CHARISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH SINCE RUDOLPH SOHM: AN ECUMENICAL CHALLENGE

ENRIQUE NARDONI

University of Dallas, Irving, Texas

THE RELATIONSHIP between charism and office has been labeled one of the most difficult problems for the history of the early Church,[1] a problem that has its own history. This history began in 1892 when Rudolph Sohm issued his thesis of the charismatic Church, challenging the then-common consensus in German Protestant scholarship—the concept of the Church as a free association. Sohm's challenge changed the position of Protestant scholarship. Under Sohm's influence, the early-twentieth-century Protestant scholars agreed on the necessity of charism to the Church, but they disagreed on the relationship between charism and office. By the same time the "catholic" churches (in a broad sense of the Reformed, the Anglican, and the Roman Catholic churches) had adopted a position defensive of their institutional structures, holding that office is necessary for the Church but charism only secondary.

The Second Vatican Council brought a significant change by recognizing that the Church is constituted of both institutions and charisms, and by stating that both derive from the Spirit. This position has been very important in the post-Vatican II ecumenical dialogue.

This historical outline defines the subject of this article and determines the four sections into which it is divided. The subject comprises Sohm's thesis on the charismatic Church, modifications, alternative positions, and subsequent developments. Section 1 studies the contribution of Sohm and his disciples to the notion of charism as the essence of the Church. Section 2 treats early-twentieth-century Protestant positions concurring that charism is constitutive of the Church but diverging on the issue of the compatibility of charism with office. Section 3 deals with the notion of charism as secondary for the Church, held by the spectrum of "catholic" churches. And section 4 considers post-Vatican II developments, both Protestant and "catholic."

The scholars surveyed in this paper are the most representative among those affiliated with the Protestant and the "catholic" churches. The paper is interested in these particular churches, because they were

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[1] Heinz Conzelmann, "Charisma," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* 9 (1973) 396.19–20.

deeply affected by the debate caused by Sohm's challenge. Indeed, the problem originated within the Protestant Church in Germany and then spread primarily to the wide spectrum of "catholic" churches.

CHARISM AS THE ESSENCE OF THE CHURCH

The Christian Church viewed as a charimastic community is a concept developed, in Germany, by R. Sohm in his critique of the Protestant consensus of the 1880s. According to that consensus, the early Church was a voluntary association in which preaching and teaching were performed by the charimastic action of apostles, prophets, and teachers, and matters of administration and worship were conducted by the humanly instituted presbyters/bishops. In this vein, the early local churches were autonomous and democratic, since they were voluntary associations resulting from the believers' decision.[2]

Sohm took exception to the consensus in his first volume of *Ecclesiastical Law,* published in 1892,[3] in which he argued that the Church possesses from the beginning the self-awareness of being assembled, not by the free will of the individual believers, but by the word of God and organized by the charisms of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4–6, 11).[4] Being charismatic by origin and nature, the Church is a spiritual and supernatural entity, independent of any human, ecclesiastical organization and, therefore, free from any human law.[5] This charismatic autonomy

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[2] On the Protestant consensus and the developments following Sohm's thesis, see Olof Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung: Eine kritische Darstellung* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1932) 3–30; E. Foerster, *Rudolph Sohms Kritik des Kirchenrechtes* (Haarlem: Bohn N.V., 1942) 49–68; U. Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1972) 7–94; W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 178–83, 213–16, 309–11. The understanding of the early Church in the Protestant consensus carries concepts derivative from both the Reformation and the Enlightenment. From the Reformation derived both the rejection of an authoritative teaching office (as a reaction against the authority of the pope and the bishops) and the recognized need for order and institution (as a reaction against the "fanatics" in the Reformation time). From the Enlightenment came the concept of autonomy of the individual person as the starting point and criterion for any order and institution.

[3] Rudolph Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I: Die geschichtlichen Grundlagen* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1892). On Sohm's biographical information, see S. Grundmann, "Sohm, Rudolph," *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 6 (1962) 116–17; T. D. Dougherty, "Sohm, Rudolph," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 13 (1967) 413.

[4] Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I* 19–23, 26, 482.

[5] Ibid. 22–23, 51–56. It seems that among the factors that led Sohm to the thesis of Church opposed to law were his concept of inner and invisible Church and his idea of law associated only with human power. Referring to Sohm, Linton says: "Church and right are incompatible. . . . The only alternative is either divine church right or no church right. A third possibility—a human church right—does not exist" (Urkirche 59; translation mine).

is valid for the universal and for the local church as well, because the latter is nothing else than the embodiment of the former.[6]

In the early Church, according to Sohm, there was no governing office passing resolutions on the community. The early Church received her directions only from the word that was preached. The charism of leadership was included in the charism of preaching and exercised by the charism holders—the apostles, prophets, and teachers (1 Cor 12:28; Acts 13:2–3).[7] In the apostolic Church there were also bishops, as Phil 1:1 says. They were designated beforehand to take the charismatic function of teaching after the death of the apostles, prophets, and teachers.[8] The mistake of the Church, according to Sohm, was to allow the bishops to be office holders, changing the charism into a power claimed by a permanent office, a mistake made in the time of Clement of Rome.[9]

Sohm's thesis provoked a variety of responses. The most famous among them was Harnack's, whose position was reflected especially in a long article in the *Protestantische Realenzyklopädie,* which he expanded later into a book.[10] Harnack began by making against Sohm an argument based on the image of the Church he himself had drawn mainly from the *Didache.* Harnack distinguished in the early Church

[6] Following Paul, Sohm says that the Church is the Body of Christ and Christ has only one Body. Where Christ is, there the whole Church is. Where two or three are gathered in Christ's name (Matt 18:20), there the Church is present (*Kirchenrecht I* 20).

[7] Ibid. 14–15, 21–23, 29–30, 113. According to E. Foerster (*Kritik* 8–9), Sohm intended to help the evangelical community recover the Lutheran concept of invisible Church and rid herself of the human institutional structure introduced by Melanchthon. On Luther's concept of invisible Church which dominated Sohm's thought, see Y. Congar, *Vrai et fausse réforme dans l'église* (Paris: Cerf, 1969) 341–85.

[8] Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I* 83, 88, 115.

[9] Ibid. 158–64. Sohm operated with the then-accepted concept that charism denotes a supernatural power given to an individual to perform an action in the community under direct guidance of the Spirit, independent of human authority. He introduced into the concept a new element: the opposition to office, which includes the following elements: permanence; recognition by the community (a sign of permanence and recognition is a stable designation of the office); special position of individuals in front of the community (authority, dignity); an established commissioning protocol or ritual (laying on of hands); and legal protection for the function. On this, see Brockhaus, *Charisma* 24.

[10] A. Harnack, "Kirchliche Verfassung und kirchliches Recht im 1. und 2. Jahrhundert," *Protestantische Realenzyklopädie für Theologie und Kirche* 20 (1908) 508–46; and the enlarged version of the article: *Entstehung und Entwicklung der Kirchenverfassung und des Kirchenrechts in den zwei ersten Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1910); English translation: *The Constitution & Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910). On the controversy between Harnack and Sohm, see Linton, *Problem* 135–38; Foerster, *Kritik* 85–89; W. Maurer, "Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Harnack und Sohm und die Begründung eines evangelischen Kirchenrechtes," *Kerygma und Dogma* 6 (1960) 194–213; W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament* 178–83, 213–16, 309–311.

two organizations: one charismatic (in the universal Church) made up of apostles, prophets, and teachers; and the other noncharismatic (in the local church) made up of institutions derived from the natural society (presbyters) or established by the community (bishops and deacons). According to Harnack, in the course of time the organization of bishops and deacons took over the roles of the presbyters and even replaced the charimastic leadership of the universal Church.[11]

In the process of the controversy, however, Harnack adopted important elements of Sohm's position. He modified his history-of-religions approach by accepting the self-awareness of the Church as a theological criterion defining her nature. Consequently, he gave priority to the charismatic and universal Church over the noncharismatic and local church, and remarked on the tension between the charism of the former and the institution of the latter.[12] In this vein, Harnack agreed that the early, apostolic Church was charismatic and stated that the Gentile Christian communities were pneumatic democracies of the universal Church.[13]

In the wake of the controversy, O. Scheel[14] stood out among Sohm's supporters. Scheel rejected Harnack's thesis of two organizations and argued for Sohm's idea that there is only one Church, the charismatic Church visibly represented in the local communities. According to Scheel, "those who have charge of you" in 1 Thess 5:12 and "the bishops and deacons" in Phil 1:1 were charismatic. Paul (Rom 12:6–8) calls their functions "gifts of the Spirit."[15] Therefore, each local Pauline church was ruled only by the Spirit. It was "a pneumatocracy," in which each believer was as much a charismatic as Paul himself.[16] Scheel argued that the only reliable sources for the early Church are the Pauline letters and contended that the image of Church they contain must be valid for all other churches.[17]

Sohm's thesis was substantially supported by three outstanding Protestant scholars in the middle of this century: H. von Campenhausen, E. Käsemann, and E. Schweitzer. Campenhausen, in his book *Ecclesiastical Authority,* first published in 1953, adhered to Sohm's thesis of the charismatic Church including the opposition of charism

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[11] For Harnack's image of the Church taken from the *Didache,* see A. Harnack, *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel* (TU 2.2; Berlin, 1884) 94–96, 143–48.

[12] Harnack, "Verfassung" 518, 520, 529.

[13] Harnack, *Entstehung* 39; "Verfassung" 520–21, 529.

[14] O. Scheel, *Die Kirche im Urchristentum* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1912); "Zum urchristlichen Kirchen- und Verfassungsproblem," *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* 85 (1912) 403–57.

[15] Scheel, *Verfassungsproblem* 441–43; *Kirche* 33–35.

[16] Scheel, *Kirche* 37, 42.   [17] Scheel, *Verfassungsproblem* 449.

and office.[18] The innovation of Campenhausen was to reinterpret Harnack's thesis of the two organizations by identifying them with two different churches: the noncharismatic with the Jewish-Christian community of Jerusalem, and the charismatic organization with the Pauline churches. While the Jerusalem Church was governed by presbyters whose authority derived from their office, the Pauline churches were characterized by total exclusion of any human order or authority, entirely under the sway of the Spirit. This characterization was congenial with Paul's rejection of any external law or commandment, following his statement: "If you are led by the spirit you are not under the law" (Gal 5:18).

According to Campenhausen, by historical necessity the charismatic later merged with the presbyterial organization. The mistake was to credit ecclesiastical institutions with sacred character. This accreditation was tantamount to the exclusion of charisms.[19]

In 1949, some years before the publication of Campenhausen's book, Käsemann had delivered a lecture on the issue of charism and office, which was not published until 1960.[20] Käsemann argued that the charismatic structure of the Pauline churches was the embodiment of the authentic Church. In them, every Christian was a charismatic and an office holder. In this statement, office means a service the authority of which lies in the Spirit and the existence of which occurs in its actual discharge under charismatic impulse. In this view, the order of the community is created by the Spirit itself through charisms. Authoritative decisions issued in the community are like statements of sacred law given under the sway of the Spirit in anticipation of the last day. In Käsemann's understanding, charism and authority are not in an antithetic but a dialectical mode, as long as authority does not become a permanent possession of an office holder or subject to his dominion. In Käsemann's opinion, there is both continuity and discontinuity between Paul and early Catholicism. Continuity exists in the concepts of Church and sacraments; in these areas Paul prepared early Catholicism. Discontinuity occurs in the concept of office and authority; in these fields Paul was in opposition to the early Catholic idea of office.[21]

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[18] Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1969).

[19] Campenhausen, *Authority* 58 and 64.

[20] The English translation came some four years later: E. Käsemann, "Ministry and Communion in the New Testament," *Essays on New Testament Themes* (SBT 41; London: SCM, 1964).

[21] E. Käsemann, "Ministry," *Essays,* 63–94; "Statements of the Holy War," *New Testament Questions for Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 66–81. For a critique of Käsemann's position, see K. Berger, "Zu den sogennanten Sätzen heiligen Rechts," *New*

Käsemann's position has some features in common with E. Schweizer's.[22] According to the latter, the Pauline churches were under the rule of the Spirit's freedom. Charisms were services granted to every believer, but no one could claim permanent possession since charisms were regarded as actions of the Spirit. According to Schweizer, Paul was opposed to any permanent, authoritative office.

This survey of selected scholars shows the importance of Sohm's thesis that challenged the then-common consensus and led scholars to move from the view of the Church as a voluntary association to the Church as a charismatic organization. Sohm and Scheel saw the charismatic organization as present in all early-Christian churches, while Campenhausen and Käsemann distinguished two forms of organizations, the institutional in the Jerusalem Church and the charismatic in the Pauline churches. Harnack in turn distinguished between the universal and the local church but, at the end, gave priority to the charismatic Universal Church.

Regarding the opposition between charism and office, there was a tendency to limit or soften Sohm's thesis. Harnack did so by juxtaposing two forms of organizations, one charismatic and one administrative and cultic. Campenhausen limited the tension between charism and office to the Pauline churches. Käsemann softened the tension by distinguishing between antithetic and dialectic modes. However, in spite of some limitations and softness, the opposition between charism and office remained deep in these scholars. The institutionalization of the churches at the end of the first century is for them a defection from the early, authentic Christian Church.

CHARISM AND OFFICE CONSTITUTIVE OF THE CHURCH

Besides those who regarded charism as incompatible with office, there were other Protestant scholars of the end of the last century and the first part of our century who, while supporting the position of charismatic church, did not agree that charism is incompatible with office. They maintained, rather, that in Paul charism and office coexisted without opposition as two essential elements of the Church.

This was the position of M. Lauterburg[23] who rejected the incompatibility of charism with office supported by Sohm, and took exception to the twofold organization of the Church defined by Harnack. For

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Testament Studies 1 (1954) 248–60; A. Vanhoye, "The Biblical Question of 'Charisms'," in *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives: Twenty-five Years After (1962–1987)* (3 vols.; ed. R. Latourelle; New York: Paulist, 1988). 1.438–68.

[22] E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1961) 89–104.

[23] M. Lauterburg, *Der Begriff des Charisma und seine Bedeutung für die praktische Theologie* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1898).

Lauterburg, the life of the early Christian community began by being energized by charisms. Offices came as a second step in the life of the community. When a charism was recognized as permanent in one person it became an office. In this vein, office is the consolidation of a charism.[24] All offices originated in charisms and are supported by charisms. Referring to 1 Cor 12:28, Lauterburg says that not only the prophets and teachers were charismatic but also the presbyters and bishops as well; they were gifted with the charism of administration.[25] The charism par excellence is the gift of grace coming from Christ (Rom 5:15–16; 6:23), and all charisms have their source in this grace.[26] According to Lauterburg, all Christians possess the Spirit and all of them ideally and potentially have a charism (1 Cor 12:7–11). Actually, however, only those who have a function for the service of others have a charism.[27] The ecstatics do not have a charism because charism essentially denotes a spiritual capacity for service to others, for building the community.[28]

H. Lietzmann argued that, according to 1 Cor 12:28, the two structures of the Church identified by Harnack (one charismatic and the other noncharismatic) were present from the beginning in the same Pauline churches without any opposition.[29] Lietzmann regarded the "helpers and administrators" of 1 Cor 12:28 as noncharismatic and identified them with the "bishops and deacons" of Phil 1:1. Worth noting is that for Lietzmann, although compatible with the charismatic structure, the noncharismatic structure of the Church derived merely either from natural society or from the free decision of the people.

F. Grau defended, on the one hand, Lietzmann's position that charism and office coexisted in the early Pauline churches; on the other hand, he contended against Lietzmann that, according to Paul, office was a special mode of charismatic activity, which included a permanent possession of the spiritual gift and the commission to exercise it. Grau remarked that Paul, in 1 Cor 12:28, regarded "apostles, prophets, and teachers" as office holders, and considered "apostles" to be superior to all charism holders.[30]

H. Greeven reinforced Grau's thesis and added a new direction. He emphasized the role of the prophets and teachers as leaders of the

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[24] Ibid. 54–55.   [25] Ibid. 58–59.
[26] Ibid. 6–7.   [27] Ibid. 6, 19.
[28] Ibid. 26.
[29] H. Lietzmann, "Zur altchristlichen Verfassungsgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 55 (1914) 97–153.
[30] F. Grau, "Der neutestamentliche Begriff Charisma, seine Geschichte und seine Theologie" (diss., Tübingen, 1946) 184–91, 234–37.

community. He contended that the prophetic spirit established "those who were presiding over" the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:12) and the bishops and deacons of Philippians (Phil 1:1). His point was that the offices of administration and order in the Church derived from the exercise of the power of the Word.[31]

L. Goppelt argued that the constitution of the Pauline churches was not merely charismatic, as had been held from Sohm to Campenhausen. For there were from the beginning of the Church differentiated services or offices, together with charisms. This position, initiated by Grau, would be influential in the ecumenical dialogue. Goppelt's new emphasis was twofold: offices, on the one hand, were various shares in the multifaceted reality of the original apostolate instituted by Christ himself; on the other hand, they were required by the nature of the Church, which is not only an eschatological but also a historical entity.[32]

CHARISM SECONDARY FOR THE CHURCH

While the discussion among scholars of Protestant affiliation, in Germany, turned around the charismatic nature of the Church, the concern of scholars of "catholic" affiliation, such as those of the Reformed, the Anglican, or the Roman Catholic Church, was different. The latter were concerned with the institutional structure of the Church and its derivation from the apostolate instituted by Christ. In addition, they regarded charisms as secondary for the life of the Church.

Thus, in the Reformed tradition, Ph.-H. Menoud[33] argued that the New Testament does not know a Church governed immediately by the Spirit. For him, it is wrong to say that there were only charisms at the beginning, while stable ministries developed later to replace them. In his view, divinely instituted permanent ministries existed from the beginning. Thus Paul differentiated permanent ministries instituted by God from spontaneous and scattered manifestations of the Spirit.

According to Menoud, the Church cannot live without permanent ministries; rather she can live without charisms, although she may languish from the lack of them. He emphasized that the early Church

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[31] H. Greeven, "Propheten, Lehrer, Vorsteher bei Paulus," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 44 (1952/53) 1–43.

[32] L. Goppelt, "Die apostolische und nachapostolische Zeit," in *Die Kirche in ihrer Geschichte*, ed. K. D. Schmidt and E. Wolf (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 124–35.

[33] Philippe-H. Menoud, *L'Eglise et les ministères selon le Nouveau Testament* (Neuchatel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1949) 1–60.

was a "hierarchical Christocracy," in which authority derived from the head of the body to the apostles and from the apostles to ministry holders, who were regarded as the true successors of the apostles. Similarly, W. Michaelis regarded the office of elders as constitutive of the Church by divine institution, while he saw charisms as gifts not granted to all and unnecessary for the Church.[34]

In the Anglican Church, a significant collective work was published in 1946, edited by K. E. Kirk. Included in it were the contributions of renowned Anglican scholars who argued that the transmission of the apostolic authority to the bishops is essential to the Church. They acknowledged the presence of charisms in the early Church, but regarded them as secondary.[35]

Thus G. Dix considered charism to be a private matter which does not confer any public position in the Church. In his view, there is no indication in the New Testament of a charismatic ministry; the early Church knew only two kinds of ministerial office, the apostle appointed by the Lord and the elder appointed through the laying on of hands.[36]

Similarly, A. M. Farrer acknowledged the presence of charisms in the New Testament Church but denied them a leading role in the community. According to him, in the early churches, apostolic men, heirs of the apostles, existed alongside and above the presbyterial leaders. From them the bishops received their apostolic authority.[37]

In the Roman Catholic Church during the first part of our century, the studies on ecclesiology focused on the hierarchical church founded by Christ and emphasized the fundamental difference between clergy and laity; charisms were regarded as secondary or transitory. In this context, Wikenhauser divided charisms in Paul into transitory and permanent. The former were given to the laity in some periods of the Church. The latter were charismatic offices in the Universal Church, the holders of which (apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors) were appointed directly by God or Christ; they constituted the hierarchy in the early Church. In addition to them, there were from the beginning local office holders (presbyters, bishops, and deacons), who were not merely

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[34] W. Michaelis, *Ältestenamt der christlichen Gemeinde im Lichte der Heiligen Schrift* (Bern: Haller, 1953).

[35] K. E. Kirk, ed., *The Apostolic Ministry* (henceforth *Ministry*) (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946). Schnackenburg observed that the contributions included in this book had been partially criticized by other Anglican scholars and that in the Preface of the new edition (1957) A. M. Farrer had defended the principal theses contained in it (R. Schnackenburg, "L'apostolicité: Etat de la recherche," *Istina* 14 [1969] 24).

[36] G. Dix, "Ministry in the Early Church," in *Ministry* 183–303, esp. 238–42.

[37] A. M. Farrer, "The Ministry in the NT," in *Ministry* 113–82, esp. 146, 168, 170.

charismatic as they were installed by the apostle's imposition of hands.[38]

Th. Soiron studied the Church in 1 Corinthians 12 and concluded that Paul, in 1 Cor 12:28, established the hierarchical structure of the Body of Christ. His study, however, did not mention the role of charisms in the Church.[39] J. Brosch regarded charisms as distinct from office and as a luxury for the Church. He remarked that charisms involve potential risk for the hierarchical church founded by Christ, because they tend to split the organization. A particular risk stems from a charismatic apostolate (1 Cor 12:28), which Brosch considered to be different from the hierarchical apostolate established by Christ.[40]

L. Cerfaux analyzed charisms in Paul and distinguished simple charisms, like speaking in tongues, from charismatic services such as teachers and helpers. While the former were merely transitory, the latter were absorbed in the stable institutions of the churches and were connected with the apostolate and the local hierarchy.[41]

CHARISM RECONSIDERED: POST-VATICAN II DEVELOPMENTS

A new period for the history of the theology of charism in the early Church began with the "Copernican change" in the concept of Church introduced by Vatican II (1962–1965) and the increasingly acknowledged importance of the Spirit which was supported by the rise of the charismatic renewal.[42] According to this new awareness, the Church is built not only by institutional structures but also by the infinite variety of the gifts that each person "has the right and duty to use . . . for the building of the church."[43]

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[38] A. Wikenhauser, *Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1940) 77–83.

[39] Th. Soiron, *Die Kirche als der Leib Christi* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1951) 77–78, 186–88.

[40] J. Brosch, *Charismen und Ämter in der Urkirche* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1951) 43–45, 102–103.

[41] L. Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul* (New York: Herder, 1966) 247–48; originally published 1962. Paul's apostolate, according to Cerfaux, was both charismatic and institutional. It was charismatic, because it held his mandate from the risen Lord; and it was institutional because it derived from the apostolic group founded by Jesus (ibid. 124).

[42] See P. J. Leblanc, "Charismatic Renewal and Ecumenism," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 17 (Supplement: Change in the Church) 106–107; F. C. Sullivan, *Charisms and Charismatic Renewal: A Biblical and Theological Study* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1982).

[43] Vatican II, *Apostolicam actuositatem* 3; and *Lumen gentium* 4 and 12. See Y. Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* 1: *The Experience of the Spirit* (New York: Seabury, 1983) 170. *Lumen gentium* (4; 7; and 12) introduced the word *charisma* for the first time into

H. Küng pointed out in 1965 that in Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church had rediscovered the authentic Pauline ecclesiology so long neglected by Roman Catholic theology.[44] One year later, Schürmann commented that the Council, like Paul, understood the Church as a spiritual organism that transcends the distinction between hierarchical offices and free charisms.[45]

Animated by the spirit of Vatican II and stimulated by the charismatic renewal and, primarily, by ecumenical dialogue with other Christian confessions, Roman Catholic scholars in the 1970s and 1980s produced an extensive literature on charism in the New Testament.[46] In this literature, both institutional ministries and charisms constitute the Church, and both are gifts of the Spirit. An emphasis was placed on the relationship of institutional ministries with the apostle founder, a relation that provides a Christological dimension to the institution. The apostle was understood to be sent directly by Christ, not only to proclaim the gospel but also to shape communities according to the apostolic tradition and praxis.

In the complex relationship between institution and charism, some Roman Catholic scholars emphasized one component of the binomial,

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the theological vocabulary of the Latin Catholic Church. See A. Vanhoye, " 'Charisms'," *Perspectives* 1.442.

[44] H. Küng, "The Charismatic Structure of the Church," *Concilium* 4 (1965) 41–61; Küng, *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967) 388–444; "What Is the Essence of Apostolic Succession?" *Concilium* 34 (1968) 28–35. In Küng's view, charism is essential to the Church and the hierarchy must be conceived as a diaconal structure subsumed under the charimastic nature of the Church.

[45] H. Schürmann, "Die geistlichen Gnadengaben in den paulinischen Gemeinden," *De Ecclesia I*, ed. G. Barauna (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1966) 494–516.

[46] In addition to those quoted in the last two notes, the following are the most important Catholic publications on this issue. G. Hasenhüttl, *Charisma: Ordnungsprinzip der Kirche* (Freiburg: Herder, 1969); K. Kertelge, *Gemeinde und Amt im Neuen Testament* (Munich: Kösel, 1972); H. Merklein, *Das kirchliche Amt nach dem Epheserbrief* (Munich: Kösel, 1973); J. Hainz, ed., *Kirche im Werden: Studien zum Thema Amt und Gemeinde im Neuen Testament* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1976); A. Vögtle, "Exegetische Reflexionen zur Apostolizität des Amtes und zur Amtssukzession," in *Die Kirche des Anfangs* (Festschrift für Schürmann; Freiburg: Herder, 1978) 529–81; V. Garcia Manzanedo, *Carisma-Ministerio en el Concilio Vaticano Segundo* (Madrid: PS, 1982); L. De Lorenzi, ed., *Charisma und Agape (1 Cor 12–14)* (Rome: Abbey of St. Paul-Outside-the-Wall, 1983); L. Boff, *Church, Charism & Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (London: SCM, 1985); R. Schnackenburg, "Charisma und Amt in der gegenwärtigen neutestamentlichen Forschung," *Charisma und Institution* (henceforth *Institution*), ed. T. Rendtorff; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1985) 358; N. Baumert, "Charisma und Amt bei Paulus," *L'Apôtre Paul: Personalité, style et conception du ministère*, ed. A. Vanhoye; Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 73; Leuven: Univ. Press, 1986) 203–228; A. Vanhoye, " 'Charisms'," *Perspectives* 1.439–68; N. Baumert, " 'Charisma'— Versuch einer Sprachregelung," *Theologie und Philosphie* 66 (1991) 21–49.

but neglected or minimized the other. One such case is the significant collective work *Ministry and Ministries in the New Testament,* in which no chapter on charisms can be found.[47]

More important is the criticism of Küng's position by, among others, Y. Congar and P. Grelot.[48] Küng had claimed that the early Corinthian Church was a charismatic organization which originally conflicted with institutions and only later merged with them. He had proposed, therefore, the possibility of an exclusively charismatic church. In their critique, Congar and Grelot pointed out that Küng's view did not do justice to the whole Pauline context. This context requires a broader view in which both the institutional and the charismatic aspects are primitive. According to Grelot, the institutional structure originated in the very early Church from the combination of charisms and the action of the apostle founder who, after a process of discernment, acknowledged the gifts of leadership.[49]

Similar to Küng's are the positions of G. Hasenhüttl and L. Boff. The first thinks it is possible to have a community without permanent institutions, but not without a basic charismatic structure.[50] Boff, in turn, identifies Christ with the Spirit so much that the Christological (institutional) aspect almost disappears.[51]

Worth mentioning is a challenge to two accepted assumptions in the debate on charism. The first is the widely held assumption that Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 was concerned with the constitution of the Church. J. Gnilka[52] and R. Schnackenburg,[53] following the Lutheran scholar J. Roloff, took exception to this assumption, pointing to the paraenetic character of 1 Corinthians 12–14.

The second widely held assumption is that Paul used the term *cha-*

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[47] J. Delorme, ed., *Le ministère et les ministères selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Seuil, 1974). A similar omission is found in A. Lemaire, *Les ministères aux origines de l'église: Naissance de la triple hiérarchie, évêques, presbytres, diacres* (Lectio Divina 68; Paris: Cerf, 1971).

[48] See Y. Congar, "L'Eglise de Hans Küng," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 53 (1969) 693–706; and P. Grelot, "La structure ministérielle de l'Eglise d'après saint Paul: A propose de 'l'Eglise' de H. Küng," *Istina* 15 (1970) 389–424; "Sur l'origine des ministères dans les églises pauliniennes," *Istina* 16 (1971) 453–69. For Küng's response, see H. Küng, *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 55 (1971) 193–230. For a more recent evaluation of Küng's position and his dependence on Käsemann, see A. Vanhoye, "Charisms," *Perspectives* 1.451–54.

[49] See Grelot, "Origine" 459. By the term institution in the early Church, both Congar and Grelot understand a concrete and stable function to serve the community whatever the ways were to obtain it.

[50] G. Hasenhüttl, *Charisma* 223–29.

[51] Boff, *Charism* 144–64.

[52] J. Gnilka, "Geistliches Amt und Gemeinde nach Paulus," *Kairos* 11 (1969) 95–104.

[53] Schnackenburg, "Charisma," *Institution* 358.

risma in a technical sense, designating the free gift given directly by the Spirit to an individual believer for the good of the community. This view has been challenged by N. Baumert[54] and A. Vanhoye.[55] They argue that nowhere in the New Testament does charism have a technical meaning. Rather, the term always bears the general sense of "free gift," with some qualifications according to the various contexts in which it occurs.

In the Christian confessions outside the Roman Catholic Church, mainly among German Protestant scholars, the literature on the subject has been no less extensive. The general tendency is to soften the tension between charisma and institution.[56] Representing the conviction of contemporary scholars, E. Schweizer said in the ecumenical meeting of the Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie held in Zürich in 1985 that neither the distinction between charism and office supported by Lietzmann nor the charimastic order of R. Sohm had any foundation in Paul.[57]

It has become customary among Protestant scholars, following Käsemann, to distinguish a twofold concept of office. One is a service existing only in its actual discharge under the control of the Spirit, and the other is the permanent possession of an ability to serve, transmissible by ordination. This distinction allows some, such as J. Dunn[58] and J. H. Schütz,[59] to soften the tension between charisma and office without abandoning it.

Some Protestant scholars have taken issue with the widely held assumption that Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 dealt with the constitution

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[54] Baumert, "Charisma," *L'Apôtre Paul* 203–228.

[55] Vanhoye, "Charisms," *Perspectives* 1.454–59.

[56] Important Protestant publications on the issue are the following: J. Roloff, *Apostolat, Verkündigung, Kirche* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1965); U. Brockhaus, *Charisma und Amt* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1972); James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975); J. H. Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Monograph Series. Society for New Testament Studies 26; Cambridge: University Press, 1975); J. Rohde, *Urchristliche und frühkatholische Ämter* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1978); H. von Lips, *Glaube—Gemeinde—Amt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); F. Hahn, "Charisma und Amt," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 76 (1979) 419–49; E. Schweizer, "Konzeptionen von Charisma und Amt im Neuen Testament," *Institution* 320–24; J. H. Schütz, "Charisma im Neuen Testament," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 7 (1981) 688–93; F. Hahn, "Grundfragen von Charisma und Amt in der gegenwärtigen neutestamentlichen Forschung: Fragestellung aus evangelischer Sicht," *Institution* 335–49.

[57] Schweizer, "Konzeptionen," *Institution* 320.

[58] Dunn, *Jesus* 259–97. In his view, the concept of office of the Pastorals is incompatible with Paul.

[59] Schütz ("Charisma" 691) says that the concept "office-charism" of the Pastorals is incompatible with Paul.

of the Church. Thus J. Roloff stated that Paul did not give any constitutional outline but, rather, basic norms for Christian life.[60] In U. Brockhaus's view, the problem of charisms for Paul was not a theological and organizational problem but an ethical issue.[61]

The contemporary approach of scholars and church leaders to charism and office is especially perceptible in the documents of ecumenical dialogue. These are of two different kinds: joint commissions, the members of which are officially nominated by the church authorities at a world level; and commissions the members of which are officially nominated by the authorities at a national level. Examples of the first kind are *Malta Report, Ministry and Ordination, The Ministry in the Church, The Presence of Christ in Church and World,* and *Ministry* (the Lima text). An example of the second: *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry.* These documents are neither doctrinal declarations which commit the churches on the highest authority, nor are they formal declarations of agreement. Rather, they are basic statements made by competent and responsible theologians representative of their own churches in search of stages towards doctrinal agreements.[62]

Malta Report, a 1972 document of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Study Commission, stated that "charisms are of constitutive importance for the order and structure of the church" and that "we are told quite early in the New Testament period of special ministries and offices. To some extent at least they were viewed as charisms." The document witnesses the agreement that "the office of the ministry stands over against the community as well as within the community."[63]

Referring to the thesis of opposition between charisma and office, spirit and law, the same document states: "Greater awareness of the historicity of the church in conjunction with a new understanding of its eschatological nature, requires that in our day the concepts of *jus divinum* and *jus humanum* be thought through anew. . . . *Jus divinum* can never be adequately distinguished from *jus humanum.* We have

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[60] J. Roloff, *Apostolat* 126.　　　　　　[61] Brockhaus, *Charisma* 220.

[62] For the theological evaluation of these documents, see Yves Congar, "Theological 'Agreements'," *Diversity and Communion* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-third Publications, 1984) 137–48; J. F. Hotchkin, "Ecumenical Dialogues," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 18 (Supplement 1978–1988) 133–36.

[63] *Malta Report* 50–54. Lutheran–Roman Catholic Study Commission, 1972, in *Growth in Agreement* (henceforth *Growth*) (eds. H. Meyer and L. Vischer; New York: Paulist, 1984) 180.

the *jus divinum* always only as mediated through particular historical forms. These mediating forms . . . can be experienced . . . as fruit of the spirit."[64]

Ministry and Ordination, a 1973 document of the Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, asserted that in the early Church all ministries were used by the Holy Spirit for the building of the Church and that all instituted ministries derived from the original apostolate, which had "a special relationship with the historical Christ and a commission from him to the church and to the world (Matt. 28.19; Mark 3.14)."[65]

The Ministry in the Church, a 1981 statement by the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Commission, declared that in the New Testament a special ministry emerged, regarded as "standing in the succession of the apostles sent by Christ." It can be said that this special ministry "was essential then—it is essential in all times and circumstances."[66]

It is interesting to compare the statements of this document with what J. Reumann wrote in 1970, in his contribution for the U.S.A. National Lutheran and Catholic dialogue: "For Lutherans matters of church structure and ministerial organization were and are *adiaphoral.* No one theory of church organization was espoused by the Lutheran Reformers as essential to the nature of the church or as *the* 'biblical' one. What mattered instead was the word or gospel."[67] The comparison shows that the ecumenical dialogue in *The Ministry in the Church,* in an effort to retrieve the biblical structure of the Church, goes beyond the Lutheran Reformers who regarded the structure of the Church as *adiaphoral.*

The Presence of Christ in Church and World, a 1977 report of the Reformed–Roman Catholic Conversations, singled out the idea that Christ supports his people in their apostolic vocation by the power of the Spirit: "This power manifests itself in a variety of ways which are *charismata.*" According to the report, there is in the Church a special ministry for the administration of the Word and Sacrament. It is one of the charisms, and it is entrusted by ordination to a particular person

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[64] *Malta Report* 31, in *Growth* 175.

[65] *Ministry and Ordination* 3–4. Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission, Canterbury 1973, in *Growth* 79–81.

[66] *The Ministry in the Church* 17. Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Commission, 1981, in *Growth* 252–53.

[67] J. Reumann, "Ordained Minister and Layman in Lutheranism," *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue IV: Eucharist and Ministry* (National Lutheran Committee–Catholic Bishops' Committee: Washington D.C. and New York, 1970) 228.

"within the context of the believing community." In this context the ordained person is given authority and dignity from Christ.[68]

Worth mentioning are some statements of *Ministry*, the 1982 Lima text, a Report of the Faith and Order Commission, World Council of Churches: "The Church has never been without persons holding specific authority and responsibility. . . . A particular role is attributed to the Twelve within the communities of the first generation. . . . As Christ chose and sent the apostles, Christ continues through the Holy Spirit to choose and call persons into the ordained ministry."[69]

It is remarkable that in these documents, statements on issues which in the past have been points of dispute, now are basic points toward an agreement. To this effect, presuppositions that made positions unbridgeable, such as the notion of invisible Church, are abandoned, and one-sided and exclusive notions, like the Church as either charimastic or institutional, are disregarded. These documents show an effort to retrieve the biblical structure of the Church while avoiding the partisan positions of the end of the last and the first part of our century.

CONCLUSION

This survey of scholarly opinions on charism in the early Church has shown the import of Sohm's thesis of the Church as a community created and guided by the Spirit. His thesis challenged the then-common consensus on the Church as a voluntary association and gained a wide acceptance in Protestant scholarship.

In the debate, opposite and defensive views came to the fore. The concept of the Church as a community exclusively charismatic, supported by Sohm and his disciples, was confronted by the concept of coexistence of charisms and offices, originated by Lietzmann. Furthermore, the thesis of the Church as essentially charismatic common in Protestant scholarship was rejected by scholars of the "catholic" churches who defended the institutional structure of their churches as apostolic and reduced charism to a secondary element.

The study of the debate shows that, in the course of this century's discussions, some views, though significant for their own time, have been abandoned. Among these are the concept of a Church exclusively charismatic, the idea that the action of the Spirit is restricted to charism, and the notion that charism is merely secondary.

[68] *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* 94–99. The World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, 1977, in *Growth* 457–58.

[69] *Ministry* 8–11. Report of the Faith and Order Commission, World Council of Churches, Lima, Peru, 1982, in *Growth* 484–85.

However, important elements of the confronting views have survived as parts of a wider context and synthesis. Among these are the pneumatological dimension of the Church pointed out by Sohm, Lietzmann's thesis of the coexistence of charisms and offices from the early days of the Church, and the connection between apostolic authority and ministry in the early Church, a view held by the "catholic" churches.

The synthesis that has been regarded as an acceptable stage toward an agreement by all is that the Church is a spiritual organism in which, from the early days, there have been permanent ministries and charismatic ministries, all regarded as gifts of the Spirit. To the description of this synthesis must be added a component which is regarded as essential by the "catholic" churches and which is increasingly significant in the Lutheran Church. This is the presence in the early Church of the apostolic authority, with which the institutional ministries are considered to have been associated. Some elements of this synthesis, such as the relationship of Spirit and Church and the association between original apostolate and institutional ministries, open avenues for further and clarifying studies.

The challenge aimed at the widely held assumption about the concept of charism in Paul and his intention in 1 Corinthians 12–14 calls for future research and discussion. However, it does not undermine the position, shared by all scholars since Vatican II, that Paul initiated a pneumatological approach to the Church which is of immense significance.