that the revelatory “word” comprises both God’s saving deeds and verbal communication by God’s spokespersons. The events include the liberation of God’s people from slavery in Egypt and above all the person and deeds of Christ, culminating in his death and resurrection. In him, as dead and risen, “the grace of God our savior has appeared” (Titus 2:11, well known from the Christmas lectionary). God reveals himself as close to humans in his grace, as Emmanuel who frees from servitude and gives life to the dead. “Deus Salvator se revelat salvando.” The words announcing God’s saving deeds are for Smulders essential, but the schema is extreme in excluding revelation-in-deed, because it fears the reduction of revelation to human experience, as allegedly held by Catholic Modernists.

The drafters of *De deposito fidei*, in Smulders’s analysis, overreacted to the excesses of Modernism and saw deviations in the more recent cultivation of a biblically grounded conception of revelation both in history and in words of narrative, proclamation, and derived doctrine. They had not sensed that the very person of Christ, in the totality of his earthly being, is God’s self-manifestation, as is clear from the opening of 1 John, which Smulders cited to much the same effect as it would have in Vatican II’s *Dei Verbum* no. 1.

Smulders’s critical notes for Nuncio Beltrami had no immediate influence on Vatican II’s work on revelation, but in time they became significant. First, Smulders received a call just before the council opened to serve in Rome as *peritus* of the bishops of Indonesia, for whom in time he composed conciliar interventions. Two such interventions came on November 14, 1962, the opening day of debate on the schema *De fontibus revelationis*. In a text prepared by Smulders and approved by the whole group of bishops of Indonesia, Archbishop Gabriel Manek, S.V.D., delivered a reasoned *non placet* on *De fontibus*, because of its low theological level, its insinuated censure of good Catholic theologians, and its creation of obstacles to dialogue with separated Christians.¹⁵ After Manek,

¹⁵ See AS I/3, 55–57, providing the text to which 19 bishops of Indonesia appended their signatures. Since cardinals spoke first, Manek’s was the 13th intervention and the 10th that declared *non placet* on this first day of debate on *De fontibus*. He followed the negative positions of Achille Liénart, Josef Frings, Paul-Émile Léger, Franz König, Bernard Alfrink, Léon-Joseph Suenens, Joseph Ritter, Augustin Bea, and Patriarch Maximos IV of the Melkite Catholic Church. For the genesis of Manek’s and the following interventions, see Wicks, “Pieter Smulders and *Dei Verbum*: 2, On *De fontibus revelationis* during Vatican II’s First Period, 1962,” *Gregorianum* 82 (2001) 559–93.

Archbishop Albert Soegijapranata, S.J., used a Smulders text to expand the horizon of debate by a critique of the three theological schemas that followed *De fontibus* in the initial booklet, arguing that they clashed with the council's pastoral aims.¹⁶

Later, in June 1963, during a visit to Indonesia, Smulders met with the bishops at Djakarta and with them prepared an evaluation of the revised text *De divina revelatione*, which had been distributed to all the Vatican II bishops in May 1963.¹⁷ This Indonesian text was constructively critical, as it offered some of Smulders's favorite formulations, to bring out the salvific message and christological concentration of God's revealing word to us. Smulders's ideas on revelation became even more important in March 1964, after he had been co-opted to serve Vatican II's Doctrinal Commission in revising *De revelatione*. When the Commission apportioned the work, Smulders was commissioned to work up, from the interventions of the bishops, including the one from Indonesia, a first sketch of a revised prologue and chapter 1 of *De revelatione*. In this work Smulders was not to propose his own theological ideas but was to revise the text in line with what the episcopal members of the council had said in their written comments. These interventions, however, included his own text from Djakarta, and he quite properly worked its ideas into the new draft, which the council received with considerable satisfaction during its third period of 1964.¹⁸

(3) Amid the daily routines of the council's first period in 1962, an unexpected happening was the circulation, in mimeographed texts, of systematic critiques of the prepared doctrinal texts and even of alternative texts as substitute schemas offered by individuals or groups of *periti*. From the Dutch College, 2700 copies of Edward Schillebeeckx's critical *Animadversiones* on the seven initial schemas went out to the bishops.¹⁹

¹⁶ AS I/3, 58–59. After *De fontibus* came the other texts of the Preparatory Theological Commission, *De deposito fidei pure custodiendo*, *De ordine morali*, and *De castitate, matrimonio, familia, et virginitate*.

¹⁷ AS III/3, 913–17. See Wicks, "Pieter Smulders and *Dei Verbum*: 5, A Critical Reception of the Schema *De revelatione* of the Mixed Commission (1963)," *Gregorianum* 86 (2005) 92–135, at 105–11 and 124–26.

¹⁸ On this work of revision, see my "*Dei Verbum* Developing," in *The Convergence of Theology: Festschrift O'Collins* 109–25, which indicates 14 changes that Smulders lifted from episcopal comments for the revision. Smulders was helped by the detailed written analysis of possible modifications given him by his fellow revisor, Charles Moeller, as I related in "*De revelatione* under Revision (March–April 1964)," in *The Belgian Contribution* 461–94.

¹⁹ Jan Brouwers, secretary of the Dutch Episcopal Conference, told of the origin of Schillebeeckx's work in "Vatican II, derniers préparatifs et première session: Activités conciliares en coulisses," in *Vatican II commence . . . Approches francophones*, ed. Étienne Fouilloux (Leuven: Peeters, 1993) 353–78. The text of nearly 50 pages circulated in Latin and English; it will be an appendix of vol. 2 of Alexandra

Rahner also put in circulation a critical *Disquisitio brevis* on Scripture and tradition.²⁰ Congar wrote an eight-page profession of faith that could serve to introduce all the council's documents.²¹ The Belgian exegetes Jacques Dupont and Beda Rigaux put out a short draft *De Scriptura* to improve passages in *De fontibus*.²²

The best known alternative schema of 1962, given the fame and eventual authority of its two authors, Rahner and Ratzinger, is *De revelatione Dei et hominis in Jesu Christo facta*, in three chapters, 2000 copies of which circulated in November just before the council began discussing the schema *De fontibus revelationis*.²³

The Rahner-Ratzinger schema offered a grand vision of God's saving economy, a vision that would cast the light of the gospel from a lamp stand to console suffering humans and guide their steps in the way of peace. Chapter 1 is a basic anthropology, telling of human beings made in God's image and called to share in his gratuitous love. Humans long to live in communion with God, an aspiration that constitutes the deepest truth of being human. Christ reveals God's intent, namely, to give the truth that

von Teuffenbach's edition of the office diary of the Doctrinal Commission's Secretary, Sebastian Tromp, in preparation by the Gregorian University Press.

²⁰ Hanjo Sauer made Rahner's Latin text available among the appendixes of *Erfahrung und Glaube: Die Begründung des pastoralen Prinzips durch die Offenbarungskonstitution des II. Vatikanischen Konzils* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993) 657–68.

²¹ Congar presents the whole divine economy as springing from God's love. The text is given in *Glaube im Prozess: Christsein nach dem II. Vatikanischen Konzils; Festschrift Karl Rahner*, ed. Elmar Klinger and Klaus Wittstadt (Freiburg: Herder, 1984) 51–64.

²² *De Scriptura* is unpublished, but present in archives—for example, those of Vatican II participants held in Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve.

²³ The original Latin was published in *Glaube im Prozess* 33–50, along with a German translation. Brendan J. Cahill, *The Renewal of Revelation Theology* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1999), after studying the Rahner-Ratzinger text (172–80), gives the Latin with an English translation (300–317). Rahner wrote to Herbert Vorgrimler on October 19, 1962, that he was working on a text he would present at a meeting of German and French theologians convened by Bishop Hermann Volk of Mainz. On October 25, Frings met at his residence with six other cardinals, including Suenens and Montini. Frings argued that because the schema *De fontibus* was sure to divide the Council Fathers and cause an impasse, a remedy was needed. He had a fresh approach in the work of his *peritus* Ratzinger on revelation and Scripture, which was read to the cardinals. The efforts by Rahner and Ratzinger fused in *De revelatione Dei et hominis*, and the presidents of the Austrian, Belgian, Dutch, and French bishops' conferences supported Frings's intention to circulate it. The synthesis was a greatly reduced compendium of the first two schemas, in a positive and pastoral style. On the key events in these crowded days, see Wicks, "Six Texts by Prof. J. Ratzinger" 250–52.

frees from falsehood, the love that draws humans out of solitude, and the grace that overcomes sin. God's gratuitous love pervades human existence, which cannot be grasped without this dimension.

Chapter 2 explains God's universal saving presence in history, because God's will to save embraces every human being. Some natural insight into this is possible but remains obscure, while world religions have some truth, of which Christ is the fullness. Christian faith esteems the religions and wants to purify them, bringing their positive aspects to Christ and the church. The call of Israel is fundamental, for "whatever was written previously was written for our instruction . . . that we might have hope" (Rom 15:4).

Chapter 3 treats God's revelation in the church, as it transmits the way, truth, and life coming from Christ, which Scripture attests in fixed and inspired texts. The New Testament authors served the church by their inspired writing, from which then God's word resounds in the assembly. The church claims Scripture as its own, discerns the books of the canon, and in its transmission makes the biblical message come alive.

On the one hand the church is bound to the Scriptures of which it is not master but servant. Scripture gives the church its message and the bread it offers to human wayfarers. On the other hand, the church has a magisterial authority and the Holy Spirit's guidance for explaining Scripture's content, of which Christ is the key. In the community, Christ's words take on relevance for today, that is, for revealing human reality in the light of God—for the kingdom in which all God's works are fulfilled.

This text suggests something of the stimulus given to the theologians by their assembling in Rome in 1962 to serve at Vatican II. Their diaries tell of amazement at the end of these days over their many exchanges on substantial topics for the benefit of such a grand undertaking as a general council of the Catholic Church.

But some bishops looked realistically toward what could be done by the heterogeneous assembly of 2300 Catholic bishops, who had to deal with what came to them through official channels from the council's preparatory commissions. The Rahner-Ratzinger text opened a grand horizon, stirring hopes for wide-ranging doctrinal renewal, but it could not be easily fitted into the task at hand in Vatican II's opening weeks.

(4) Archbishop Gabriel Garrone of Toulouse played a central role in turning Vatican II toward its eventual teaching on revelation. In the 1962 debate in the *Aula* regarding *De fontibus revelationis*, Garrone joined two other French bishops in calling for adding to the text's treatment of tradition and Scripture an opening passage on God's gracious deeds and words in the economy of revelation—just as Joseph Ratzinger had proposed earlier for Cardinal Frings.

November 21 marked a turning point when John XXIII removed *De fontibus revelationis* from the immediate agenda of the council. He created a mixed doctrinal and ecumenical commission for a thorough revision of the text. Archbishop Garrone was on the commission, and, since he had proposed adding a new opening section, he was asked to supply the commission with a draft text of a new prologue. Garrone turned to another *peritus*, Jean Daniélou, the patristic scholar and professor at the Institut catholique of Paris.

Daniélou composed for Garrone a draft of seven paragraphs, “On Revelation and the Word of God,” which Garrone presented to the mixed commission on November 27, 1962. The text was at that time conceived as an introduction (*prooemium*) to the commission’s eventual revision of *De fontibus revelationis*. The Daniélou-Garrone text took important steps toward the eventual nos. 1–6 of *Dei Verbum*, promulgated three years later.²⁴

Daniélou’s nos. 1–2 enrich Vatican I on revelation by stating how the transcendent God—omnipotent, most wise, most loving—conveys two great truths of revealed content, namely, his own triune life and the human vocation to share in God by grace and glory. A gratuitous gift, this revelation exceeds our creaturely reach and comes only because God first seeks us out. Christ opens the otherwise sealed book of God’s plan. As Savior, he carried out redemption; as Revealer, he conveys the good news for understanding salvation. Christ reveals the truth of God turned to us in the three Persons. He reveals the truth of humans, chosen for adoption as God’s children for God’s glory. Daniélou wrote that in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: *in ipso . . . tota Revelatio continetur*.

In nos. 3–4, Daniélou sketched the stages of revelation, beginning with the witness to God given to all humans from the beginning, as Paul remarked at the Areopagus (Acts 17:14). This cosmic witness to God’s being and justice can be received in faith, as shown by the “holy pagans,” Abel, Enoch, and Noah (Heb 11:4–7). Israel’s Scriptures are an advance by showing God as holy and living, who frees his people, dwells in their temple, establishes the covenant, and announces a coming definitive presence of God’s glory. Revelation culminates in Christ, in whom the Father shows himself perfectly. Because Christ realized the purposes of the whole divine project, namely, glorifying God and divinizing human nature,

²⁴ Pietro Pizzuto treats Daniélou’s alternative text in *La teologia della rivelazione di Jean Daniélou: Influsso su Dei Verbum e valore attuale* (Rome: Gregorian University, 2003) 21–26, after which he notes changes introduced into the text. Pizzuto’s appendixes provide the text on 525–32 in the three known stages of its development.

Christianity is ultimate among religions. Because of its perfection, Christianity cannot be just a stage in human development.

No. 5 explains how revelation occurs, namely, by God's words of address and his saving deeds. These must be taken as closely related, even perceived *simul*, in a view contrasting with the official schema "On Preserving the Purity of the Deposit." For Christ manifested himself in words vindicating his divine prerogatives along with actions attesting to his divine authority. He spoke words instituting a new law and declared himself Lord of the Sabbath, while his deeds confirm that his witness is authoritative. On the other hand, what our Lord says makes clear the mystery otherwise concealed in his works.

Daniélou's no. 6 restates *Dei Filius* on the naturally knowable truths that revelation also conveys, e.g., God's personal nature and our human dignity, which cohere with our supernatural vocation. Thus revelation not only shows how humans reach their supernatural goal but also casts light on a truly humane life in time.

Finally, Daniélou, in no. 7, contrasted the objectivity of God's deeds and words about God and humans with the revealing word's interior impact as "effective and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12). The word is powerful in converting hearts and gently attracting them. In eliciting faith, the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit joins the outer witness of speech. The Spirit's action continues as well for the deepening of faith by gifts that enhance the believer's understanding of God's revelation.

The following points of Daniélou's draft eventually found their way, after a further conciliar journey, into *Dei Verbum's* teachings: Daniélou had articulated (1) the christological concentration of revelation, (2) a statement of revelation's content in its main foci, (3) the dual revelation of God and of the human reality, (4) revelation in words and deeds intimately interrelated, (5) revelation in Christ as unsurpassable, on intrinsic grounds of its content, (6) revelation both for attaining our supernatural end but also for the coherence of our temporal-earthly life, and (7) the Spirit's role both in eliciting faith and in its development toward deeper grasp of God's word.

In the mixed commission, objections were raised against the Daniélou-Garrone text as being too long for a prologue to the revised chapters on tradition/Scripture, inspiration, the two Testaments, and the Bible in the church's life. As a result, it was considerably abbreviated in the schema *De revelatione* distributed in May 1963. But in initial written observations, the bishops treated this draft so critically that it was held back for further development in the revision on which Smulders worked in early 1964. Nevertheless, the Daniélou-Garrone ideas were in the air, and many of them found a place in *Dei Verbum*.

CONCLUSION

Interpretation of Vatican II commonly portrays the removal of the schema “On the Sources of Revelation” from the immediate agenda on November 21, 1962, as the council’s dramatic turning-point.²⁵ From the selection given here of texts by the *periti*, we learn that, beyond widespread dissatisfaction with that schema, also positive theological proposals were circulating at that time. The *periti* were making ready the elements of a much improved conciliar teaching on revelation, as formulated in *Dei Verbum*, promulgated in 1965.

More generally, when I concluded my survey of the varied contributions of Vatican II *periti* from 1959 through 1965, I noted how the council constituted a unique case of cooperation between the theologians, who serve by research and explanation, and the Church’s episcopal and papal magisterium.²⁶ The opening of Vatican II was a singular situation because aspects of its preparation were problematical, a point noted by several theologians who found themselves in intense daily contact as the council opened. The stimulus from the prepared texts and from the interaction was enormous. The conversations among the *periti* and their writings turn out to be, when seen from our vantage point, reasons why the overall results of the council far surpass what could have been expected in mid-1962—as the evolution of the constitution *Dei Verbum* shows. The work of the *periti* was very significant in this development, as their proposals for a revised account of revelation that the Church receives in faith indicate. They took the lead in proposing a movement beyond what Vatican I and the manuals had taught. From their proposals, eventually accepted by the council, came a stirring evangelical account of God’s saving communication to the human family.

²⁵ John W. O’Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard University, 2008) 141–52.

²⁶ Wicks, *Doing Theology* 187–223, esp. 222–23.