

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

The Christian Mission, a Look into the Future

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Charisma in the New Testament and the
Apostolic Fathers

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Ministry Without Fear

KRISTER STENDAHL

Homiletics

Volume XLII

June 1971

Number 6

Charisma in the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers

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THIS ARTICLE IS AN INQUIRY INTO THE MEANING OF CHARISMA IN THE SACRED Scriptures and the early church, with special reference to the relation of *charisma* to the "things having to do with the Spirit" (*pneumatika*) of 1 Cor. 12—14, to the Christian community, to "prophecy," and to the sacred ministry.

As the term *charisma*, together with the cognate "charism" and "charismatic," is conventionally used, it means a particular personal magnetism or spiritual quality that enables the possessor to exert influence over broad masses of people and elicit their support. Or it may describe the particular virtue that inheres in or is attributed to a function, an office, or a position which imparts to the holder exceptional leadership capacity or a unique claim on respect.¹

In a religious context *charisma* has acquired the sense of the supernatural graces that Christians need to be able to perform the tasks that devolve on them in promoting the spiritual welfare of their fellow Christians. One contemporary theologian defines *charisma* as "an operation of the Spirit of God on the believer that has as its goal salvation in Christ, that is not institutionally mediated through the sacraments, and that human beings are not able to compel."²

The writer's purpose in this essay is to investigate the term *charisma* in the Sacred Scriptures and in the apostolic fathers with a view to determining the meaning of the term in the primitive church during the period in which an institutional church is widely alleged to have replaced an originally charismatic fellowship.

The investigation is handicapped at the outset by the paucity of material. With the variegated multiformity that the data from the Biblical and subapostolic periods allow us to posit for the early church, it is precarious in the extreme to assume that any generalized pattern in which we try to organize the bits of our information corresponds to the historic reality in either a single community for a long period of time or in many communities at a given point in time.³ Nor can we extensively and with certainty conclude from the later

und Kirche, 2d ed., 2 (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1958), 1025.

³ See Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953), pp. 59 to 60. (English translation under the title *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* by J. A. Baker [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969], pp. 55—56.)

¹ The two-volume collection of essays by Fritz Taeger, *Charisma: Studien zur Geschichte des antiken Herrscherkultes* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1959—60), provides an excellent example of this use of the word.

² J. Gewiess, "Charisma I," in Josef Höfer and Karl Rahner, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie*

content of technical terms what their original meaning may have been.

A further problem inheres in the stubborn historical fact that since the days of Tertullian Western theological language has used *charisma* and its vernacular derivatives in a sense that the Biblical and early post-Biblical usage of the vocable does not support. That is, it uses *charisma* as the generic term for the extraordinary and at times miraculous phenomena that St. Paul concludes under the term *pneumatika*, "things having to do with the Spirit," in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. Thereby an element of confusion that is difficult to disentangle is introduced into the question.

The vocable *charisma* is not common before the New Testament. Occurrences that clearly antedate the New Testament are difficult to find. Philo the Jew (30? B.C.—A.D. 40?) refers twice in a single passage to *charisma theou*, "God's *charisma*."⁴ The uncertainly dated Sibylline Oracles (2, 54) turn the words around and speak of *theou charisma*. *Charisma* does not correspond to any term in the Old Testament. In the Septuagint version it occurs only as a variant reading in Sirach 7:33 (for *charis*, "grace") and 38:30 (for *chrisma*, "anointing").

1. CHARISMA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament itself *charisma* turns up only within the Pauline circle, except for the one occurrence in 1 Peter 4:10.⁵

⁴ *Allegories of the Sacred Laws*, 3, 78.

⁵ While the cognate verb *charizomai* is at least as old as Homer, its use in the New Testament is restricted to the Pauline corpus and Luke-Acts. (In the Septuagint version *charizomai* occurs in Esther 8:9; Canticle 1:4 [as

Except in Rom. 1:11, *charisma* occurs in both the singular and the plural without adjectival modifiers.

In talking about the "fall" of Adam in Rom. 5:15-16, Paul uses *charisma* twice to describe God's gracious gift in the most comprehensive sense. The *charisma* of God outweighed the fall, the apostle says in v. 15. The results of the gift also outweigh the result of one man's lapse; the single sin of Adam brought judgment with a verdict of condemnation, according to v. 16, but after many falls there now comes the *charisma* with its verdict of acquittal.⁶

In Rom. 6:23 the *charisma*, the "free gift," of God, that is, eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, stands in opposition to the wages that sin pays, that is, death.

In 1 Cor. 1:6-7 the apostle sees a demonstration of the strength of the witness to Christ among the Corinthians in this, that while the members of the Christian community there are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed, the community — scandalous as its behavior was — lacks no *charisma* of the Spirit.

In 1 Cor. 7:7 Paul sees the ability to a variant in Codex Sinaiticus]; Sirach 12:3; 2 Macc. 1:35; 3:31, 33; 4:32; 7:22; 3 Macc. 5:11; 7:6; 4 Macc. 5:8; 11:12). The verb provides no additional illumination of the meaning of the noun. In the strongly "spiritual" Johannine corpus *charisma* and *charizomai* are absent, and even *charis* occurs only in the prolog to the fourth gospel and in the salutation formula of 2 John 3. In 1 John 2:20, 27 we have *chrisma* where we might expect *charisma*. Other functional synonyms are *exousia* ("power, authority"), *dynamis* ("might"), and the "fruit of the Spirit" in Gal. 5:22.

⁶ The idea of acquittal is in a sense implicit in *charisma*. The cognate verb *charizomai* is used to describe the freeing of an offender in Acts 3:14. See also Luke 7:42-43; 2 Cor. 2:7, 10; 12:13; Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13; 3:13 — in all these passages the verb means to "forgive."

lead a life of chaste continence as a *charisma* that he has from God, but he sees this as merely one gift among other gifts and as a gift that not everyone has received.

He calls deliverance from peril in answer to intercessory prayer a *charisma*; for that reason he enjoins his readers in 2 Cor. 1:11: "You must all join in the prayers for us; the more people there are asking help for us, the more thanks will be given for the *charisma*."

Rom. 1:11 provides the single case of *charisma* with an adjectival modifier, in this case *pneumatikon* ("spiritual"). Paul affirms his longing to see the Christian community at Rome for the mutual strengthening of their faith by sharing a *charisma pneumatikon* with them, although he does not specify the nature of the *charisma*.

The Pastorals relate *charisma* with the presbyteral office. According to 1 Tim. 4:14, Timothy has in him a continuing *charisma* which was given to him when the prophets spoke and when the college of presbyters laid hands on him (or — translating it differently — when he was ordained to the presbyteral office); he is exhorted not to let it lie unused. In the context the gift has to do with Timothy's work of leading and teaching the Christian community, with the example he is to set the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity, and with his direction of the divine worship of the community in terms of his public reading of the Sacred Scriptures, preaching, and instruction.

A similar exhortation is repeated in 2 Tim. 1:6-7: Timothy is to fan into a flame the *charisma* that God gave him

when Paul laid hands on him. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the spirit of power, love, and self-control. The *charisma* is not something that the recipient possesses absolutely and manipulates. It must constantly be renewed in the discipline of prayer and devotion.⁷

In these passages *charisma* is the function and effect of the *charis* that has appeared in Christ. The recipient is under the Spirit's direction, and the Spirit of the exalted Christ supports and sustains his activity. Indeed, the *charis* of Christ is the very subject of Timothy's activity. Thus the admonition to Timothy to "fan into flame" the *charisma* that he possesses and not to despise it is on a par with the injunction of Rom. 12:6-7 to the recipients of the *charismata* to use them according to the measure of their task.⁸

1 Peter 4:10 speaks of the individual *charisma* that every Christian has received. Every Christian is a "charismatic" in this sense. As good stewards who are responsible for the right employment of the variegated *charis* of God, they are to put themselves, each with his own *charisma*, at the service of others. Concretely, if a given Christian is a speaker, he is to speak in words which seem to come from God; if he is a helper, he is to help as though

⁷ The laying on of hands in ordination is obviously the New Covenant counterpart of the Old Covenant anointing to a royal and priestly office. The sensed equivalence of the two has led in parts of the Christian community to the not necessarily happy substitution of anointing for the imposition of hands in confirmation and to the supplementing of the imposition of hands in ordination with anointings.

⁸ Jürgen Roloff, *Apostolat — Verkündigung — Kirche: Ursprung, Inhalt und Funktion des kirchlichen Apostelamtes nach Paulus, Lukas und den Pastoralbriefen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1965), p. 260.

every action is being done at God's orders. The objective is that in everything God may receive the glory through Jesus Christ.

The plural *charismata*, found only in Romans and 1 Corinthians, does not appear with an adjectival modifier.

In Rom. 11:29 Paul declares with reference to God's gifts to the Jewish community of the Old Covenant that God never takes back His *charismata* or revokes His choice.

Like 1 Peter 4:10, Rom. 12:6 underlines the intimate relation of *charisma* to *charis* and the gratuitous character of both. It reminds Christians that their *charismata* differ according to the *charis* that is given to each of them. If the gift is prophecy, the recipient is to use it "according to the measure (*analogian*) of the faith" (a debatable phrase that has evoked a great deal of exegetical and systematic reflection); if his gift is administration, he is to use it for administration; if it is teaching, he is to use it for teaching; the preachers are to deliver sermons, the almsgivers are to give alms freely, the officials are to be diligent, and those who do works of mercy are to do them cheerfully.

1 Cor. 12:1 introduces the subject of the chapter as spiritual gifts, which the verse calls *pneumatika* ("things of the Spirit," or "things spiritual"), not *charismata*. *Charismata* are mentioned for the first time in vv. 4 and 5. These verses (and v. 6) affirm that there is a variety of *charismata*, but always the same Spirit, there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord, and there are all sorts of different ways of working in different people, but always the same God who is working in all of them.

Vv. 9, 28, and 30 contain the only references in the chapter to a specific *charisma*, the "*charismata* of healings," with both words in the plural.

The closing 31st verse is the transition to the panegyric on love in the next chapter. It urges the Corinthian Christians to be ambitious for the higher *charismata*, without explicitly specifying what they are.⁹ Chapter 14, which resumes the interrupted discussion of the *pneumatika*, does not use the term *charismata*.

2. CHARISMA IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The occurrence of *charisma* in the early Christian literature that was not included in the canon is again relatively infrequent.

The Corinthian Christian community that received the First Letter of St. Clement (96?) of Rome seems to have been one in which there was an end-of-the-century revolt by enthusiasts against the established leadership. The letter recalls the use of *charisma(ta)* in Rom. 12:6 and 1 Corinthians 12,¹⁰ as well as in 1 Peter 4:10, when it asserts in 38:1: "So let our whole body be saved in Christ Jesus, and let each be subject to his neighbor as his particular *charisma* dictates."

In the documents that survive from the pen of St. Ignatius (35?—107?) *charisma* occurs four times.

In Eph. 17:2 he asks: "Why do we perish in our folly, by being ignorant of the

⁹ Some interpreters see the context implying that the "higher *charismata*" include such "pneumatic" gifts as "prophecy."

¹⁰ It is not without some importance that both these chapters are precisely the ones in which the metaphor of the church as a body first occurs.

*charisma*¹¹ which the Lord has truly sent us?" From the context it would appear that the *charisma* that St. Ignatius has in mind is the gift of incorruption (*aphibarsia*), that is, salvation generally.

In his letter to St. Polycarp 2:2 St. Ignatius encourages his fellow prelate: "As for the invisible realities, pray that they may be revealed to you. In this way nothing will be lacking and you will abound in every *charisma*." The echo of 1 Cor. 1:7 that one hears here reappears in the two occurrences of *charisma* in the address of St. Ignatius' letter to the Smyrneans, which he calls a church "that has mercifully been blessed with every *charisma* and is lacking in no *charisma*." In all three of these instances *charisma* is linked to the officers of the community.¹²

The Didache depicts an isolated second-century Christian community, most probably in Syria, which found itself compelled to devise means of distinguishing the authentic itinerating apostles and prophets from those who claimed the titles for their own gain and benefit. *Charisma* occurs only once, in 5:1: "The Father wishes that a share of His own *charismata* be given to all."

In all of these occurrences in the New Testament and in the apostolic fathers the gratuitous gift aspect of *charisma* is the most prominent and consistent feature. Whatever the *charisma* may be in an individual and concrete case, it is a gift that God—or by appropriation the Holy Spirit—has given. The *charisma* may be earthly

goods; it may be privileges accorded to Israel after the flesh; it may be deliverance from mortal peril; it may be a kind of spiritual treasure; it may be God's undoing of the "fall" of Adam; it may be the everlasting life of the age to come; it may be an individual native or acquired competence like speaking, helping, teaching, administering, or preaching; it may be the qualifications needed for the responsible discharge of the presbyter's office, imparted through (or at least in connection with) the laying on of hands; it may be the gift of "healing"; it may be the exceptional ability to live chastely outside of marriage; it may conceivably be any of the *pneumatika* of which *charismata* is a kind of synonym. Intrinsically, the term thus does not imply anything that is abnormal or irregular. It is to be recognized as a gift of God which He bestows—as He bestows His *charis*—in accordance with His own sovereign decision and for which He is to receive glory in Jesus Christ.¹³

3. CHARISMA IN THE EARLY PATRISTIC ERA

In the centuries that follow, the ecclesiastical¹⁴ use of *charisma* gradually modi-

¹¹ Variants of *charisma* in the manuscript texts of this verse are *charis* and *chrisma*.

¹² Like *charis* in Smyrneans 9:2; Romans, introduction; and Magnesians 8:2.

¹³ Otto Perels stresses the eschatological elements, broadly conceived, in the *charismata*, which he calls an "expression of the eschatological Christ-event" ("*Charisma* im Neuen Testament," in *Fuldaer Hefte*, No. 15 [Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1964], pp. 42–45). See the parallel observations and arguments in William C. Robinson, Junior, "The Church in the World," *Interpretation*, 19 (1965), 412–17, and the earlier survey by Gerhard Friedrich, "Geist und Amt," in *Wort und Dienst: Jahrbuch der Theologischen Schule Bethel*, new series, 3 (Bethel-bei-Bielefeld: Verlagshandlung der Anstalt Bethel, 1952), 61–85.

¹⁴ For the few secular contexts in which *charisma* occurs, see Walter Bauer, *A Greek-*

fies its meaning. The translation of the Old Testament that goes under the name of Theodotion has *charisma* in Ps. 30 (31):22, where the Septuagint has *eleos* ("mercy"), to reproduce the Hebrew *khesedh* ("steadfast [covenant] love").¹⁵ St. Justin the Martyr (100?—165?) speaks of the *charismata* that Christian men and women have from the Holy Spirit, in connection with his argument that the gifts which the Jewish community had formerly enjoyed had now been transferred to the Christian community.¹⁶

Apropos the early second century prophetess Ammia of Philadelphia and her contemporary, the prophet Quadratus, the apologist Miltiades (fl. 161—169?) observes against the Montanists—who had had no one with the prophetic *charisma* among them since the death of Maximilla 14 years before—that "the apostle had deemed it necessary that the prophetic *charisma* exist in the whole church until the final Parousia."¹⁷

Fear of enthusiasm among the members of an obscure late second-century sect called the Anotoi (or Alogoi) was reportedly so great that "they did not recognize the things of the Spirit . . . and did not acknowledge the *charismata* in the holy church" that the holy prophets and apostles—among them the St. John who

wrote the Gospel, the letters, and the Apocalypse—possessed.¹⁸

The Letter of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia (177/178) declares that the Phrygian physician Alexander was "not without a share of the apostolic *charisma*."¹⁹

St. Irenaeus (130?—200?) uses *charisma* often; for instance, of the gifts given both to the presbyters "who along with the succession of oversight (*cum episcopatus successione*) have received the certain *charisma* of truth according to the Father's good pleasure,"²⁰ and also of "many brothers in the church who have prophetic *charismata* and talk through the Spirit in all kinds of languages, and bring to light usefully the secrets of human beings, and telling the mysteries of God in detail."²¹

The Montanists of this period insisted that the Catholics had to demonstrate the *charismata* with which the former claimed to be endowed if the Catholics wanted to make themselves credible.²²

St. Clement of Alexandria (150? to 215?) is one of the first Christian writers to describe Baptism as a *charisma* (as well

English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 4th ed., trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 887.

¹⁵ Fridericus Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt . . . fragmenta*, 2 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1964), 134.

¹⁶ *Dialog with Trypho the Jew*, 88.

¹⁷ Quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 17, 4.

¹⁸ St. Epiphanius of Salamis, *Refutation of All Heresies*, II, 1, Heresy 51, 35.

¹⁹ Quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5, 1.

²⁰ *Against the Heretics*, IV, 26, 2. The passage has been extensively discussed. See Norbert Brox, "Charisma veritatis certum," in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 75 (1964), 327 to 331.

²¹ *Against the Heretics*, V, 6 (see also II, 32).

²² St. Epiphanius, *Refutation of All Heresies*, II, 1, Heresy 48, 1.

as an illumination, perfecting, and washing), that is, as the "charisma by which the punishments for sins are taken away."²³

With Tertullian (160?—220?) *charisma*, as we have seen, enters Latin theological literature as a transliterated loan-word with the general meaning of "gift" and with the special meaning of the extraordinary spiritual gifts described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14.

There is an interesting use of *charisma* in an invocation over water in the early third-century apocryphal Acts of Thomas 52 (49): "O Rest sent to us from the Rest . . . come and dwell in these waters, so that the *charisma* of the Holy Spirit may perfectly be perfected in them."

In his venturesome reflections on the Holy Spirit in connection with his elucidation on John 1:2 ("all things were made through [the Logos]") Origen (185? to 254?) states: "I think of the Holy Spirit as providing the 'matter' (*hylēn*) — if I may say so — of the *charismata* that are from God to those who are designated as holy ones on his account and on account of their participation in him, the said 'matter' coming into existence from God, administered by Christ, and subsisting in the Holy Spirit."²⁴

In the early fathers the *charismata* of the Holy Spirit are often the seven gifts listed in the Septuagint of Is. 11:2 (wisdom, insight, counsel, power, knowledge,

the fear of the Lord, and piety). Of considerable interest is the later designation of Christ as the "uncorrupt Fountain (*pēgē apseudēs*) of *charismata*" in stanza 4 of Ode 8 of Meneia 3, 3.

4. CHARISMATA AND PNEUMATIKA

The emergence of the Pentecostal movement on a worldwide scale, with its insistence that the miraculous and ecstatic phenomena of the first Pentecost and of the primitive church — especially divine healing, "prophecy," and "speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives utterance"²⁵ — must be and are being re-

²⁵ There are apparently two phenomena involved, which are not always clearly differentiated in the Pentecostal movement. The "speaking in other languages" which Acts describes as having taken place at Pentecost seems clearly to have been intelligible speech in a language unknown to the speaker. The "speaking in a language" of 1 Corinthians 14 seems just as clearly to have been an ecstatic utterance needing explanation by a person who possessed the gift of "interpretation" (*hermēneia*). The issue is outside the scope of this survey. See Frederick Dale Brunner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and the New Testament Witness* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1970); James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Reexamination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1970); Prudencio Damboriena, *Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity* (Washington: Corpus Books, 1969); Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals* (New York: Paulist Press, 1969); Frank Staff, E. Glenn Hinson, and Wayne E. Oates, *Glossolalia: Tongue Speaking in Biblical, Historical, and Psychological Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967); Morton T. Kelsey, *Tongue Speaking: An Experiment in Spiritual Experience* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1964); John L. Sherrill, *They Speak with Other Tongues* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964); H. J. Stolee, *Speaking in Tongues* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963). On the Pente-

²³ *The Teacher*, 1, 6. We find the same thought in St. Gregory the Theologian (Nazianzen) (329—89), who calls baptism "a *charisma*, as given even to debtors." (*Oration* 40, 4)

²⁴ *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, II, 6.

vived in the Christian community of the 20th century, requires an examination of the extent to which *charismata* and *pneumatika* in 1 Corinthians 12 (and 14) are identical.

Although the Old Testament has no vocable that corresponds to *charisma*, the role of the breath (or spirit) of Yahweh in the eruption of extraordinary "spiritual" phenomena and endowments is amply documented. Moses is so richly endowed that God takes some of his spiritual gifts to inspire the 70 elders to prophesy (Num. 11:25). The breath of Yahweh inspires Joshua, Samson, Othniel, Jephtha, and David. It is to rest upon the virtuous king of Isaiah's prophecy (11:2). Saul and his agents fall into prophetic-mantic ecstasy (1 Sam. 10:9-13; 16:13). Ezekiel experiences levitation and rapture under its influence (8:3; 11:1). Visions, revelations, dreams, prophecies, miraculous healings, and resuscitations are also part of the record. Acts sees in the experience of Pentecost a fulfillment of Joel's oracle that the time would come when God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh to the accompaniment of prophecy, visions, and dreams.

The intertestamental literature tends in general to localize prophecy and its attendant ecstatic phenomena either in the past or in the future, except in the case of the apocalyptic material.

costal movement see Walter J. Hollenweger, *Enthusiastisches Christentum: Die Pfingstbewegung in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Wuppertal: Theologischer Verlag Rolf Brockhaus, 1969); John Thomas Nichol, *Pentecostalism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); and Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966); and Nils Bloch-Hoell, *The Pentecostal Movement* (New York: Humanities Press, n. d. [after 1960]).

In Qumran "God has allowed the Teacher of Righteousness to know all the secrets of the words of his servants, the prophets."²⁶ The author of the Book of Hymns (*Hodayoth*) traces to the indwelling Holy Spirit of God such strength that He cannot be moved, the knowledge of God's wondrous secret, and the experience of the springing up of a well of knowledge within Himself.²⁷

Philo sees ecstasy as a gift of the Spirit.²⁸

Our Lord during His lifetime gave to His 12 disciples and to the Seventy-two authority to expel unclean spirits, to heal every disease and every infirmity, to cleanse the lepers, to raise the dead, and to tread down serpents, scorpions, and all the power of the ancient adversary.²⁹ The long ending of the second gospel embodies a second-century tradition that our Lord had promised to His followers that they would perform signs as accompaniments of their proclamation of the Gospel — casting out demons, speaking in new languages, picking up serpents without being harmed, drinking deadly poisons with impunity, and healing the sick by the laying on of hands. (Mark 16:17-18)

After the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, the apostles (including St. Paul) and even the Seven speak in tongues, expel unclean spirits, perform signs and

²⁶ Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of Qumran: Theology of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, trans. Emilie T. Sander (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 117; the reference is to the Habakkuk Commentary (1 QpHab), 11, 1.

²⁷ 1 QH 7, 6-7; 12, 11-12; 13, 19.

²⁸ *The Migration of Abraham* 7.

²⁹ Matt. 10:1; Mark 3:15; 6:7; Luke 9:1-2; 10:9, 17, 19). The healings are the only competences that clearly correspond to what St. Paul explicitly calls *charismata*.

great miracles, handle serpents without harm, heal the paralyzed, the ill, and the lame (sometimes through contact only with the apostle's shadow or items of clothing), and unmask the untruthful.

In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 the extraordinary phenomena are called *pneumatika*. A degree of synonymy with *charismata* must be conceded, although it tells us less about the meaning of *charisma* than about the gratuitous nature of the *pneumatika*. Interesting is the quasi-Trinitarian (or at least triadic) relation of kinds of service (*diakonai*) to Christ, of modes of operation (*energēmata*) to the Father, and of *charismata* to the Holy Spirit (vv. 4-6).³⁰

The implications of *pneumatika* may be illuminated by Paul's use of *pneumatikos* ("Spirit-endowed person") — a synonym of *teleios* ("mature person") — to describe certain individuals in the external fellowship of the community in contrast to others who are *psychikos* ("natural, having only a *psychē* — that is, mere life — and not *pneuma*") and *sarkikos* ("carnal").³¹ It is not improbable that when Paul uses *pneumatikon* to describe the extraordinary gifts (especially "prophecy" and "speaking in a language") that pseudo-*pneumatikoi*

claimed to possess he intends to voice a measure of apostolic skepticism about the authenticity of at least some of their pretended gifts.

In the absence of information about other Christian communities, it is precarious to generalize on the basis of the one at Corinth. At the same time we need to remember that without the disorders that took place in connection with the celebration of the Eucharist at Corinth, we should have no explicit evidence that any of the Pauline communities celebrated the Sacrament of the Altar. Without the exaggerations that attended the practice of "speaking in a language" in the same community, we should be dependent on the inferences that we could draw from Acts (and the second-century obiter dictum in Mark 16:17), which, as we have seen, really describes a different phenomenon from the glossolalia of Corinth.

Paul's attitude toward what he explicitly calls *charismata* is thoroughly positive. His attitude toward the phenomena that he calls *pneumatika* is basically approving. He had had his own share of pneumatic experiences; he was no novice even as far as glossolalia was concerned (1 Cor. 14:18). A gradation has been noted in the *pneumatika* of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 — intellectual gifts, miraculous gifts, gifts of spiritual instruction, the gift of recognizing spirits, and finally the ecstatic gifts. Paul's value criteria for ranking these phenomena is their usefulness to the Christian community, and it is on this scale that glossolalia takes its place at the bottom of the list. As a *pneumatikon* it has its merit; in contradistinction to a *sarkikon*, it provides access to things that are inaccessible to the unaided human mind

³⁰ On the *pneumatika* see the discussion in Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 154–55; and Ernst Käsemann, "Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament," in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), trans. W. J. Montague under the title "Ministry and Community in the New Testament," in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1964). See also Hans Conzelmann, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), pp. 244–247.

³¹ Bultmann, 1, 158–59.

(*nous*). In the light of the history of the Christian church the more extraordinary *pneumatika* appear to have been relatively transient, but this is an aspect that—quite naturally in the premises—Paul never comes to discuss. But beyond even the more eminent *charismata* are the universally accessible three virtues that last—faith, hope, and love, with love as the greatest. It is arguable if faith, hope, and love are themselves the higher *charismata* of 1 Cor. 12:28, or if in Paul's exposition they stand in contrast to the *charismata*.

The only *pneumatika* in 1 Corinthians 12 that are explicitly called *charismata* are the *charismata* of healings. These are not part of the essence of the Christian, but are *charismata* that God gives to some and not to other Christians. Healing in the letters of the New Testament comes as the result of calling on God (2 Cor. 12:8; James 5:14-16). The existence of illness is not intrinsically evidence of a lack either of subjective faith or of divine concern. It "is and remains an evil that contradicts God's creative plan." In any case forgiveness of sins is seen as a precondition of divine healing.³²

We can distinguish nuances of usage in the employment of *charisma(ta)* and *pneumatika*.³³

³² Albrecht Oepke, sub *iaomai*, etc., *T{heologisches} W{örterbuch} z{um} N{eu}en T{estament}*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, 3 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1938, 1957), 204, 12-13; 214, 29-40; Eng. trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley in *T{heological} D{ictionary} {of} {the} N{ew} T{estament}*, 3 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 204, 214.

³³ Categorizations of the *pneumatika* are almost as numerous as discussions of the subject. Gerhard Friedrich distinguishes six groups: (1) the apostolate, which includes all the others; (2) those of proclamation; (3)

The first would be the completely non-technical use of *charisma* in passages like Rom. 1:11; 5:15; 6:23; 11:29; and 2 Cor. 1:11 to describe any of God's benevolent operations in His world and in His holy community.

A second use of both terms would describe gifts that the Holy Spirit may impart to any member of the holy community but does not necessarily impart to all Christians. These would include in Rom. 12:6-8 "teaching," "prophecy," and "exhortation," none of which is wholly institutionalized in the New Testament and subapostolic periods, as well as "service," "contributing," and "the cheerful doing of acts of mercy." In 1 Cor. 12:8-11 they would include "the utterance of wisdom,"

those of assistance; (4) those of leading the community; (5) those of extraordinary powers; and (6) those of prayer ("Geist und Amt," in *Wort und Dienst: Jahrbuch der Theologischen Schule Bethel*, new series, 3 [Bethel-bei-Bielefeld: Verlagshandlung der Anstalt Bethel, 1952], 83—84). W. F. Dicharry groups the items in the eight lists that he finds in the New Testament into three kinds: (1) Those having to do with teaching; (2) those having to do with service; and (3) those involving extraordinary and miraculous competences ("Charisma: In the Bible," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967], 3, 460). Henri Leclercq lists a different triad on the basis of his four New Testament lists: (1) Those which concern the instruction of the faithful; (2) those which refer to the alleviation of bodily needs; and (3) those having to do with governing the community ("Charismes," in Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, eds., *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 3 [Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1948], 582—83). Hans Küng, who draws on Ernst Käsemann, "Amt und Gemeinde," in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 114 (Eng. trans., pp. 68—70), comes out substantially where Leclercq did ("The Charismatic Structure of the Church," *Concilium*, 4 [1965], 53).

"the utterance of knowledge," "faith,"³⁴ "the *charismata* of healings," "the workings of miracles," "the ability to distinguish between spirits," "prophecy," various "kinds of languages," and "the interpretation of languages." At the end of the chapter this nuance is illustrated—in addition to the repetition of "miracles," "*charismata* of healings," and various "kinds of languages"—by the "assistances."

A third use of both terms would include the passages which speak of gifts that have an institutional importance, like the "one who rules (*proistamenos*) with zeal" in Rom. 12:8,³⁵ or the "administrations" of 1 Cor. 12:28. "Prophecy," "teaching," and "exhortation" would belong here to the extent that they were institutionalized and linked with specific functionaries in the local community.

A fourth use of both terms would refer to those who exercised these functions (or occupied offices), certainly the "apostles" and "prophets" of 1 Cor. 12:28 and of Eph. 4:11, along with the "evangelists" and the "rulers"³⁶ and "teachers," where the verb "give" but not the noun *charisma* occurs.

5. ARE THE CHARISMATA (AND PNEUMATIKA) FOR ALL CHRISTIANS?

We can admit to a certain ambiguity about the gifts of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in a sense the possession of all Christians. They have all—without eth-

nic differences—been baptized into one body and they have all been made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12). This is true whether or not special manifestations accompanied their baptism (or its subsequent completion in the laying on of hands).³⁷ This gift of the Spirit takes the baptized person out of this present age and seals him for the age to come. It is no more—and no less—the gift of the Spirit when the Christian is endowed with special power equipping him for a special mission and enabling him to accomplish extraordinary feats.³⁸ In any case both *charismata* and *pneumatika* are to be striven for.³⁹ The *pneumatika*—conceived of as something additional to the Spirit and the saving grace that are the possession of all believers—are the distinguishing factors, ordered toward the sanctification of the community, that differentiate the members of the body of Christ from each other.⁴⁰ In some cases the gift is a supervening and transient one that surprises the recipient and the beholder—as in the case of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Jerusalem com-

³⁷ Acts reports the outpouring of the Spirit before, at, and after baptism.

³⁸ "In the contradiction that on the one hand the Spirit is the origin of a new attitude and capacity in the Christian, and on the other hand that his attitude qualifies him for ever-new endowment with the Spirit and that he must strive after spiritual gifts, an expression is provided for the insight that the might of the Spirit is not a magically (mechanically) working power, but is one that equally demands and presupposes a transformation of the will." (Bultmann, 1, 163)

³⁹ Note the identical formulation in 1 Cor. 12:31 and 14:1.

⁴⁰ A. Lemonnyer and Lucien Cerfaux, *Théologie du nouveau testament* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1963), pp. 138—39.

³⁴ Not saving faith, but particularly potent, wonder-working faith; see, for instance, 1 Cor. 13:2 (although not all exegetes would concur).

³⁵ See the early parallel in 1 Thess. 5:12, "those who work hard among you and rule over you."

³⁶ *Poimenes*, as the translation with *poimēn* of the Hebrew *ro'eh*, "shepherd" or "ruler."

munity at Pentecost and on Cornelius in Joppa. In other cases the individual's native biochemical makeup and the sum total of his personal psychic and physiological history may have conditioned him to be an appropriate candidate for a special gift of the Spirit. (This may be the case even with such esoteric gifts as the ability to foretell future events and to speak in various "kinds of languages," as well as with less remarkable and more quotidian abilities like administration and teaching.) In a world where the Spirit is from the primordial beginning *Creator Spiritus*, the gift is no less a gift merely because the Spirit has been readying the recipient for his role and cultivating his aptitude even before baptism joined him to the holy community.⁴¹

In the subsequent history of the church there is a gradual decline in the manifestation of the *pneumatika*. Some of the "pneumatic" functions are absorbed by the officers of the community. Thus the expulsion of demons becomes the task of the exorcist. As early as the Letter of James the *charismata* of healings are replaced by the anointing and intercession of the pres-

byters. Spontaneous prophecy becomes less and less frequent. Speaking in languages disappears in the Catholic Church. Ecstasy and miracles become the hallmark of the Christian of heroic virtue or of the mystic. Periodically a pneumatic revival agitates a portion of the church, as in the case of Montanism in the second century, Messalianism in the fifth to the seventh centuries, some of the medieval schismatics, the early Friends of the 17th century, the Camisards of the 18th, some 19th century movements in Russia, in Lapland (Laestadianism), and on the American frontier, and Pentecostalism in the 20th century; the list could easily be extended.⁴²

The middle ages see the development of a rudimentary theology of *charismata* as *gratiae gratis datae* ("gratuitously given graces") in Thomas Aquinas.⁴³ Classic Lutheran and Reformed theologies accord the subject little, often no, place.

6. CHARISMATA AND "PROPHECY"

It was Adolf von Harnack who argued as early as 1884 that there were two classes of officeholders in the primitive Christian communities, (1) the incumbents of a supracongregational "charismatic" teaching ministry — apostles, prophets, and teachers, all "charismatic" persons because their vocation was based on a communication of the Spirit — and (2) locally elected administrators — presbyter-bishops and deacons. While the thesis still exerts some

⁴¹ "On the whole, the early Christians do not seem to have lived in a constant atmosphere of miracles. Even though Paul recalls that his apostolate has been confirmed by signs and wonders . . . it is probable that they were not of daily occurrence. When he was preaching in the synagogues, when he was teaching in the school of Tyrannus, he fell back on ordinary methods, while relying on the inner help of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, the Christians did not abandon themselves to help of some extraordinary kind to rid themselves of the dross of their paganism. They knew they had the help of God, but worked to earn their salvation 'with fear and trembling.'" (Joseph Bonsirven, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. S. F. L. Tye [Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1963], p. 326)

⁴² A classic (if somewhat prejudiced) survey is Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950 [reprinted 1961]).

⁴³ *Summa theologiae*, 2/2, qq. 171—78. See also 2/1, q. 111; 3, q. 7, 7.

influence, it was soon attacked and has not stood the test of subsequent inquiry.⁴⁴

"Prophet" — *prophētēs* and its cognates — is not a univocal concept in the New Testament. "Prophecy" can be a vocation, as it were, but it can also be the activity of Christians who "prophesy" only on occasion. The same thing is true of teaching and teachers.⁴⁵ The New Testament understanding of "prophecy" is shaped in part by the conception of prophecy in the Old Covenant; here prophets are conceived of chiefly as the proclaimers of the message that they have received from God, but who by virtue of their special relation to God have a privileged knowledge of at least certain future events. The primary function of "prophecy" in the New Testament is again the proclamation of the divine Word and the divine will, either in general or with specific reference. The context of the explicit description of prophecy as a *charisma* in Rom. 12:6 indicates that both the prophetic gift and the prophet's activity are contemplated.

The existence of a prophetic office, broadly understood, in the New Testament would seem to be adequately established, even though "prophetic" activity was not restricted to these official "prophets." In

the lists of primitive officeholders the prophets come immediately after the apostles. Barnabas and Silvanus, both prophets, exercise leadership in the Jerusalem church. The importance of the prophet is mirrored in the position which the Apocalypse accords to them. What we are told about Barnabas, Silvanus, and Agabus indicates that some prophets may have been itinerant preachers, but it would be precarious to generalize from these cases. The prophet, as is clear from 1 Cor. 14:29-33, speaks by direct revelation and inspiration and on divine initiative.⁴⁶ For that reason he must speak responsibly, "according to the measure of the faith" (*kata tēn analogian pisteōs*) (Rom. 12:6) and "as one who utters oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).⁴⁷ The utterance of the prophet is to be weighed by "the others" (*hoi alloi*), which may mean the others who compose the congregation or the other prophets.

On occasion the prophet may foretell future events, and sometimes at least, as in Acts 2:4, 17; 19:6, prophesying and speaking in other languages are synonymous. In Pauline theology the obvious difference already noted between unintelligible ec-

⁴⁴ For a summary of the controversy in the English-speaking theological world see C. W. Dugmore, "Organization and Worship of the Primitive Church," in T. W. Manson, *A Companion to the Bible*, 2d ed. by H. H. Rowley (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963), pp. 552 to 553.

⁴⁵ On prophets see Apocalypse 22:9; Hermas, *mandatum* xi; for teachers see James 3:1; Barnabas 1:8; 4:9; Hermas, *visio* iii, 5, 1; *mandatum* iv, 3; *similitudo* ix, 15, 4; 16, 5; 25, 2; for both prophets and teachers see Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11.

⁴⁶ Although having prophesied in Christ's name is not automatically a guarantee of salvation (Matt. 7:22-23). See E. Earle Ellis, "The Role of the Christian Prophet in Acts," *Apostolic History and the Gospel*. Biblical and Historical Essays presented to F. F. Bruce on his 60th birthday, edited by W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 55-67.

⁴⁷ It would seem unlikely that the subjective faith of the prophet is to be the criterion of his prophecy. We shall probably do better to think of *pistis* here as referring to the totality of the proclamation about the Christ-event as the community has received, appropriated, and confessed it.

static speaking in other languages that requires interpretation and prophetic utterance in a language understood by the hearers without interpretation is basic for the understanding of both "prophetic" gifts. Public prayer, which has the building up of the community as well as the public expression of petitions and intercessions in the presence of God as coordinate functions, appears to be one of the functions of the prophet. Theological reflection is linked to prophecy, just as it is linked to the objective written revelation and the apostolic tradition. Instruction appears to be less the function of the prophet than of the teacher, just as evangelistic proclamation appears to belong more in the sphere of the evangelist than of the prophet, whose primary concern is the existing congregation and whose task is thus more closely allied to "pastoral" activities.⁴⁸

Prophets and teachers are a part of the community and exercise their spiritual functions as part of the community. The same thing is true of other offices, even of those which involve administrative leadership.⁴⁹ The significant thing is that all of these functions are at least ideally "service functions" (*diakoniai*) rather than sources of prestige and personal power.

In the subapostolic period the prophets of the local Christian communities continue to enjoy great influence and honor.

⁴⁸ See Gerhard Friedrich, "Propheten und Prophezeien im Neuen Testament," in Friedrich, ed., *TWzNT*, 6 (1959), 829—58; *TDNT*, 6 (1968), 828—856.

⁴⁹ Von Campenhausen's assertion that in principle there was no "leadership echelon" (*Führerschicht*) in the Pauline communities (p. 68 [Eng. trans., p. 63]) is at the very least open to misunderstanding.

In its area of the church the Didache assigns to the prophets important liturgical roles. Their support has a claim on the financial resources of the local Christian community prior even to that of the poor. When the prophets prophesy in the Spirit, they are immune to censure. At the same time the number of prophets seems to be declining. Not every local Christian community has prophetically endowed members. The Didache encourages such communities to have the bishops and deacons take over the worship responsibilities of the prophets and teachers, a step that some of the local Christian communities seem to have been taking only very reluctantly.

Hermas of Rome, author of *The Shepherd*, is a mid-second-century visionary who both appreciates spiritual gifts and supports the established order. For him too the question of differentiating between the authentic prophet and the charlatan is a real one, and he takes occasion to deplore the latter's exploitation of the credulity of the faithful. For him the criterion is the prophet's way of life — the charlatan strips off his own mask by his self-aggrandizement, his desire for place and position, his effrontery, his addiction to worldly pleasures and delights, and his avarice.

The decline of the prophetic office is also documentable in Justin the Martyr and in 2 Peter. Yet elsewhere fathers of the church like Melito of Sardis (died 190?) are remembered by their contemporaries for their prophetic gifts. As late as A.D. 300 we have papyrological evidence of the high esteem in which "the prophetic order" was held when it is called "the body of the flesh of Jesus Christ that is mixed through Mary with the hu-

manity.”⁵⁰ That in the fourth century the prophetic office was at least a venerated memory in the Western church is evidenced by the retention of the reference to the “admirable company of the [Christian] prophets” among the earthly worshipers of the Thrice-Holy Trinity, when an anonymous hymnographer reworked an Old Latin Easter preface, *Sanctus*, and post-Sanctus into the *Te Deum laudamus*.⁵¹

The “one who teaches” is a *charisma* in Rom. 12:7. The shift from the abstract noun in the case of “prophecy” and “service” to the masculine participle in the case of “the one who teaches,” “the one who exhorts,” “the one who distributes alms,” “the one who is placed over the others,” and “the one who does deeds of mercy” is probably nothing more than a stylistic variation.

Didaskein (“to teach”) is a prominent, permanent, and irremissible function of the disciples (and specifically of the apostles) of our Lord from the beginning, both during His lifetime and afterward.⁵² That which they are described as teaching is variously the interpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the Christ-event, the message of our Lord of the coming of the kingly rule of God, the gracious offer of the forgiveness of sins, and the explication of the significance of the Gospel for the daily life of the believer. *Didaskein* distinguishes itself from parallel types of

communication — such as evangelizing (*euangelizein*) and proclaiming the Christian *kērygma* — less in content than in methodology. Within the Pauline communities the “ones who teach” continue this function of the founding apostle (Rom. 12:7; 2 Thess. 2:15). In the “prison letters” and in the Pastorals the “one who teaches” has an increasing concern with the totality of the Christian message and its application to the ethical-moral realm.⁵³

The *didaskalos* (“teacher”) is the Christian counterpart of the Jewish rabbi; he is a teacher by vocation and profession.⁵⁴ The term thus involves a narrower concept than “one who teaches” in the same way that “one who prophesies” is a broader concept than “prophet.”⁵⁵

In the subapostolic period the task of teaching becomes more and more that of the professional teachers.⁵⁶

⁵³ Eph. 4:11; Col. 1:28; 2:7; 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:11; 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2. 1 Tim. 2:12 prohibits women from teaching. Titus 1:11 calls for the silencing of fissiparous and avaricious Judaizers.

⁵⁴ Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11, where the common article at least suggests a measure of identity with the “rulers” (*poimenes*); 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11.

⁵⁵ See Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, sub “*didaskō* [and cognate words],” in *TWzNT*, 2 (1935/1960), 138—68; *TDNT*, 2 (1964), 135—165.

⁵⁶ See Didache 15, 1; Barnabas 1, 8; 4, 9. Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Junior, argues that at least in Smyrna teaching was not the task of the bishop, but of teachers who may or may not have been part of the presbyteral college. As he sees the situation, the teacher’s *topos* (“place”) was to lead meetings of Christians and seekers after instruction in Christian doctrine. “At such gatherings baptism would be administered to those who professed the main articles of the Christian *kerygma*.” (“Smyrna in the Ignatian Letters: A Study in Church Order,” *The Journal of Religion*, 20 [1940], 145)

⁵⁰ Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1, 5, 9 ff., quoted in Friedrich, 6, 861, 48-50.

⁵¹ See Ernst Kähler, *Studien zum Te Deum und zur Geschichte des 24. Psalms in der alten Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), esp. pp. 31—39.

⁵² Matt. 28:20; see Mark 6:30; Acts 4:2, 18; 5:25, 28, 42; 15:1, 35; 18:11, 25; 20:20-21; 21:21, 28; 28:31.

7. CHARISMA AND THE PRESBYTERAL OFFICE

The two passages that come into question here are studded with exegetical problems. "Do not neglect the *charisma* you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon you" is the way 1 Tim. 4:14 reads in the Revised Standard Version, and 2 Tim. 1:6 reads: "[in view of your sincere faith] I remind you to rekindle the *charisma* of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands." Some of the problems and their solutions reflect the denominational biases and prejudices of the exegetes. What do the words translated "given you by prophetic utterance" mean? Do they imply that the conveyance of the *charisma* somehow took place through the utterance of the one who prophesied? Or does it mean that a prophetic utterance identified Timothy as a person upon whom hands were to be laid? ⁵⁷ What was the nature of the *charisma* in relation to the office upon which Timothy was about to enter? Does the *charisma* merely impart a habitual competence and authorization to do certain things? Does it involve an ontological change in the person? Are we to take from these verses that while the *charisma* is imparted only once, it requires continual actualization on the basis of the recipient's faith? ⁵⁸ Do the words translated "when the elders laid their hands upon you" mean that a number of incumbents of the presbyteral office—a college

of local presbyters—laid their hands upon Timothy? ⁵⁹ Or should "the laying on of hands" be taken as a technical term for "ordination" and "the presbyterate" be taken as referring to "the presbyteral office," rather than to the incumbents, ⁶⁰ so that the phrase would read "by ordination to the presbyteral office"? If the ordination was a joint action of a college of presbyters, was Paul's participation essential or accidental? Indeed, does the implied discrepancy indicate that the two letters intended to describe two ordinations, or do they refer to the same act? Is the ordination merely a symbolic action, or is it the actual impartation of a grace of office? ⁶¹ Do the two different prepositions that govern "imposition" in the two passages mean the same thing, or do they have a different force in each case, merely indicating time or attendant circumstances in the first case and instrumentality in the second? ⁶²

However one may answer these ques-

⁵⁹ So commonly; see, for example, Karl Staab and Josef Freundorter, *Die Thessalonicherbriefe, Die Gefangenschaftsbriefe und die Pastoralbriefe* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1950), p. 198.

⁶⁰ So, for instance, Gottfried Holtz, *Die Pastoral-briefe* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1965), p. 111; John Norman Davidson Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1964), p. 107; Barrett, p. 72; and Joachim Jeremias and Hermann Strathmann, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus . . .* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), p. 30.

⁶¹ So, for example, Jeremias and Strathmann, p. 31: "Mitteilung der Amtsgnade"; Norbert Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 4th ed. (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1969), pp. 180—182.

⁶² So, for example, Barrett, p. 63, although he concedes the possibility of the alternative option.

⁵⁷ So, for example, Charles Kingsley Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 71, and *The Interpreter's Bible*, 11 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), 433.

⁵⁸ So Roloff, p. 257.

tions, it is obvious that the intention of the author of the Pastorals in writing these verses (and the intention of the church in affirming the canonicity of the documents in which they appear) is to identify Timothy as the paradigm of every presbyter-bishop. His ordination, his continuing *charisma*, his authority, his work are the typical counterpart of the ordination, the continuing *charisma*, the office, the authority, and the work of every presbyter-bishop who has a similar unequivocal and clear vocation and institution in office. The role of the community, acting through the ordinator(s), is not exclusive; the *charisma* is ultimately God's gift.

Ernst Käsemann has made an appealing suggestion when he concludes that 1 Tim. 6:11-16 is the outline of a primitive Christian ordination exhortation and that the word *entolē* in the climactic 14th verse means "commission" (*Amtsauftrag*) to teach and to apply the deposit of faith for the weal and welfare of the Christian community. If this is right, this passage sheds additional light on the distinctive implications of *charisma* in these two verses. The "commission" is imparted in public before many witnesses. It has an irrevocable character that is to last during the life of the recipient or until "the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." It participates in the nature of a symbol of external continuity from one generation of incumbents of the office to the next, even though God is the real source of the *charisma*, the real ordinator, just as He is the real author of the deposit that is transmitted from one generation of faithful guardians of the deposit to the other.⁶³

⁶³ Ernst Käsemann, "Das Formular einer neutestamentlichen Ordinationsparanäse," in

The occurrence of *charisma* in this connection raises the question if the presbyteral-episcopal office as we encounter it in the New Testament and in the subapostolic church is essential. Here too the answer is likely to be a function of one's denominational and personal orientation, reflected in one's attitude toward certain passages that are crucial for the argument.

One line of argument holds that at first the Christian community knows no office that is essential to its constitution as the church (*ekklesiā*) of Jesus Christ. In this stage the leadership of the church is totally corporate and finds expression through pneumatic individuals endowed with what is in essence miraculous power. The second stage would then come in the Pastorals, where the *charisma* of the presbyter-bishop is conveyed by ordination. The next stage would trace the appointment of presbyter-bishops back to the apostles, a stage that we meet with in Acts. The final step would be taken in 1 Clement, which sees the presbyteral-episcopal office as constitutive of the church and has God commissioning Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ commissioning the apostles, and the latter by Christ's authorization arranging for their own successors. The proclamation of the Word of God becomes the responsibility of the officials of the local community and the bishop becomes the priestly president of the sacramental cultus.⁶⁴

Granted certain basic assumptions, this line of genetic development has a certain plausibility about it. It is true that the earliest explicit linking of *charisma* and

Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen, 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 101 to 108; Roloff, pp. 261—64.

⁶⁴ So, for instance, Bultmann, 1, 104—10.

ordination comes in the Pastorals and that a critical dating of these letters puts them as late as the early second century. It is also true that some interpreters are persuaded that the selection of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot is a legend and see Acts 14:23, which has Paul and Barnabas appointing presbyters in Asia Minor church by church, as an apologetic retrojection. Yet the idea of successors of the apostles (not to be confused with the modern doctrine of "apostolic succession") is by this token a received datum by the eighties at the latest. Again it is true that the precise formulation of a chain of commissions from the Father to Christ, from Christ to the apostles, and from the apostles to their presbyteral-episcopal successors meets us for the first time in 1 Clement.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the whole chain of argument depends for its force less on explicit affirmations than on the silence of the limited source material.

Furthermore, there are leadership offices in the church from the very beginning, even though we must stipulate that the New Testament apparently has no term for the "priesthood" or the "sacred ministry"⁶⁶ Apart from the possible and sometimes hotly debated implications of Matt. 16:18-19; 18:18; John 20:21-23; 21:15-17; and the position of James the Elder in the Jerusalem community, what is prob-

ably the earliest document in the New Testament knows *proistamenoi* in 1 Thess. 5:12, even though it may use the term in a very general and nontechnical sense.⁶⁷ We do have spiritual leaders of the local communities that the Pauline letters call prophets and teachers. We do have bishops and deacons in the Letter to the Philippians. We do have presbyters in Acts (and we may even speak of presbyter-bishops). The Pastoral letters seem to imply an identity of presbyters and bishops. The Letter of James knows only presbyters and not bishops and deacons.

Thus, granted that the accent in the New Testament is on function rather than on office and that the date of the institutionalization of the function cannot be precisely fixed, the idea of an essential, divinely sanctioned presbyteral-episcopal office is nevertheless in the New Testament itself and not only in post-Biblical history.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The evidence examined admits of certain conclusions:

1. On the basis of the usage of the New Testament and of the apostolic fathers, *charisma* is an unhappy choice among the available words to describe what "charismatic" has come to imply in the church; *pneumatikon* might have been more appropriate.⁶⁸ Intrinsically, *charisma* implies

⁶⁵ The earliest explicit designation for the leader of the eucharistic celebrations is "president" (*proestōs*) in Justin the Martyr. The eucharistic bearing of *prosenenkontas ta dōra tēs episkopēs* in 1 Clement 44 is debatable.

⁶⁶ Ernst Käsemann, "Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament," in *Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen*, 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), 109 (Eng. trans., p. 63). A possible exception might be *presbyterion* in 1 Tim. 4:14.

⁶⁷ *Hēgoumenoi* in Heb. 13:7, 17, 24 is a parallel usage.

⁶⁸ Burkhard Neunheuser, "Gnade, Geistesgaben, Heiliger Geist in mittelalterlicher und neutestamentlicher Sicht: Terminologische und sachliche Probleme—Ein Versuch," in *Liturgie und Mönchtum*, 20 (1957), 34—47, has traced the changes in meaning that the subject words and related vocables have undergone in the course of time. He holds that it makes good sense to "take up the terminology of the New

nothing more than "a gratuitous gift of God."

2. The primitive church recognized and operated with the necessity for responsible spiritual and administrative leadership from the beginning.⁶⁹

3. The polar tension between structure and "spirit" has always existed in the church. Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5—all but certainly the earliest document in the New Testament canon—finds it necessary to couple his exhortations to "respect those who labor hard among you and are over you in the Lord" with the injunctions, "Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophesying" (vv. 12, 19). The effort to catalog criteria, to create canons, and to apply discipline—laudable as the pastoral

concern and the desire for justice in dealing with parallel and analogous phenomena in terms of precedents may have been—has always produced tensions, of which we have an early example in the paradigmatic case of John of Ephesus and Diotrophes in 3 John.

4. Since the source of all ecclesiastical offices "is the outpouring in the church of the Holy Spirit which becomes manifest in them"⁷⁰ and since all *charismata* and *pneumatika* are the gift of the same Holy Spirit who abides in the church, it would seem to be the task of the church's administrative leadership at every echelon to take to heart the apostolic injunction not to quench the Spirit.⁷¹

St. Louis, Mo.

In addition to the standard commentaries and reference works, the following resources are potentially useful.⁷² In general they operate with the interchangeability of the terms charismata and pneumatika.

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Bettencourt, Estevao. "Charisms," *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. Karl Rahner and others, 1 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 283—284.

Testament, provided that it is done responsibly" and provided further that in the process nothing be lost that "was gained in the way of clarification, specification, and development."

⁶⁹ Unstructured and unregulated "pneumatic" movements have in the history of the church not demonstrated a high degree of viability. Nils Bloch-Hoell's observation about the Pentecostal movement's forsaking of "the principle of nonorganization" during the 60 years of its existence is instructive. (*The Pentecostal Movement*, p. 176)

⁷⁰ Pierre Grelot, in an essay that first appeared in *Assemblées du Seigneur*, No. 58 (Bruges: Abbaye de St. André, 1964), but that was accessible to the present writer only in Mathilde Lehne's German translation in Jean Giblet, ed., *Vom Christus zur Kirche: Charisma und Amt im Urchristentum* (French title: *Aux origines de l'église*) (Freiburg: Verlag Herder,

1966), p. 210. He argues that Paul's observations in 1 Corinthians 12 "permit only the conclusion that there are charismata"—it would have been better to say *pneumatika*—"that are not bound to an office (glossolalia or the gift of interpretation of languages, for instance), but that there is no office that is not charismatic" (ibid.).

⁷¹ The principle enunciated in effect by *Lumen gentium*, 12; see also Léon Cardinal Suenens' famous speech, "The Charismatic Dimension of the Church," in *Council Speeches of Vatican II*, ed. Hans Küng, Yves Congar, and Daniel O'Hanlon (Glen Rock, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1964), pp. 29—34.

⁷² The present writer gratefully acknowledges the valuable suggestions kindly offered by his colleague, the Rev. Victor A. Bartling, professor of New Testament exegesis at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

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