1. HISTORICAL SURVEY

Since the rise of the liberal theology the pneumatology and ecclesiology have particularly been questioned. This means that far-reaching questions and diverse trends concerning the concepts of church offices and ecclesiastical authority have arisen. Consequently the inevitable has happened: Scholars have radically questioned and even rejected the current traditional opinion in Catholic and Reformed circles that church office is a true and authentic divine institution as well as a biblical concept. 1)

In this climate of thought the church and theologians have had (and still have!) to cope with voices for radical renewal. Indeed it has become a time of "Umwertung aller Werte" (revaluering of all values). In due course the generally accepted conventional unity of church and religion has been disrupted, because it has no longer been accepted as self-evident that religion or faith could be practised within the structures and functions of the established churches. The credo’s and voices we hear from these circles sound alien and shocking to the conservative ears, but they are not at all surprising. The following expressions have inter alia been uttered as convictions:

"Anonymous christians"; "to be a christian outside or without the church"; "non-religious interpretation of the Bible"; "to be a true christian means to be incognito there for others"; "to be a christian only means to pray and practise righteousness to all men"; "undogmatic and unmetaphysical ‘God’ and religion"; "to live without the academic or working hypothesis ‘God’", et cetera.

This state of affairs must be identified and characterised as a radical and comprehensive secularisation (i.e. horisontalisation and undogmatisation) of God, faith, life and religion. It is obvious that church offices and -authority would also be affected deeply by this trend of thought. In this respect Dietrich Bonhoeffer pleaded in his Prison-letter 3rd August 1944 that ministers of churches had to give up the securities of their offices and official approach of affairs and issues in order to become employed in factories. The church had to do away with its conventional set-up for the sake of un-"official" service and help to others. Thus the church had to be de-institutionalised. The basic issues for Bonhoeffer were inter alia how to speak of God in a secular way and how to be a christian without being religious (Letter of 30th April 1944).
More or less in the same train of thought Paul van Buren\(^3\) and Harvey Cox\(^4\) wrote their books.

This spirit and sense of renewal and revaluing have also had other causes and effects. In this respect I remind you of the fact that as far back as 1897 Pope Leo XIII made his appeal for renewal to the church “as a devotion to the Holy Spirit as a means of renewal of individuals and society”\(^5\). In the sixties of our century Pope Paul VI repeated this appeal for renewal in terms of “a new Pentecost”. These two appeals for renewal together with various others may be regarded as the beginning and origin of Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism which has since then been known as the worldwide Charismatic Movement.

Since the end of the nineteenth and sixties of the twentieth centuries two components have thus been presented: on the one hand an appeal and movement for renewal in theological circles AND on the other hand the beginning of the Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement. Consequently the entire structure of the church has been questioned and re-examined. These vital critical questions call for a thorough analysis and investigation of the true nature of the church, because the traditional structure of the church has been rejected in certain circles and schools of thought. This situation is so far-reaching that we may call it the crisis in ecclesiology and pneumatology.

The initiators of this movement were i.a. R. Sohm (1892),\(^6\) M. Lauterburg (1898)\(^7\) and A. von Harnack (1909).\(^8\)

The publication of the works of these scholars co-incided historically with the birth of Pentecostalism, also known as “the third force in Protestantism”. I am referring here to the ministries of the “Holiness preacher” W.J. Seymour in 1906 in 312 Azusa Street Los Angeles and that of the Norwegian Methodist minister T.B. Barrat in Western Europe.

In his magnum opus Sohm stated that church polity (i.e. ecclesiastical law and order) and also church offices are foreign entities (Fremdkörper) to the fundamental nature of the original church. This is so because the church is fundamentally and exclusively a spiritual (pneumatic) entity, with no offices or institution whatsoever. Therefore, according to Sohm, when the church organised itself into offices and regulated its life by human church polity instead of its charismatic organisation, it fell into sin. Sohm thus emphatically maintained that the church is basically the invisible body of Christ without offices or institution. The charismatic organisation of the church is kept together by the faith of its members and pneumatic charismata. For this reason Sohm rejected all external organisation and institution as being illegitimate and superfluous.
Sohm thus presented a radical *spiritualistic view* of the structure of the church where the nature of ecclesiastical life consists of the “charisma of teaching” of apostles, prophets and teachers. Next to them functions the “charisma of deed” which takes care of the practical conservation of Christianity and which consists of presbyters, widows, ascetics and martyrs. The office of a supervising bishop is totally lacking.

During the ensuing years (1908—12) a serious controversy between Sohm and Harnack followed. Taking an overall view, there are major differences but also similarities between the viewpoints of these two scholars. With K. Holl they state their conviction that the primitive church had a charismatic organisation and structure. Harnack views the church as a “sociological entity” with a twofold organisational structure, viz. primarily charismatic and secondarily administrative services. Together with Sohm, Harnack also maintains that the institutional and juridical aspects of ecclesiastical life are totally alien to the true spiritual and charismatic nature of the church. These scholars do not view church polity and offices (i.e. the whole institutionalised life of the church) as part and parcel of the work and impetus of the Spirit in and for the church. Therefore these features should by no means be regarded and acknowledged as essential parts of the primitive church. These issues and aspects are of no more than administrative significance and rest on arbitrary mutual agreement. Harnack stipulates emphatically that the office of elders for example, substituted in an advanced phase of development the individual charismatic gifts of glossolalia and prophecy.

Karl Holl makes a radical distinction between the traditional and institutional character of the primitive Jewish church of Jerusalem on the one hand and the Paulinic church with its personal and pneumatic character with its emphasis on the local parish on the other hand.

In the course of the ensuing years various modifications have been made regarding this issue of relationship between charisma and church office. Controversial views and reactions have come to the fore. A complete and valuable summary of the development and viewpoints is presented by O. Linton and others. A survey of the headlines reveals a radical *antithesis* of charismatic- and administrative services (i.e. offices) in the nature and structure of the church. According to the spiritualistic viewpoint (Sohm, Harnack, Holl, Lauterburg, cum suis) only the charismatic services belong to the authentic New Testamental church.

With reference to this school of thought another viewpoint has developed. It is generally known as the *Actualistic view*. Exponents of this viewpoint state that the charismata consist of *in concreto* working gifts of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Therefore the charismata are
constituted by specific, concrete and incidental services and events under actual and specific circumstances. This viewpoint has been expounded by scholars like E. Käsemann, E. Schweizer and in a modified form H. von Campenhausen.

Käsemann for instance, declares that the pauline church did not have or even know any presbyterium (i.e. official institute). The presbyterium which we encounter in the Pastoral Letters, was an illegitimate deviation of the “paulinische Konzeption einer Gemeindeordnung vom Charisma aus”. He continues his argument in this respect by postulating: “Der Apostel hat Ordnung eben nicht statisch auf’Amtern, Institutionen, Ständen und Würden aufgebaut, sondern Autorität allein dem konkret geschehenden Dienst zuerkannt, weil allein im Akt des konkreten Dienstes der Kurios seine Herrschaft bekundet.”

Schweizer views the ordination and institution of church offices by Paul in his own time “nur als nachträgliche Anerkennung eines schon vorher geschenkten Dienstes denkbar”. In view of the spiritual and charismatic nature of the church, Schweizer however disapproves of such official appointments in the church because in his view they are illegitimate and impossible.

It is quite clear that both Käsemann and Schweizer constitute a fundamental dialectical (if not antithetical!) and tense relationship between Spirit and church polity (institution of offices and laws). This also means an antithesis between charisma(ta) and church offices. Käsemann makes a significant contribution when he attempts to solve the tension by maintaining both components and relating them dialectically. According to him a unity is accomplished in a merging process when, under guidance of the Spirit and his gifts, the offices are concretely and actually exercised in services of a particular local church. By this exposition Käsemann tries to take Sohm’s view to its utmost consequences.

Schweizer’s contribution in solving the tension was to take a position midway between Sohm and Harnack. He distinguishes and acknowledges ordained and unordained (i.e. administrative and charismatic) services in the church. In the one service to the church of Christ the poles (or entities) of charisma and church office are fused together in a unity. Although Schweizer thought that he had freed ecclesiology of the antithesis and tension, he still maintains that the charismatic organisation has always been and must always be the authentic and true nature of the church. He aptly calls it “the freedom of the Spirit in the church”.

Thus, despite various attempts to modify or even alter the convictions, the charismatic (pneumatic or spiritualistic) viewpoints survived.
This basic conception and conviction display a variation but also modifications of descriptions. O. Scheel prefers to denote it as “pneumocracy”, von Campenhausen “charismatic constitution of the church”, Schweizer “freedom of the “Spirit”. Yet some scholars such as von Campenhausen and Käsemann, acknowledge that Sohm and Scheel incorrectly reconstructed the primitive church. The primitive church was de facto not solely charismatic or pneumatic. According to the former scholar Paul had himself incorporated and acknowledged institutional structures in the church. Others, like Harnack, H. Lietzmann and R. Bultmann state that the institution of offices in the church was effected by “mehr administrativ-kultische Amtsreihe”.

Viewed globally, we see that there were many and varied attempts to solve or limit the tension and antithesis between charisma and church office. They consisted of the acceptance of a twofold organisation (charismatic and administrative) beside each other (Harnack, Leitzmann, Bultmann); or in limiting the antithesis on Paul and the church and accepting a subsequent development of offices (Holl, von Campenhausen); or by constituting a charismatic church polity of the Spirit, with the only antipole being the traditional church offices (Käsemann).

Despite all these ingenious efforts the antithesis still prevailed. Another component of this unsolved problem of charisma — church office is the viewpoint that the charismata were illegitimately transposed into church offices, the Spirit into human church polity. Sohm even declares that this deviation on the road was the sinful fall of the church and that this was already present in I Clemens. Holl, on the other hand, states that the primitive church of Jerusalem had been ordained in a hierarchy. Because of this state of affairs the transition into early Catholosism (Frikatholismus) was not an innovation to the church. As a matter of fact, this development of charisma into church offices was an accomplished fact at the end of the first century A.D. (Käsemann)! Von Campenhausen views this state of affairs with disapproval and describes this institutionalizing as “eine verhängnisvolle Verschiebung im geistlichen Gesamtverständnis der Kirche”.

Other scholars attempted to solve the antithesis with various efforts to harmonise the two components. They accepted with approval the development in the church (and therefore in ecclesiology) towards established and authoritative offices. This development took place at the end of the first and beginning of the second centuries A.D. Great names in this respect are O. Michel (1942), F. Grau (1946), J. Schniewind (1949), G. Friedrich (1952) and L. Goppelt (1962). They followed M. Lauterburg (1898).

A third group, mainly Catholics but also Anglicans and Reformed, took up a radical standpoint against Sohm. They maintained the offices
of bishops and others as opposed or together with the charismata. Names that can be mentioned here are u.a. Ph. H. Menoud (1949), W. Michaelis (1953), H. N. Ridderbos (1966), B. H. Streeter (1930), A. M. Farrar (1957) and G. Dix (1957).

A fourth group investigated the relationship between charismata and hierarchical church offices. In this respect two great figures wrote classical books. From the Catholic circle they indicated the fundamental pneumatic (charismatic) nature and essence of the church. These two men are H. Küng (1967) and J. Gnilka (1969). Their colleagues in the same train of thought are A. Wikenhauser (1937), Th. Soiron (1951), R. Schnackenburg (1949) and G. Hasenhüttl (1969).

One who tries to make a synopsis of all these viewpoints, is attempting the impossible. However, on one point at least there is consensus opinio: the primitive church had a charismatic or pneumatic nature and constitution. In this set-up the apostles together with the prophets and teachers should have taken the lead in the church. This they did with official authority. Some scholars even mention apostolic succession in this respect. Yet, these scholars are reluctant to speak of a charismatic church polity or constitution. Consequently the consensus of opinion only goes so far as to discern a charismatic primitive era of the church, in contra-distinction to the later development into official institutions.

This "later development" from the initial charismatic- to the institutional structure of the church was diversely evaluated by these scholars:

1. Some view it as a natural, continuous development. Therefore it is logical, legitimate and consequently acceptable.
2. Sohm emphatically disapproves of this development because it is the sinful fall of the church.
3. Others accept this development as a historical and inevitable necessity.
4. A fourth group stipulates that the effects of sin are chaos and a disorganised community. In the field of the Christian community the church offices were indispensable to constitute and secure rule and order, because the believing members of the church also are not what they ought to be. In this state of affairs authoritative offices to exercise order, law, justice and supervision should be created. This viewpoint is called the pragmatic view and it was presented i.a. by B. Büchsel.
5. A last group states that from the very beginning the church offices (apostles, prophets and teachers) justly stood next to and opposed to the charismata. They accept an unsolvable antithesis between these two components. When the charismata (or charismatic offices?) died out or vanished from the scene, the offices filled the gap. But even in this secondary phase the fundamental antithesis continued to exist.

This legitimate and continuous development from charismata into church offices was emphasised by Protestants (Ph.H. Menoud, W. Michaelis, L. Goppelt), Anglicans (B.H. Streeter, A.M. Farrar, G. Dix, A. Wikenhauser) and Catholics (J. Gniika, G. Hasenhüttl, V. Dias).

The majority of contemporary protestant scholars however regard this development from charismata or charismatic offices into the later church offices as an illegitimate transition or transposition and as a deviation from the original nature and structure of the authentic primitive church (like Käsemann and von Campenhausen). Käsemann wrote in this respect: “Die in die Defensive gedrängte Kirche hat Tradition und Amt als Schutzwall gegen drohende Gefahren aufgebaut”.

With due respect and appreciation to the work of the above-mentioned scholars, I must however conclude this part of the paper by stating that we have no solution yet for our problem. Therefore I will humbly attempt to re-examine the problem.

2. HERMENEUTICAL SCRUTINY

With regard to the issue at stake (charisma and church office), we are mainly dealing with passages of Scripture in I Cor 12—14; Rm 1:11; 6:23; 12:6—8; 16:1; Eph 4:11ff; Phlp 1:1; I Th 5:12; 2 Cor 1:11.

The core of our subject especially focuses our attention on the classical passages such as I Cor 12—14, Rm 12:6—8, Eph 4:11ff and Phlp 1:1f. These passages provide us with the lists of charismata and the so-called ‘doctrines on charisma’ (Charismenlehre).

*Prima facie* Paul is seemingly arranging church-life here. Therefore one is inclined to reconstruct church polity (law) and a church constitution (Gemeindeordnung or Gemeindeverfassung) from this material and data. In terms of Paul’s arrangement and his regulating of the charismata, church functions and -services one could consequently interpret and explain the functioning relationship between charismata AND church offices (institute and polity of the church).

However, before we may undertake even a final analysis and subsequent systematisation of results, we *must* urgently pay attention to
a fundamental issue of first priority. This priority is the hermeneutical question regarding the Sitz im Leben of Paul’s teaching on charismata. From the data available in the passages in question we must determine whether or not it was here Paul’s intention to present to us a constitution for the church. In other words, why did Paul write these passages? What was his purpose? Under which circumstances was it necessary and relevant to write these passages? These are the essential hermeneutical questions concerning the inducement, purpose and historical background of our passages. They are questions which are indispensable in order to acquire legitimate results from an exegetical scrutiny.

Ulrich Brockhaus discerns various “Deutungstypen” for Paul’s teaching on charisma. These “Deutungstypen” have been accepted as Sitz im Leben and context of the passages in question. According to Käsemann Paul taught and wrote on the subject of charisma in an ethical context. Our passages are part and parcel of Paul’s teaching on justification. Paul also, according to Käsemann, projected his teaching on charisma into ecclesiology.

The consequence of Käsemann’s approach is that charisma actually becomes a concrete form of the new obedience of the new life in Christ through the Spirit. Furthermore it also means that charisma covers a broader spectrum than church polity and constitution, because it comprises everything and all the gifts which the believer receives from God to make him more competent for God’s service.

Otto Michel and others state that our passages were written in the context of christology. According to Rm 5:15f and 6:23 charismata comprise salvation that God had bestowed in Christ on all mankind. Therefore the general salvation in Christ is transposed on to the meaning and function of charisma (I Cor 12—14; Rm 12:6—8). By this exposition these scholars reject the distinction between a technical and a non-technical meaning of “charisma”. Michel wrote: “Christus ist das entscheidende Charisma, das alle Charismen in sich schliesst.”

In this view charisma is none other than proclamation of Christ and his salvation. Therefore the charismata were deprived of their ecstatic nature.

J. Gnirka and others limit Paul’s teaching on charisma exclusively to the special situation of the Corinthian church. The members of this church were totally confused by the ecstatic charismata which had been practised there. Hence Paul’s instructional writing to the Corinthians was limited to and aimed at this special situation. Paul did not purport to present an exposition of general validity and normative nature for all times. His precepts were only paranesis for the Corinthian church in particular. According to these exegetes we are confronted here with a
temporary situation which was in transition to the permanent ordination of the pauline- and post-pauline church.

In conclusion to this hermeneutical question we must mention still another viewpoint. Some scholars maintain that the inducement for Paul’s writing I Cor 12—14 passim was to introduce a hierarchical arrangement of church affairs. Exponents of this viewpoint are J. Schnackenburg, Th. Soiron and others, especially Catholic and Anglican scholars. The former postulates an essential “Heilige Ordnung” and order of rank in church offices and charismata. He did so on the strength of the terms “prōtos”, “deuteros” and “tritos” in I Cor 12:28.

The merit of all these scholars is that in one way or another they concerned themselves with the hermeneutical question concerning the place and purpose of the lists of and Paul’s teaching on the charismata. However, they did not adequately deal with the issues of the historical background and/or Sitz im Leben of these passages. The major reason for this inadequacy seems to be the fact that they evidently were too eager to reconstruct a constitution or church polity for the pauline church. They found the material for this pauline church polity in the passages in question. In following Sohm and Harnack’s train of thought, they consequently constituted the exclusive charismatic nature of the church. Furthermore, because the opinion was almost canonised that in I Cor 12—14 pas., Paul did present the constitution and polity for the primitive charismatic church, these scholars had eyes only for the charismatic aspect. Once they were caught up in this school of thought, they paid no attention to or even noticed the fact that Paul had also referred to official functions and services in these lists! As a matter of fact, these functions and services (apostles, prophets and teachers) had apparently functioned in an official way in the church of Paul’s time.

If one thoroughly surveys the whole of I Cor 12—14 and Rm 12:6—8 together with Eph 4:11ff, one thing is as clear as crystal: Paul did not intend to write a constitution or even to prescribe church polity or ecclesiastical ordination as such. One finds no traces here of principles for a systematic church polity; neither do these passages per se reveal the modus operandi for the institutionalised church. Basically and primarily Paul answered particular questions and coped with problems of the local churches, especially those in Corinth and Rome. In fact, Paul therefore prescribed codes of behaviour for the living and working together of the members of the church. Paul’s writing was therefore concerned with the communal life and -activities of the believing christian community. In consequence of the situation in Corinth and Rome Paul had to correct misrepresentations and he admonished those who had erred and abused God’s gifts (charismata). His admonitions were
especially addressed to the proud and strong ones who misunderstood their charismata and consequently abused them.

In such a historical and spiritual set-up it is clear and understandable that Paul would provide criteria and norms for the correct and proper use and operation of charismata and official functions of the church. The norm par excellence for the life and structure of the church community is LOVE (I Cor 13). The criteria for the correct use and practice of the charismata and functions are the edification (oikodome) and complete equipment (katartismos) of the whole of the church.

Therefore Paul did not describe or prescribe the structures of the church community as such, but merely corrected and admonished a particular state of affairs that existed and functioned at that time. Hence, by writing our passages Paul did not create or prescribe the principles of church polity, church structures or -institution. On the contrary, he canalised the existing functions and charismata in a God-pleasing and orderly way so that it might serve the well-being of the whole church (I Cor 14:40).

Fundamentally and historic-theologically the Sitz im Leben is NOT the prescription of principles for a pauline ecclesiology, but ethical paranesis. The cause and motive for writing were to secure a sound and effectively functioning Christian community of brethren who serve each other in mutual love for the sake of Christ’s church and the glory of God. This paranetical context is quite evident in I Cor 12—14 and Rm 12. The latter passage structurally forms part of the major concluding paranesis of the letter to the Romans, and it is closely linked with chapters 6—8 (the new life in Christ). Both I Cor 12 and Rm 12 convey the theme of the church as the body (sôma) of Christ. In this body each true member has a function to fulfil and a service to render. To enable a member to exercise his function and service, the Holy Spirit endows him with a charisma or charismata.

So each member possesses a charisma (or charismata) and is indeed a charismatic, because everyone partakes in the life and work of the church. They must also serve and edify each other mutually, for the sake of the spiritual prosperity of the whole.

By this explanation and paranetical prescription Paul has revealed a magnificent truth: He has withdrawn the concept “charisma” from vague and theoretical-theological spheres. In doing so, he has put it in its rightful place, viz., as a concrete and actual function and service in the life of the church. In the writings of Paul “charisma” was therefore utilised to describe the work (ergon) and power (dunamis) of the Holy Spirit in the church. He also used the term “charisma” to expound the fact that the Spirit is the norm of the new life of the individual believer in the church, in order to edify and fully equip the whole.
This is precisely what Käsemann rightly discerned in his view on the "Deutungstypus" of I Cor 12—14 and Rm 12:6—8.

Hermeneutically it is therefore entirely illegitimate to reconstruct a church polity or constitution (institute) from the data of I Cor 12—14 and Rm 12. Mutatis mutandis it is likewise illegitimate to conclude on the grounds of these and other relevant passages that fundamentally the primitive church had been charismatic. Consequently it is also incorrect to polarise charisma and church office on the strength of an analysis of our passages.

As a matter of fact, our passages also present indications of certain official functions that were exercised in the church. These "offices" or functions had been integrated in the life and service of the church!

We must therefore conclude that the radical and irreconcilable antithesis of the liberal theology is a hermeneutical, exegetical and consequently a theological infringement. We may state this emphatically because the exegetical core and hence the theological scopus of these passages lies in the realm of the ethical-paranetic and NOT in that of the official-institutional, i.e. church polity. To formulate it in terms of the German thought: basically we are not dealing here with "Gemeindeordnung" or "Gemeindeverfassung", but with the proper regulating and arrangement of the spiritual life of the religious community, the members of whom were exercising the new life of faith in Christ through the Spirit and his gifts (Rm 6—8). Of this new life Christ Himself is the greatest and primordial Charisma and the Holy Spirit is the "First Fruit (Gift)" (aparche) and "Deposit" (arrabōn).

What this mutual pneumatic and charismatic life — in which each believer stands and participates — should be like and how it should function, Paul described and prescribed with reference to the problems and defects of the Corinthian and Roman churches. This prescription is valid and applicable for the whole church of all ages. For this reason Paul's paranesis is both indicative (description) and imperative (prescription). Herewith he directed the task, place and purpose of the charismata (and its exercisers) AND of the particular official functions (and their bearers). But again, in all these expositions the very scopus is not the church offices as such, neither the structures of charismata. It is, on the contrary, the function and usage thereof in and for the church.

One can easily read and deduce this fact from the terms that Paul applied to denote the meanings and significance of the functions:

Presbuteros, episkopos, diakonos, proistamenos, prophētos, kubernēsis, antiēmpsis, didaskalos and paraklēsis.

These terms are circumscriptions and indications of the FUNCTIONS and QUALIFICATIONS of specific charismatic persons who...
occupied and exercised these functions in and for the church. On the other hand, these were also denoted by special and descriptive concepts. These are the following:

- **Charismata** = gifts (Rm 12:6; 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30; 1 Tm 4:12; 2 Tm 1:6; Ac 20:28)
- **Diakoniai** = services (Rm 11:23; 12:7; 1 Cor 12:5; 16:15; 2 Cor 4:1; 6:3; 11:8; Eph 4:12; Col 4:17; 1 Tm 1:12; 2 Tm 4:5,11)
- **Energêmata** = powers, actions (1 Cor 12:6,10)
- **Ergon** = work (Eph 4:12; 1 Th 5:13; 1 Tm 3:1; 2 Tm 4:5)
- **Oikonomia** = ministry, supervision (1 Cor 4:2; 9:17; Eph 3:2; Col 1:25; 1 Tm 1:4; Tt 1:7)
- **Leitourgia** = service-work (2 Cor 9:12; Phlp 2:17,30; Rm 15:16)
- **Latreia** = religion (Rm 9:4; 12:1; 1:25; Ac 7:42; 26:6,7; Phlp 3:3).

It is quite clear from this summary that the terms charisma, service and functions are very closely related and integrated into the work and life of the church. It is hence also clear that we can or may not discern or reconstruct an antithesis between charismata and church offices because the functions of presbuteros, episkopos, diakonos etc. are always accompanied by the qualifying and enabling charisma. As a matter of fact, these functions of supervisors, elders, service-men (servants) are inconceivable and impossible to exercise save for the endowment of the Spirit and his gifts!

### 3. THE CONCEPTS “CHARISMA” AND “CHURCH OFFICE”

It is almost impossible to determine the semantic field of the term “charisma” from the Greek literature. The reason for this is that this term in its general connotation is very rarely used. We must however accept that the core of the word semantically comprises the term “charis”. In the context of our christian literature the root of the term goes back to the Hebrew word “chen”. The semantic accent of this word lies in **God’s actions**, mostly in the sense of God’s undeservable turn and favour towards man. It could aptly be circumscribed as “the protecting mercy/favour of God”.

The **Wisdom-literature** of the Old Testament ascribes a juridical element to the word, viz. the judge of God (Pr 3:34 passim).

In the **Prophetic literature** it obtained a strong eschatological accent.

In the writings of **Qumran** “Chen” functioned and figured in the context of the Covenant. Because of God’s covenantal fidelity He grants his undeservable gifts to mankind. On account and on the strength of man’s repentence, God can and shall favour man by his salvation (1QS11:11,12; 1QH2:23,25; 4:37).

In these terms then **Liddell-Scott** correctly circumscribes the
meaning “charisma” (as derived substantive from “charis”) as “a gift/present of divine favour and benevolence”.48)

The concept “charisma” in this connotation is a hapax legomenon in the Old Testament, viz. Ps 30(31):22. Furthermore it occurs twice in the Book of Jesus Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 7:33; 38:30.

The rootword “charis” appears manifoldly in the Old- and New Testaments. In the New Testament “charis” occurs a 100 out of 160 times in the Corpus Paulinum and Deutero-Paulinum. The frequency of “charisma” shows a similar pattern: with only one exception (1 Pt 4:10), this word is exclusively a pauline concept (16 times).

It is therefore a vain and invalid effort to try to illuminate the meaning of “charisma” anywhere else in the Bible. What actually happened, was that Paul had borrowed this word from the hellenistic vocabulary in order to describe and denote events and actions in the christian community and religious life. If by any means a technical (special) connotation might exist next to the general connotation of meaning, then Paul himself is the creator or inventor of this technical meaning or usage. Rightly U. Brockhaus stipulated this fact.

For Paul then the root meaning of “charis” is every power emanating from God truine. The Spirit applies this power of the exalted Lord to the lives of men. Similarly this is the context of “charisma(ta)”. The latter is a gift/present of God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the First Fruit (aparche) and Deposit (arrabon). By these gifts (charismata or favours) of power (dunamis) God accompanies (empowers) the work and service of his servants (apostles, prophets and all witnesses).

The basis of this “charis” and “charisma” is the perfect and complete salvatory work of Christ.

Hence one may describe the relationship between “charis” and “charisma” as follows: The grace/favour/gift which God autonomously grants to his children through Jesus Christ and his death of atonement, conveys implications and effects for the life and the life hereafter. These implications and effects, which the Spirit works and accomplishes, are salvation, sanctification and servitude to God.

Subsequently these effects are differentiated into diverse actions in the church. These different effects and actual actions of the one “charis” in and by the believers through the Spirit, Paul called “charismata”.

Hence we define “charisma” as the endowment of the Spirit in the personal life of the individual believer on account of the salvation of Christ, for the sake of God’s work on earth.

On the strength of our analysis we may emphatically state that
“charismata” are primarily no official qualifications (i.e. offices), but they are actions in the church by its members on account of the fact that the Spirit mercifully grants the competence and efficiency for service (German: Dienstbefähigung). This is the only conclusion that may be drawn from an analysis of the usage and significance of our term in Paul’s letters to the Corinthians and Romans.

Secondly we must accept the fact that Paul used the term “charisma” in a general and in a special connotation, viz. non-technically and technically.

An analytical investigation of the relevant texts reveals the following results:

1. **Rm 1:1.** Our term here signifies spiritual things, i.e. gifts or donations in general.

2. **Rm 5:15f.** This text emphasises the theological and soteriological basis and contents of charismata. It consists of salvation in and by Christ. An alternative term for “charisma” is “dorema”.

3. **Rm 6:23.** Paul here indicates the meaning and significance of “charisma” in contrasting it in a antithetical paralellism with “opsonia” = military pay of a soldier in terms of his merits. “Charisma”, on the contrary, is a free gift of God’s favour and consists of eternal life; the wages (opsonia) of sin is death.

4. **Rm 11:29.** The election of Israel is a charisma. God can never regret his gifts and calling.

5. **I Cor 5:7.** The nature and contents of charisma are described in terms of knowledge (gnosis) and the word of truth (logos) of God.

6. **I Cor 7:7.** Paul mentions here the charisma of abstinence in the context of marital life.

7. **2 Cor 1:11.** Paul thanks and praises God for the gift (charisma) of delivery from perils.

8. For the rest “charisma(ta)” is used as a special and technical term in Rm 12:6—8 and I Cor 12—14 (especially 12:4,9,28,30,31).

   In these passages “charisma” denotes specific functions in the church. Each believer possesses a charisma or even more than one charisma (I Cor 12:4,7,11,29; Rm 12:6).

This technical term describes and indicates activities and ministries.
in and by the church. Paul is the inventor of this technical meaning. We may even state that in the three instances outside our passages where our term occurs in this connotation (viz. I Pt 4:10, I Tm 4:14 and 2 Tm 1:6), it was borrowed from Paul.

From this investigation we must infer that “charisma” is by no means a simplistic concept, carrying only one fixed meaning. The word is used, via Paul, in a general, non-technical AND in a specific technical connotation. The former usage indicates various general religious issues. The latter one (viz. in I Cor 12—14; Rm 12:6—8; I Tm 4:4; 2 Tm 1:6 and I Pt 4:10) was inaugurated by Paul and serves to denote the christologically grounded gifts of the Spirit. These gifts had been given for the sake of the functions and official work IN the church AND BY the church: The charismata provide the abilities or competence to serve Christ on earth and to function as organs of Christ’s body (his Church).

In rectifying the misconceptions and abuse of these charismata in the Corinthian and Roman churches, Paul gave the norm for exercising charisma, viz. LOVE (I Cor 13). In the same context he provided the criteria for the effective and God-pleasing functioning, viz. the oikodome and katartismos (Eph 4:12; I Cor 14).

Rightly H. Schürmann concludes in this respect: “Es handelt sich um solche Erscheinungen die nach Ursprung und Erscheinungsweise alle ‘pneumatisch’ sind, in denen sich gemeinsam die allmächtige Wirkkraft Gottes auswirkt, die alle beim Aufbau der Gemeinden dienen und die insgesamt grosse Gnadegeschenke Gottes sind.”

This brings us to the concept “church office”.

The fact is generally known and accepted that the concept “church office” does not occur in the Bible at all. This term is part and parcel of academic ecclesiology and ecclesiastical vocabulary. However, the cause at stake does occur and exist in the Bible.

This concept denotes and describes that a particular task or responsibility has been directed to a particular competent and authorised person. Hence this person executes his task officially, i.e. by appointment and authority. In the context of the New Testament studies U. Brockhaus stipulates the following components of the office in the church:

1. An office must be permanent.
2. It must be acknowledged and accepted by the church or congregation (Christian community).
3. The office and office-bearers are to be regarded with due respect because of their authority and dignity. The bearer of an office stands in a special position or relation towards the congregation (German: Sonderstellung).
4. The direction of this task must take place by ordination and imposition on of hands.
5. A juridical element must always be attached to a church office.

This exposition is completely acceptable because it is properly substantiated by the data of Scripture. An analytical investigation of the New Testamental data furthermore reveals that the idea of “church office” is conveyed by the Greek terms “diakonia” and “oikonomia”. The latter term, meaning “ministry” or “supervision”, is linked semantically and in the history of revelation with two specific Old Testamental concepts, viz. “pēkudah” and “moēd”. These terms functioned in the cultic practices of the Jewish synagogue. “pēkudah” is the substantive of the stem-verb “pakad” = appoint, visit, supervise. “Moēd” is the substantive of the verb “jaad”, meaning “to appoint”, “to gather”.61)

In conclusion we may now ask the question: What is the nature of the New Testamental relationship between “charisma” and “church office” (diakonia/oikonomia)? This brings us to the primary concern of this paper.

In terms of our investigation we may state that the New Testament, especially the Corpus Paulinum, mentions a diversity of qualifications and functions of charismata which serve for the edification and equipment of the believers. These services are described in the context of and relationship with official and permanent functions (offices) of the church. The most important functions are:

*Charismata* = gifts, favours of the Spirit
*Diakoniai* = services
*Energēmata* = powers or actions
*Ergon* = work
*Oikonomia* = ministry, guard
*Leitourgia* = service-work
*Latreia* = religion, service.

The more important of these, viz. diakoniai, oikonomia, leitourgia and latreia, refer to the cultic-religious life and practice of the temple and to the priestly services of the Old Testamental era. In the New Testament, however, they received a new spiritual and christological content. It indicates here God’s service through Jesus Christ and the Spirit in the church and by the church. These new services comprise the entire life of the believer and the christian community. As such they penetrate into the organic- and instituted life of the church.

In the course of the history of revelation and salvation these concepts lost their sacral and cultic connotations of the Old Testament because of the unique atoning sacrifice of Christ. The Spirit now works or creates the charis (grace) and salvation of Christ in the life of the
individual. Consequently faith also is a charisma. In order to enable the believer to render competent and efficient services for Christ’s sake in and to the church, the Spirit provides charismata for these general and official services. This service-work is motivated by and purports to edify and equip the believer. The norm for mutual co-operation and relationship is love.

Hence “charismata” and “church offices” are interrelated and integrated into a unity because both are services to the one and same church.

We may, for the sake of clarity, logically and formally distinguish between these two concepts in the following way:

“Charismata” are spiritual qualifications and abilities by the favour of God through the exalted Lord and the Spirit.

“Church offices”, on the other hand, are parts of God’s method of work in and for the church. These offices have Christ as foundation, the Spirit as their dunamis (power) and the church as space (realm) of work.

We have stated and proven above that the classical parts of Scripture on charismata (Rm 12:6—8; I Cor 12—14 and Eph 4:11ff) in no way whatsoever provide a technical and official ordering of the church in the sense of church polity or -institute. Paul’s intention in writing these passages was not to emphasize or even constitute the official and institutional facets of the charismata or church offices. On the contrary, he wants, by means of paranesis and correction, to state the qualifications whereby and disposition through which the charismata should function. We must therefore interpret these passages in an ethical-paranetic Sitz im Leben and not in the sense of constitutional prescriptions and principles for church policy or official ecclesiology.

These passages fundamentally stipulate the fact that all the services in the church are of charismatic (pneumatic) nature, because no one is able to render spiritual or official services to the church save for the endowment of the Spirit. It is the Spirit who, by his free gifts of grace, applies Christ’s salvation to the believer. Hence it is the Spirit who works the ability and competence for service in and through Him.

Consequently church offices are by nature and fundamentally also charismata.

Hence it is totally illegitimate to polarise charismata antithetically against the alleged officially instituted church of Jerusalem! Even in I Cor 12:28 and Eph 4:11, where Paul integrated official services and functions with prescriptions regarding charismata, there is one outstanding major theme and purpose. This is the indication of spiritual qualifications together with the purpose-criterium of these “offices” AND charismata, viz. the edification and complete equipment of the saints.
Hence we must draw the only obvious conclusion, namely that charismata and church offices are *indissolubly bound together* under this criterium and purpose. Therefore in no passage of Scripture whatsoever does one encounter the alleged antithesis between charisma and church office, between Spirit and church polity, between Gentile pauline charismatic church and Jewish Palestinian institutionalised church in Jerusalem: Charismata were and are by no means church offices! As gifts of the Spirit they enable and make one competent to serve Christ and his church. It must be clearly understood that the institutional church (with its offices, laws and polity) could and still can in no way exercise and fulfill its duty otherwise than by endowment of the Spirit, viz. by the received and operating charismata.

In this respect *G. Friedrich* justly states: "Paulus macht das Charisma zum Amt. Er ordnet den Geist nicht dem Amt unter, sondern er macht den rechten Geistträger mit seinen Charismen zum Amtsträger."52)

Christ is the *content* of this church office. He grants the divine authority to it; through his charismata the Spirit bestows the individual with the competence, ability, efficiency and willingness for service.53)

In conclusion we must state the fact that, on the strength of the authentic evidence of I Cor 12:28 and Eph 4:11ff, we must accept that church offices *did* exist in the pauline era. These passages mention apostles, prophets and teachers. Paul definitely knew and acknowledged these offices. He also integrated them into his lists of charismata by means of circumscription of their function and indication of their competence for official service.

Furthermore he appealed to the church of the Thessalonians to recognise and acknowledge the *proïstamenoi* (those who guide and instruct) and to pay the highest esteem and love towards them (I TH 5:12). Similarly he saluted the *presbuteroi* and *diakonoi* of the Philippian church (Phlp 1:1).

The author of the Pastoral Letters (Deutero-Pauline?) approaches the matter in the same spirit. Nothing in these letters contradicts the pauline notions, convictions and institutions. On the contrary, these two bodies of writings (Pauline and Deutero-pauline) are in full accord. The Pastorals do not reflect on the individual *charisma* as such, but bring the *charisma* in the closest relationship with salvation (*soteria*) and hope (*elpis*). Furthermore they mention the "charis" of the office of apostleship, i.e. the *charisma* of the office. Lastly these letters draw the attention to prescriptions and instructions for office-bearers in the church. These men have been set apart by imposition of hands in order to fulfill the ministry in the church (I Tm 4:14; 2 Tm 1:6).

Therefore we must conclude with all objectivity and firm conviction
that church offices were not unknown to Paul. He definitely did not oppose or reject church offices, neither was he being hostile to them. He recognised, acknowledged and respected the offices and encouraged them as being part and parcel of the efficient functioning of the church, the body of Christ. Hence we are justly entitled to postulate with conviction that Paul acknowledged and co-operated with the state of affairs already existing in his time. This acknowledged and legitimate situation was that church offices and charismata should be and indeed was the one, integrated and complete work of the church, on account of the accomplished work of salvation of Jesus Christ.

4. RÉSUMÉ

The results of our investigation may be summed up in the words of E. Kamlah according to whom the pneumatology of Paul is determined by “die Bestimmung Jesu durch den Gesit und des Geistes durch Jesus. ..... Auf der Entfaltung der Wirkungen des Geistes liegt der Schwerpunkt: einerseits in der Gemeinschaft der Gemeinde (I Kor 12: 4–11; 28–30; Rm 12:6–8). Neben ekstatische Bekundungen des Geistes stellt Paulus dabei bewusst auch andere: denn jeder Dienst in der Gemeinde ist nach ihm eine solche Gabe des Geistes. Durch diesen real in der Taufe und im Abendmahl mitgeteilten Geist, der sich in seinen Gaben bekundet, wird die Gemeinde gemeinsam am Leben erhalten und so vereint (I Kor 12:13).

Anderseits wirkt der Geist auch am einzelnen: Er bezeugt und vermittelt dadurch die Sohnschaft (Rm 8:15f; Gl 4:6); er unterstützt, indem er vor Gott interpelliert (Rm 8:26; Phlp 1:19).”

In Paul’s view every function in the church, including the officially instituted offices, conveys a charismatic or pneumatic nature.

Hence we cannot discern a formal and structural antithesis between charisma and church office in Paul’s thought. Both church office and charismata (general and specific) are gifts (charis) of God: church offices being the method by which God truine works and acts; charismata being the qualifications and man’s competence which God autonomously grants to serve Him in his church. Neither of these two realities stands independently by itself, nor even excludes by opposing the other. Both were granted by God (didōmi) to edify and completely equip the members of the church; both are measured, limited and weighed in their function by LOVE.

In the actions and functions of the church God is the exclusive and absolute Authority. On account of the atoning sacrifice of Christ God exercises his work and authority in the church by means of charismata of church offices, ministries and functions. All these God himself gives (didōmi), appoints (etheto), puts into (tithēmi), confers (merizō)
and distributes (diaireō).

The New Testament, especially Paul, thus reveals that the Lord of the church enables and qualifies men with his charismata by grace of the Spirit. This He does so that the church and its offices may be in a competent position to render orderly and proper services for the sake of the Kingdom, honour and glory of God. In doing so, the church is edified (oikodomeō) and fully equipped (katartizō) (Eph 4:11ff).

Therefore church offices never functioned next to or contra the charismata, or vice versa. At no time of church history was there any antithesis between these two realities, such as Sohm, Harnack, Käsemann cum suis maintained.

Neither was (or still is) it correct to assume that church offices as human institutions supplanted or had been substituted for the charismata. On the contrary, both church offices and charismata had (and still have) separately and together the right of existence. God's condition for existence is that they are there solely as service for the benefit of the church. Consequently it is illegitimate to constitute charismata next to or contra the church offices, because the former do not function as a separate category of offices. Both realise themselves exclusively IN the church as the body of Christ — the latter being the realm (field) of work and their substratum. In the church and for its spiritual benefit the Spirit endows the charismata in order to enable to teach, prophesy, reign, or supervise (kubernēsis), render deeds of mercy and lovingkindness, speak in tongues, heal, help (antilempsis) et cetera.

A true historical perspective reveals that in the course of time the church consolidated itself under the guidance of the Spirit and on the basis of the apostolic tradition (paradosis) (Eph 3:20). In the course of this development in the church another significant state of affairs came to the fore: more need was felt of those charismata which were indispensable for the offices (ministries) of presbuteroi, episkopoi and diakonoi (Phlp 1: 1). These charismata were: Ability to guide and supervise, ability and capability to teach, the proper discernment of spirits and sound truth (adversus heretics such as philosophers, Gnostics and Judaisers), correct conduct and attitude towards those outside the church, mutual rendering of services, sharing of goods, exercising of lovingkindness (Ac 6) and the ability to help (antilempsis).

In terms of our initial formulation of the issue at stake, we may in conclusion formulate the result of this investigation as follows:

Pneumatology and ecclesiology are interdependent on each other. Both are constituted and grounded christologically and soteriologically; both have a fundamental eschatological alignment with a vision on the consummation in the Parousia (second Advent) of Jesus, the exalted Lord — He who is and shall always be the absolute Authority and
REFERENCES

1) C.f. o.a. Calvin. *Institutio IV*, 3, 7 and 8.
16) Ibid 125.
21) Cf. von Campenhousen, op. cit., 328; also Schweizer, op. cit., 209, 228ff.
40) Käsemann, op. cit., 127, 133.
42) Käsemann, op. cit., 114—16; see also König, op. cit., 227; Hasenhüttl, op. cit., 125f, 159.
43) Michel, op. cit., 134f; also Lauterburg, op. cit., 6.
44) Michel, loc. cit.
47) Soiron, op. cit., 180ff; Wikenhauser, op. cit., 77ff. The same viewpoint is also stated by F. Grau, M. Lauterburg, O. Michel, J. Schniewind and L. Goppelt.
52) Friedrich, op. cit., 85.
53) For an illuminating survey of charisma and church office, see u.a. Brosch, J. *Charismen und Ämter in der Urkirche*. Tübingen, 1951, 38—41.
54) Kamlah, E. Article *Geist* in *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament*. Wuppertal, 1972, I, 486; also Ridderbos, op. cit., 491, 494.