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Carsten Claußen

The Structure of the Pauline Churches.

'*Charisma*' and 'Office'

The Study is divided into four main parts. The first one provides a review of some substantial contributions from a mainly theological perspective. Beside others contributions by A. Harnack and R. Sohm, E. Käsemann, E. Schweizer and J.D.G. Dunn, H. Ridderbos and B.H. Streeter, R. Schnackenburg and H. Küng are reviewed.

The second part intends to introduce some of the sociological positions which have later on influenced the studies on this topic. Relevant contributions of the sociologists, and a few of them at the same time theologians, M. Weber, E. Troeltsch, H.R. Niebuhr, P.L. Berger, and Th. Luckmann are summarized and discussed.

Part three turns back to the theological context. First of all some contributions are summarized which make use of socio-historical categories such as "family" and "household". Contributions by E. Judge, C. Hill, and G. Theißen are taken up in this section.

In the second section of part three the positions of J.H. Schütz and B. Holmberg are reviewed. They make use of sociological categories like "authority", "power", and "institutionalization".

Part four provides a discussion concerning the relationship of '*charisma*' and 'office' looking at prophecy.

This study comes to the following results:

1. The organization of the early Pauline churches is determined by the '*charismata*'.

2. One cannot talk of anything like 'office' in our modern sense.

3. However, a primary institutionalization can already be seen. Certain people contribute more or less regularly to the life of the congregation concerning certain '*charismata*'. This applies for example to prophecy. In correspondence to their '*charisma*', these people were named prophets.

4. Within the community authority lay with the apostles and with all occasional or regular ministries of the local church.

Carsten Claußen

The Structure of the Pauline Churches.

'*Charisma*' and 'Office'

Die Studie gliedert sich in vier Hauptteile. Der erste gibt eine Darstellung einiger der wesentlichen Beiträge aus vorwiegend theologischer Sicht. Unter anderem werden Beiträge von A. Harnack und R. Sohm, E. Käsemann, E. Schweizer und J.D.G. Dunn, H. Ridderbos und B.H. Streeter, R. Schnackenburg und H. Küng herangezogen.

Der zweite Teil will mit einigen soziologischen Positionen bekanntmachen, die die Behandlung der Thematik später beeinflusst haben. Es werden relevante Beiträge der Soziologen, und einige von ihnen gleichzeitig auch Theologen, M. Weber, E. Troeltsch, H.R. Niebuhr, P.L. Berger und Th. Luckmann dargestellt und diskutiert.

Teil drei kehrt zum theologischen Zusammenhang zurück. Zunächst werden Beiträge dargestellt, die auf sozio-historische Kategorien, wie zum Beispiel die Kategorien von "Familie" und "Haushalt", zurückgreifen. Aufgegriffen werden in diesem Abschnitt Beiträge von E. Judge, C. Hill und G. Theißen.

Im zweiten Abschnitt dieses dritten Teiles werden die Positionen von J.H. Schütz und B. Holmberg dargestellt. Sie benutzen soziologische Kategorien wie zum Beispiel "Autorität", "Macht" und "Institutionalisierung".

Teil vier bringt die Diskussion der Beziehung von '*Charisma*' und 'Amt' am Beispiel der Prophetie.

Die Studie kommt dabei zu folgenden Ergebnissen:

1. Die Organisation der paulinischen Gemeinden ist durch die '*Charismata*' bestimmt.
2. Von 'Amt' im modernen Sinne kann man noch nicht sprechen.
3. Eine erste Institutionalisierung läßt sich jedoch bereits erkennen. Bestimmte Personen haben mit bestimmten '*Charismata*' mehr oder weniger häufig zum Leben der Gemeinde beigetragen. Das gilt zum Beispiel im Bezug auf Prophetie. Entsprechend wurden bestimmte Personen gemäß ihrem '*Charisma*' zum Beispiel als Propheten bezeichnet.
4. Geistliche Autorität geht innerhalb der Gemeinde von den Aposteln und von allen mehr oder weniger regelmäßigen Gemeindediensten aus.

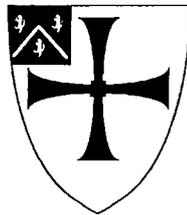
Carsten Claussen

**The Structure of the Pauline Churches:
'Charisma' and 'Office'**

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Thesis for the Degree of Master of Theology
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30 OCT 1992

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I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University.

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Preface

The following thesis is the result of studies I have been able to undertake in the academic year 1989/90 at the University of Durham. During that time I have been part of the joint programme of study between the University of Tübingen and the University of Durham for the degree of Master of Theology (M.Theol.).

During my life as a Christian I have worshipped at and also been part of a number of different churches belonging to different denominations. Most of them have had at least some impact on my life. Some of them put more emphasis on 'charisma' and experience, others more on 'office' and tradition. This background is certainly part of the reason why I wanted to look afresh and on my own at the example of the early Pauline churches. This could certainly not be done without walking down the long road of research that has been done before me. Therefore I have found it necessary to get to review some of the most brilliant contributions that have been made concerning my topic. Finally I have tried to test their results looking at the gift of prophecy as an example.

First of all I want to thank my supervisors in the Department of Theology. Prof. J.D.G. Dunn, Mr. S.C. Barton and Dr A.J.M. Wedderburn have provided diligent help and advice throughout the year.

Secondly that year is inseparably linked to my life in St.John's College. The list would be too long to name all the fellow students who have made that time a wonderful experience. Thanks to all of them.

Last but certainly not least I want to thank Esther D. Reed who has been my flatmate in the Postgraduate Centre. Her friendship and encouragement have been invaluable and very much appreciated.

I INTRODUCTION

§ 1. Intention and Outline of this Study

The intention of this thesis is to describe the structure of Early Church order as it is reflected in the Pauline literature. It seems to be advisable to avoid burdening this investigation with the very complex discussion of authenticity. Therefore this thesis will mainly be restricted to those epistles which are generally considered to be genuine Pauline ones.¹

We have also restricted our view to the Pauline trajectory which has been the most influential and significant in investigating Early Church order in general.

Nevertheless, it will sometimes be necessary to involve the accounts of Acts and the accounts of Paul's relations to the Jerusalem church.

The thesis will be divided into four parts. The first part will give a review of some of the treatments of Early Church order from a mainly theological and historical point of view. The main paradigm will be the distinction between '*charisma*' and 'office'.²

Part two will give an introduction to some of the most influential treatments of church order by sociologists. The leading paradigm in this part will be the "sect-type church-type dichotomy" and its variations.

In part three we will look at research on this topic by theologians but involving sociological and/or socio-historic methods.

¹ Rom; 1 Cor; 2 Cor; Gal; Phil; 1 Thess; Phlm.

² Since we will use the terms 'office', '*Amt*', and '*charisma*' in a specific way we will put them into single inverted commas.

The final chapter will bind things together. It will try to make use of some conclusions from the first three parts. As an example it will offer a fresh treatment of being a prophet and of the gift of prophecy in the Pauline epistles. This will eventually lead to the final conclusions and reflections of this thesis.

Part One

THE THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

§ 2. Definition of '*charisma*' and 'office'

Before actually starting to summarize the first part of the history of research on our topic it will be helpful to define what the majority of scholars mean by using the words '*charisma*' and 'office'.³

2.1 '*charisma*'

The word '*charisma*' covers a whole range of meanings. We shall understand it as naming a gift of grace. As one can

³ The following is not meant to be an accurate investigation of how these terms are used in scripture and church history. It is rather meant to define the common view of how these terms are used within the works reviewed in this thesis. Unfortunately most of these works do not give any explicit definition of their usage of these words. Therefore we shall mainly refer to Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 24f., n106, who describes these common conceptions. Neither of these two definitions claim to give an accurate account of what is really meant by these words by Paul!

see the connection is obvious between the Greek words for 'grace' and 'gift of grace': χάρις and χάρισμα.⁴

According to the common view among the works which we will review the features constitutive for 'charisma' are:

1. the authoritative concrete action of the Spirit acting through a Christian,
2. the independence with regard to human authority,
3. in principle the involvement and participation of all believers,
4. the equality of all believers,
5. the absolute renunciation of legal and structural organization.
6. not transferable by human means but dependent on the self-distributing Spirit.⁵

Of course not all of these features are thought to be constitutive by any of the following works. However, one may get the idea of the tension between 'charisma' and 'office'.

2.2 'office'

We shall use the word 'office' as a translation of the German word 'Amt'.⁶ U. Brockhaus has summarized what the majority of scholars consider the formal characteristics of 'office':

Regarded as constitutive for 'office' are:

1. the element of duration,
2. the element of recognition by the congregation,
3. the position apart (*Sonderstellung*) of individuals in relation to the congregation (authority, dignity),
4. the well-ordered commission (laying on of hands),
5. the legal element, the legal securing of the function in question.

⁴ The theological importance of this connection has been pointed out by Dunn, *Jesus*, 202-207; especially 206.

⁵ Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 25, n106. We found it necessary to modify Brockhaus' definition slightly.

⁶ For the difficulties of using the German word "Amt" in the NT context see Roloff, 'Amt IV', 509f.

6. the possibility to abstract it from a certain person and to confer it to another one.⁷

These criteria, or at least most of them, should apply if one wants to use 'office' in our sense.⁸ We will have to keep the question in mind whether this concept of 'office' exists already at such an early period of time as represented in the Pauline literature.

II A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF RESEARCH

§ 3. The Old Protestant Consensus

Around 1880 there was a broad agreement among Protestant theologians about the organization of the Early Church. There was almost a consensus about the questions of the relationship of 'charisma' and 'Amt', about the structure of ministry and about the way Christians formed local and afterwards a universal church. O. Linton⁹ gives an overview of the main teachings concerning this topic in that period.

According to this old Protestant consensus each local church was autonomous being concerned with their own affairs. Main supporters of this opinion were F.C. Baur, R. Seyerlin, A. Ritschl, H.J. Holtzmann and C. Weizsäcker and others.¹⁰ These early churches were governed by originally autonomous Christians in a democratic manner. They are religious associations. It was pointed out, that the individual Christian comes first and that a local church

⁷ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 24f., n106 (ET C.C.). Cf. the slightly different translation in Holmberg, *Paul*, 109. We have added point 6.

⁸ Cf. Roloff, 'Amt IV', 509-533; Hanson, 'Amt V', 533-552.

⁹ Linton, *Urkirche in der neueren Forschung*, 3-30; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 7-10; Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*, 37-41.

¹⁰ See Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 7; Linton, *Urkirche*, 3ff.

comes into reality when these persons form a community. Later on these local churches altogether formed the one universal church.¹¹ These ideas reflect the earlier thoughts of the Enlightenment. They focus on the ideal of human beings as free and autonomous individuals.¹² However, not only liberal theologians like F.C. Baur, who were following the doctrines of the Hegelian dialectics of German Idealism, but also pietistic thinkers like G. Arnold more or less agreed.¹³

Apostles, prophets and teachers were seen as having certain functions but without any 'Amt'. They did not have professional authority to set up doctrines (*Lehramt*); this would have offended the autonomy of the churches which were completely sovereign.¹⁴ However, necessarily there were a few 'offices' needed in order to run certain administrative affairs like preparing a Eucharist or organizing a room for services. Since these things had to be done some administration officials were necessary. However, these 'offices' had nothing to do with preaching and teaching. These administration officials were called elders or bishops, which was claimed to be the same.¹⁵

Of course these theologians would deny any influence of contemporary philosophy on their research. They proclaimed, that the disciples themselves organized their community in the way other groups in their environment did. The main problem of this Protestant consensus seems to be its strong relation to contemporary idealistic philosophy and enlightened Protestantism. It must be discussed later what effects this relationship had for exegetical research.

11 See Linton, *Urkirche*, 5; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 9.

12 Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 10; Linton, *Urkirche*, 6-8.

13 Cf. Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*, 37-42.

14 Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 8f.

15 See Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 8f.; Linton, *Urkirche*, 6.

§ 4. Edwin Hatch

4.1 Account

The first theologian, who left this consensus behind was E. Hatch.¹⁶ However, Hatch was not very far away from the older agreement. His main propositions are:

- (1) That the development of the organization of the Christian Churches was gradual:
- 2) That the elements of which that organization were composed were already existing in human society.¹⁷

Hatch himself knew, that these propositions were not new but "in greater or less degree, accepted by all ecclesiastical historians".¹⁸ Hatch describes his method of study in the first lecture.¹⁹ He refuses to read "the series of historical facts reversely",²⁰ but reads them in a thoroughly chronological way. Hatch tries to compare the early ecclesiastical organization with "all the other facts of that time",²¹ that means Christian facts as well as what we know about the whole Hellenistic, Jewish or pagan environment.²²

He points out two main points of background information about the contemporary environment of the early Christians:

First, there was "a common tendency towards the formation of associations";²³ second, the state of the Roman Empire in that period can be described in terms of poverty and misery, which provoked Christian charity.²⁴

¹⁶ Cf. Linton, *Urkirche*, 31ff.; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 10-12; Josaitis, *Hatch*, 43-72; 122-131.

¹⁷ Hatch, *Organization*, 213.

¹⁸ Hatch, *Organization*, 213.

¹⁹ Hatch, *Organization*, 1-25.

²⁰ Hatch, *Organization*, 16.

²¹ Hatch, *Organization*, 16.

²² This approach will later be called the socio-historic approach. See below.

²³ Hatch, *Organization*, 26.

²⁴ Hatch, *Organization*, 32-36.

Hatch concludes that within this situation "the officer of administration and finance must have had an important place".²⁵ He identifies these officers with the *ἐπίσκοποι*, the bishops of the early local churches, because they were very often criticized or commended for their use or abuse of their 'office'.²⁶ The bishop is described as "single head of the Christian communities",²⁷ "supreme almoner", "president of the council",²⁸ which administered the church funds, "the pivot and the centre" of ecclesiastical administration, "the depository of doctrine" and "the president of the courts of discipline".²⁹

According to Hatch another important 'office' of the Early Church is the *διάκονος*, the deacon. Hatch claims that the relation between the 'offices' of *ἐπίσκοποι* and *διάκονοι* were always very close and that it is very difficult to distinguish the qualifications of one from the qualifications of the other.³⁰ Therefore he makes no clear distinction on this point within the Early Church.

However, Hatch seems to be the first one who makes a clear distinction between *πρεσβύτεροι* and *ἐπίσκοποι*, between bishops and elders. Hatch's entire second lecture is about the *πρεσβύτεροι*.³¹ He sees the origins for the 'office' of the elders, as far as Jewish Christians are concerned, in the Jewish background;³² with reference to Hellenistic Christians he claims that the presbyterate had a "spontaneous and independent origin",³³ but describes parallels within the Graeco-Roman world as well.³⁴

²⁵ Hatch, *Organization*, 36.
²⁶ Hatch, *Organization*, 47-48.
²⁷ Hatch, *Organization*, 39.
²⁸ Hatch, *Organization*, 41.
²⁹ Hatch, *Organization*, 46.
³⁰ Hatch, *Organization*, 49.
³¹ Hatch, *Organization*, 56-82.
³² Hatch, *Organization*, 60.
³³ Hatch, *Organization*, 66.
³⁴ Hatch, *Organization*, 62-66.

According to Hatch the elders are mainly concerned with two functions: "They exercised discipline"³⁵ over their Christian fellows in the "midst of 'a crooked and perverse nation'"³⁶ and they "exercised a consensual jurisdiction in matters of dispute between Christian and Christian".³⁷

Hatch mainly focuses on the social aspects of the Early Church as an institution of social association and social help.³⁸ In Hatch's exposition it seems to be obvious that the structure of the Early Church is divided into two parts: The bishops and the deacons are mainly concerned with charity and affairs of the cult, but the elders are concerned more with legal and ethical questions. It seems to be worth comparing this distinction with Harnack's theory of a double or even triple organization of the Early Church.³⁹

4.2 Discussion

(1) One very important question remains: What about the relation between 'charisma' and 'Amt' according to Hatch's theory? Hatch does not mention a certain gift of the Holy Spirit for the officers of the Early Church. His 'offices' are "a product of the need of the community".⁴⁰ They have nothing to do with a certain 'charisma' that distinguishes

³⁵ Hatch, *Organization*, 69; 69-72.

³⁶ Hatch, *Organization*, 70.

³⁷ Hatch, *Organization*, 72; see 72f.

³⁸ Hatch, *Organization*, 221: "At once profoundly individual and profoundly socialistic, its tendency to association is not so much an incident of its history as an essential element of its character."

³⁹ See Harnack discussed below.

⁴⁰ Josaitis, *Hatch*, 99; Hatch, *Organization*, 221: "What it [Christianity] has to do it does, and will do, in and through organization. (...) But the frame of its organization is left to human hands."

certain members from other members of the same church or enables certain people to perform certain services. Hatch deals with them purely according to their functions.

(2) It is probably Hatch's main merit that he reopened the discussion at the end of a period of almost complete consensus among theologians. However, some critical comments should be made in reference to Hatch's hypothesis.

(3) Hatch's structure of the Early Church seems to reflect a very secular view. He hardly puts enough emphasis on the church as the body of Christ. His church is a mainly human society. It seems to be questionable to deny any spiritual influence on the election and ability of the officers of the Early Church.

(4) Hatch hardly has a look at the sources provided by the New Testament. He does much more research into literature contemporary with the period of early Christianity. However, we shall see further reason to criticize his hypothesis in the light of the New Testament below.⁴¹

§ 5. Adolf Harnack

5.1 Account

A. Harnack made some new contributions to the discussion about the organization of the Early Church. It seems to make sense to divide his research into three smaller stages according to his own development.⁴²

⁴¹ Cf. Josaitis, *Hatch*, 122-131, who makes further points worth discussing.

⁴² Harnack did quite a lot of research on this topic. Linton, *Urkirche*, 45f., remarks that Harnack made many slightly different attempts to describe the relationship between different offices. However in our context it is only possible to summarize the main approaches towards this topic.

His first approach towards this topic was marked by his translation of the book *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches* by E. Hatch into German. We will see later on that Harnack interpreted Hatch in a certain way.

Harnack's second step forward was mainly caused by the rediscovery and publication of the *Didache* by Archbishop Bryennios of Nicomedia in 1883. One year after this publication Harnack published a bilingual edition with a German translation of this early literature and some "prolegomena".

A third step of Harnack's research was marked by his discussion with R. Sohm, which we shall summarize below.

5.2 Harnack and Hatch

We have seen above that Hatch was the first one, who made a clear distinction between bishops and elders.⁴³ It seems to be rather difficult to find out how Hatch saw this distinction. He can be understood in different ways. Either the bishops themselves are a leading committee or they are just a part of a leading committee, which consists of both elders and bishops distinguished according to their functions.⁴⁴ However, Harnack understood it as if Hatch already made a strict distinction between two different

⁴³ See Hatch discussed above.

⁴⁴ Hatch, *Organization*, 38, says: "The βουλευταί of a city or a division, or a committee of them, were for the time being, in relation to such administration, ἐπιμελεταί or ἐπίσκοποι." This shows that Hatch himself was not clear on this point and that he can be understood in both ways. However later on p.39 he says that the members of this committee were named as both πρεσβύτεροι and ἐπίσκοποι according to their different functions. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 10, n21 seems to be right in observing that Hatch does not stand for a double organization of the church.

forms of organization in the structure of the early churches, whereas according to Hatch there was only a distinction between different functions.

Harnack describes a whole system of presbyterial organization on the one hand and episcopal organization on the other hand.⁴⁵ The presbyters were responsible for discipline in the community. Their activity was not based on a certain '*charisma*'.⁴⁶

On the other hand there were the bishops and deacons, who had to do with administrative or economic activities concerning cult, correspondence and looking after the poor. According to Harnack's view they were very close to the charismatic activities of apostles, prophets and teachers. In his opinion the 'offices' of bishops and deacons are based on certain spiritual gifts, the gifts of management and caring love (*Liebespflege*).⁴⁷ Harnack saw this charismatic ministry as persons "chosen and inspired by the Holy Spirit".⁴⁸

To summarize Harnack's view it can be said that he modifies the old consensus mainly at two points: He adopts the distinction between bishops and elders made by Hatch and secondly he develops a double organization of the Early Church: a distinction between charismatic ministries like bishops on the one hand and official ministries like the elders on the other hand.⁴⁹

However, Harnack concedes that there was already a committee of both elders and bishops in the very Early Church but it was led by the bishops.⁵⁰ Nevertheless the

⁴⁵ Harnack, *Analecten*, 229.

⁴⁶ See Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 10; cf. Harnack, *Analecten*, 231ff.

⁴⁷ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 11; Harnack, *Analecten*, 231.

⁴⁸ Josaitis, *Hatch*, 116; Harnack, *Origin*, 327.

⁴⁹ Josaitis, *Hatch*, 116; Linton, *Urkirche*, 36ff.

⁵⁰ Harnack, *Analecten*, 230.

distinction between elders and bishops remained far into the second century.⁵¹

5.3 Discussion

(1) It seems to be very reasonable that Harnack denies the strict restriction of the bishops to administrative affairs as it has been claimed by Hatch. However, his description seems to be a bit artificial and too theoretical.⁵² It is hard to imagine that the distinction of two different ministries in one committee was as strict as he demands it.

(2) In this early period Harnack did not really focus on the ministries of apostles, prophets and teachers. Compared with the old Protestant consensus this seems to be a lack in his early research. He does not clarify the relationship between them on one side and bishops and elders on the other side. However, this changed in his later research.⁵³

5.4 Harnack and the *Didache*

In 1884 Harnack published a commentary according to the newly available *Didache*. The *Didache* was highly regarded by Harnack and he modified his opinions in the light of it. Instead of the former double organization of the Early Church he now developed a triple organization. He now distinguishes between charismatic, natural and administrative ministries.

⁵¹ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 11.

⁵² Linton, *Urkirche*, 38f.

⁵³ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 11f.

The charismatic 'offices', also described as a spiritual, religious⁵⁴ or enthusiastic⁵⁵ ministry, were formed by the apostles, prophets and teachers.⁵⁶ They were not restricted to local churches but moved from one church to another. These Christians were not elected but their authority was based on certain charismatic gifts. The early churches honoured them very much.⁵⁷

The second group was formed by the elders. They took part in the patriarchal, or just natural, structure of the Early Church as a group of people of higher age and respectability. According to these ministries Harnack does not mention any special spiritual gift. Their main tasks were ethical education, exercise of discipline and jurisdiction.⁵⁸

Bishops and deacons formed the third type of ministry. They dealt with the administration of a local church and were elected officers. Harnack distinguishes bishops and deacons according to their age: bishops are older than deacons. However, the 'offices' are mainly identical.⁵⁹ Although these ministers were elected Harnack claims a special spiritual gift for them. Election and '*charisma*' do not contrast sharply with each other.⁶⁰

5.5 Discussion

(1) The new points in Harnack's second approach are the inclusion of apostles, teachers and prophets and the

⁵⁴ Harnack, *Lehre*, 146.

⁵⁵ Harnack, *Lehre*, 110.

⁵⁶ Harnack, *Lehre*, 111-118: "apostles"; 119-131: "prophets"; 131-137: "teachers".

⁵⁷ Harnack, *Lehre*, 94, describes them as a "Klasse von Geehrten in den Gemeinden".

⁵⁸ Harnack, *Lehre*, 148; cf. Hatch, *Organization*, 69-73.

⁵⁹ Harnack, *Lehre*, 143.

⁶⁰ Harnack, *Lehre*, 144f.

distinction between local organization and 'offices' for the whole church.

(2) Harnack provoked a lot of criticism. His opponents mainly criticized his outline as being too artificial and improbable.

(3) Furthermore they did not agree to the claim of a ministry of apostles, teachers and prophets to the whole church. They denied that these charismatic persons were fitted into any formal structure and insisted on the individuality of local churches. They did not want to adopt Harnack's construction of a general church.⁶¹

§ 6. Rudolph Sohm

6.1 Account

The other theologian at the end of the last and the beginning of our century beside Harnack whose research has laid the main foundations for the later discussion is R. Sohm.⁶² He published the first volume of his *Kirchenrecht*⁶³ (Canon Law) in 1892. Sohm is the first person who definitely left the old Protestant consensus behind.⁶⁴

Sohm makes a radical distinction between "law" and "church". His main thesis is that

the apostolic doctrine of the constitution of the ecclesia is that the organization of Christendom is not a legal one, but a charismatic organization.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Linton, *Urkirche*, 46f.

⁶² Cf. Linton, *Urkirche*, 49-67; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 15-20.

⁶³ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*.

⁶⁴ Cf. Linton, *Urkirche*, 49.

⁶⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 26: "[Die] apostolische Lehre von der Verfassung der Ekklesia ist die, daß die Organisation der Christenheit *nicht rechtliche, sondern charismatische Organisation ist.*" (ET C.C.).

His basic idea is that "canon law stands in contradiction to the nature of the church".⁶⁶ Sohm recognizes very well that he is in conflict with the main contemporary views on the structure of the Early Church⁶⁷ but sees himself in agreement with Luther.⁶⁸

Very important is for Sohm the definition of "Ekklesia" as the assembly of the whole of Christendom.⁶⁹ The local church is in contrast to the "Ekklesia" just one manifestation of the Early Church but it is not *the* universal Church.⁷⁰ This is clearly a devaluation of the local Christian communities in contrast to the Church as a whole.

In correspondence with this universal concept Sohm denies the existence of local 'offices'. He proclaims that the 'offices' belong to the universal church, not just to a local church. Sohm describes 'office' in terms of *διακονία*. God himself gives a 'charisma', which calls people to exercise a certain ministry as an 'office'.⁷¹ This divine

⁶⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 1: "Das Kirchenrecht steht mit dem Wesen der Kirche im Widerspruch". (ET C.C.). Sohm repeats this thought in a slightly modified form on p.459 and in another form as the last sentence of his book on p.700 as his conclusion.

⁶⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 2f.

⁶⁸ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 482: "In Luthers mächtigem Geiste, der sich gebadet hatte in den Tiefen des Evangeliums, ist mit dem Christentum auch die ursprüngliche Überzeugung der ersten Christenheit wiedergeboren worden: *Die Kirche Christi will kein Kirchenrecht.*"

⁶⁹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 16-22.

⁷⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 21: "Es gibt also dennoch nur *eine* Ekklesia, die Versammlung *der ganzen Christenheit*, aber diese eine Ekklesia hat unzählige Erscheinungsformen. Sie erscheint in der Versammlung der Ortsgemeinde, aber ebenso in der Versammlung der Hausgemeinde und in zahllosen andern Christenversammlungen, wenn sie auch nicht gerade die Versammlung einer Ortsgemeinde oder einer Hausgemeinde darstellen."

⁷¹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 26: "So ist der Dienst (*διακονία*), zu welchem das Charisma beruft, ein *von Gott auferlegter* Dienst, in diesem Sinne ein von Gott gegebenes Amt, und zwar ein Amt im Dienst der Kirche (Ekklesia), nicht irgend welcher Ortsgemeinde."

distribution of gifts of grace (*Gnadengaben*) gives every Christian⁷² his or her task and place within the church as the body of Christ with the Christians as its limbs. Since according to Sohm these different divine gifts are the reason for subordination and superiority among the members of a congregation, the structure of the "Ekklesia" is a god-given and charismatic one.⁷³ The "Ekklesia" is a spiritual being and therefore cannot have a legal organization. Christ himself is the head of the church.⁷⁴ Only God's own word shall reign within the church.⁷⁵ "The word of God is not to be identified by its form but by its inner power."⁷⁶ According to this there cannot be any power or 'office' within Christendom itself which has legal authority.⁷⁷

For Sohm this charismatic organization is not just a matter of an ideal theory, but he proclaims that it was actually the way early Christianity was organized.⁷⁸ He denies that early Christianity already in apostolic times

⁷² Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 108: "Ein wahrer Christ sein, heißt notwendig, ein Charisma haben."

⁷³ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 26.

⁷⁴ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 22: "*Die Ekklesia ist der rechtlichen Organisation unfähig.*"; "Das Haupt der Ekklesia (der Christenheit) ist Christus (Gott)."

⁷⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 23.

⁷⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 23: "Das Wort Gottes erkennt man nicht an irgend welcher Form, sondern an seiner inneren Gewalt." (ET C.C.).

⁷⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 23: "Sobald gewiß ist, daß nicht Menschen Wort, sondern allein Gottes Wort in der Ekklesia regieren soll, sobald ist ebenso gewiß, daß es keine Macht oder Amtsbestellung in der Christenheit geben kann, welche *rechtliche* Befugnis gegenüber der Gemeinde giebt."; "*Es kann keine rechtliche Regierungsgewalt in der Ekklesia geben.*"

⁷⁸ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 16ff.

was organized according to the concept of a legal constitution.⁷⁹

Sohm distinguishes between two different kinds of *charismata*: between the 'charisma' of teaching (*Lehre*)⁸⁰ and the 'charisma' of deed (*Tat*).⁸¹ He defines the gift of teaching as the main gift. It is exercised by apostles, prophets and teachers.⁸² They were the leading figures within early Christianity.⁸³ Part of their 'charisma' was the gift of ruling (*Gabe des Regiments*).⁸⁴ Although they were elected, it is only an affirmation of their election by God who reveals his decision through the word of the prophets. Therefore it is actually an election by God.⁸⁵ Also the laying on of hands has a confirming function for the charismatically endowed person⁸⁶ and is part of the ordination.⁸⁷

The 'charisma' of deed is exercised by elders, widows, ascetics and martyrs.⁸⁸ Sohm concludes that the older

⁷⁹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 14: Sohm opposes the theologians who are contemporary with him who proclaim, "daß die christliche Gemeinde schon im Lauf der apostolischen Zeit rechtliche Verfassungsformen angenommen habe, und daß die Ausbildung solcher rechtlichen Verfassungsformen eine naturgemäße Entwicklung der christlichen Gemeinde darstelle."

⁸⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 28-66.

⁸¹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 108ff. "Es gibt im Grunde nur zweierlei Gaben in der Gemeinde Christi, welche wiederum auf das engste miteinander verwandt sind. Die eine ist die Lehrgabe, die Gabe, zu wirken durch das Wort. Die andere Gabe ist die (wenn der Ausdruck gestattet ist) Liebesgabe, die Gabe zu wirken durch die That." - 108.

⁸² Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 109.

⁸³ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 28: "Und ein Charisma, eine Gabe giebt es, welcher die Führung der Gemeinde, das Regiment der Kirche in Christi Namen anvertraut ist: die Lehrgabe."

⁸⁴ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 28.

⁸⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 56-59.

⁸⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 60-64.

⁸⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 63.

⁸⁸ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 108-110.

members had a '*charisma*' just because they had been tried as true Christians.⁸⁹ As we have already seen before, according to Sohm there is an implicit relationship between being a Christian and having a '*charisma*'.⁹⁰ Elders, widows and ascetics were equally marked by their practical proving themselves to be Christian.⁹¹

According to Sohm the 'office' of the bishops does not belong to the very early institutions of Christendom, but it was already set up in apostolic times.⁹² Originally the administering of the Eucharist and of the goods of the church (*Kirchengut*) were the tasks of the Christians who had the '*charisma*' of teaching. However, according to Sohm these people were quite rare in early Christendom. In order to match this occasional lack of an apostle, prophet or teacher, bishops were elected to substitute for them in administering the eucharist and the goods of the church.⁹³ However, no bishop had the right (*Recht*) to exercise his function without congregational approval even when nobody with the gift of teaching was present.⁹⁴ Sohm denies the double organization of the Early Church as it had been proclaimed by Harnack. According to Sohm the bishops at first did not exist beside the apostles, prophets and teachers, but were just substitutes for them. The bishops

⁸⁹ Cf. the functions of the elders in later times discussed below.

⁹⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 108. Especially 108, n68 gives evidence that Sohm in this case opposes Harnack who proclaims that "there is no *charisma* of old age" (ET C.C.). See Harnack, *Analekten*, 230, n3: "Es gibt kein '*Charisma des Alters*'".

⁹¹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 110: "durch die *praktische* Bewährung ihres Christentums ausgezeichnet."

⁹² Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 83. Sohm refers to Phil 1.1 and 1 Clem ad Cor.42.1,4 (81, n1 and n3). Sohm deals with the bishops on 81-121.

⁹³ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 80f.

⁹⁴ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 115f.

did not form another organization but were, right from their coming into being, part of the single organization.⁹⁵

After the bishops Sohm describes the deacons. They appeared at the same time as the bishops. Their function was also to administer the eucharist and the goods of the church but they are subordinate to a bishop.⁹⁶ The deacons did not have the gift of teaching, but like the bishops they were also introduced in order to substitute for the apostles, prophets and teachers whenever they were not available.⁹⁷

Under the heading "ordines minores"⁹⁸ Sohm describes the smaller and less important ministries which came into being between the end of the second century and the beginning of the fifth century.⁹⁹

According to Sohm the elders¹⁰⁰ were also involved in administering the eucharist. Their additional tasks were

⁹⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 115: "Neben das apostolische Lehramt (der Apostel, Propheten, Lehrer) tritt das bischöfliche gemeinchristliche Lehramt (welches zunächst in Verwaltung der Eucharistie und der Opfergaben sich bethätigt), um als Ersatz des apostolischen Lehramts zu dienen. (...) Es giebt nicht, wie die herrschende Lehre behauptet, eine doppelte Organisation (der Lehre und der Verwaltung), sondern nur eine *einzigste Organisation*, die der Lehre, für die Leitung der Christenheit. Die Gabe und Gewalt des Wortes ist zugleich die Gabe und Gewalt der Administration, und umgekehrt: die Gabe und Gewalt der Administration ist nicht denkbar, ohne sich mit der Gabe und Gewalt des Wortes zu verbinden." This opposes Harnack very obviously.

⁹⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 121.

⁹⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 121-128.

⁹⁸ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 128-137.

⁹⁹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 128-137. Sohm describes the ministries of "Lektor", "Exorcista", "Akoluthen", "Ostiarier" (128), "Thürhüter" (129) and "Subdiacone" (131ff.) who have different functions mainly concerning the eucharist. However, these ministries mainly belong to a later period of time. Therefore it is not important to go into that in more detail in our context.

¹⁰⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 137-151.

administration (*Verwaltung*),¹⁰¹ discipline (*Zucht*)¹⁰² and lecturing (*Belehrung*).¹⁰³ They mainly helped the bishops.¹⁰⁴ However, they did not have any 'office' but they had a certain rank (*Stand*).¹⁰⁵ According to their honorary post they became later on the leading figures of the church beside the bishops.¹⁰⁶

The further institutionalization of the church was according to Sohm marked by the replacing of the charismatic structure of the very early time by a legal structure. Canon law replaced the divine structure. Sohm judges this development as a fall.¹⁰⁷ According to Sohm these changes are reflected in the first Epistle of

¹⁰¹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 145f.

¹⁰² Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 148.

¹⁰³ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 149f.

¹⁰⁴ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 151.

¹⁰⁵ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 143.

¹⁰⁶ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 146, refers to the situation at the end of the first century and in the first half of the second century (146), when the elders became leaders of the "Ekklesia" beside the bishops.

¹⁰⁷ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*: Sohm describes this development with quite negative words as a fall: "Umwandlung des religiösen Wesens des Christentums" (161); "Dieser Glaubensmut, welcher dem Geiste und Worte Gottes als solchem traut, ist seit dem Ende des ersten Jahrhunderts in unaufhaltsamem Sinken. (...) Der *Kleinglaube* verlangt *Rechtsordnung* formale Schranken, Garantien für die Aufrechterhaltung der Christenheit. Aus diesem *Kleinglauben* des christlichen Epigonentums ist der Katholicismus entsprungen" (162); "Die *rechtliche Organisation* entstellt den *Glauben*" (204); "*Fälschung* des christlichen Glaubens" (456); "So ist die Geschichte des Kirchenrechts zugleich die Geschichte fortgesetzter Entstellung der christlichen Wahrheit gewesen." - (458); "jede Abweichung von dem für wahr gehaltenen verhindernden Organisation haben zu einer Entartung des christlichen Glaubens durch das sich durchsetzende Kirchenrecht geführt" (459). Sohm says "die Entstehung des Kirchenrechts und der Kirchenverfassung ist der Abfall von dem von Jesus selbst gewollten und ursprünglich verwirklichten Zustand", quoted after Harnack, A., 'Verfassung', 509, and Harnack, *Entstehung*, 152.

Clement. The change is according to Sohm mainly marked by the fact that in this letter the bishop has not just the function of administering the eucharist and the goods of the church as before but now also the right to do these things for his whole life.¹⁰⁸ Sohm stresses this change as an important step from the charismatic structure of the Early Church towards the canon law of Catholicism.¹⁰⁹

In order to summarize: Above all Sohm's distinction between charismatic and legal structure, between Holy Spirit and institution has had a lasting influence ever since. He emphasized the "Ekklesia" as the body of Christ with the Christians as its limbs in opposition to the understanding of church just as an autonomous religious society of free Christian individuals.¹¹⁰ Sohm thought of the structure of very early Christianity only as a charismatic organization. As the charismatic structure is claimed to be God-given Sohm strictly denies any influences from Jewish or pagan models of religious or secular organization.¹¹¹ Sohm had especially to face a lot of criticism by all the theologians who focussed on the relationship between different religions and the history of religions (*Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*).¹¹²

6.2 Discussion

(1) Harnack reached the main point of criticism of Sohm's view by quoting the philosopher Leibniz: "Most scholars are right in what they claim, but they are wrong in what they

¹⁰⁸ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 158f.

¹⁰⁹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 160f.

¹¹⁰ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 10; 19; Linton, *Urkirche*, 6-8.

¹¹¹ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 10.

¹¹² Cf. for a summary of Sohm's view: Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 18-20; Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*, 94-144. For the criticism of Sohm cf.: Linton, *Urkirche*, 135-138.

deny."¹¹³ Sohm gives a one-sided view of a divine structure against all environmental influences. It must be questioned whether the strict antithesis between 'charisma' and canon law, which involves of course also a antithesis between 'charisma' and 'office', suits the realities within the Early Church or even Paul's view.

(2) In addition to this it can be said that it seems to be rather artificial to proclaim the eucharist as the main centre for almost all functions and ministries within the congregation.

(3) However, it is undoubtable that Sohm's strictly theological conception has set up one of the main points of view which still influence our contemporary discussion, even sociological contributions like the one by Max Weber.¹¹⁴

6.3 Harnack and Sohm

A. Harnack and R. Sohm have both made important contributions to the view on the relationship on 'charisma' and 'office' in the Early Church which still influence our contemporary discussion. Nevertheless their views are very different. Between 1908 and 1912 there was actually an argument between Harnack and Sohm themselves about the structure of the Early Church.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Harnack, *Entstehung*, 143: "Die meisten Gelehrten haben in dem Recht, was sie behaupten, aber Unrecht in dem, was sie ablehnen." (ET C.C.).

¹¹⁴Weber, *Theory*, 328. Weber himself concedes that he has taken the concept of 'charisma' "from the vocabulary of early Christianity" and refers to Sohm as "the first to clarify the substance of the concept [of charisma]" for "the Christian religious organization". However Weber distinguishes his definition from the terminology used by Rudolf Sohm.

¹¹⁵See Harnack, *Entstehung*, 121-186; Sohm, *Wesen*, III-XXXIII; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 20-25; Linton, *Urkirche*, 135-138.; Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*, 121-126.

However, there were not only differences between them but perhaps even more similarities as the discussion went on.¹¹⁶ For example Linton is right to point out that Sohm actually uses the outline of Harnack's prolegomena to *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*¹¹⁷ for his *Kirchenrecht*. Also the phrase "charismatic organization" used by Sohm looks very similar to Harnack's earlier "spiritual organization".¹¹⁸ Linton even claims that Sohm is very much dependent on Harnack.¹¹⁹ This seems to be a bit one-sided. Actually even Harnack himself concedes that Sohm's work is quite valuable and shows some admiration for Sohm's description of the "pneumatic character of the Early Church".¹²⁰ The influence between these two theologians was certainly two way.

There is also some influence by Sohm on Harnack's view.¹²¹ For example in 1908 Harnack's article 'Verfassung' ("constitution")¹²² gives some evidence of such influence. While in 1884 in his prolegomena to *Die Lehre der zwölf*

¹¹⁶Harnack and Sohm themselves noticed these similarities. Sohm, *Wesen*, III, points out, "daß Harnack den von mir [Sohm] entwickelten Gedanken in der Hauptsache zustimmt." And Harnack, *Entstehung*, 122, on the other side concedes in 1910: "Unter den Vertretern des Kirchenrechts und der Kirchengeschichte in Deutschland gibt es wohl nur Wenige, deren Auffassung des großen Problems der Sohms in einem Hauptpunkte so nahe steht wie die meinige."

¹¹⁷See Harnack, *Lehre*, 88-158. Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 21.; Linton, *Urkirche*, 51.

¹¹⁸Sohm, *Wesen*, 50-56: "charismatische Organisation"; Harnack, *Lehre*, 146: geistliche Organisation; Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 21.

¹¹⁹Linton, *Urkirche*, 51, n2; 56.

¹²⁰Harnack, *Entstehung*, 143: "Wer hat uns den pneumatischen Charakter der Urkirche eindrucksvoller vorgestellt und uns seine Auswirkungen umfassender kennen gelehrt als er [Sohm]?" (ET C.C.); "Was sein großes Werk über das Kirchenrecht und seine neue Abhandlung in dieser Hinsicht enthalten, ist ein dauernder Erwerb der wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis."

¹²¹Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 21-23.

¹²²Harnack, 'Verfassung', 508-546.

*Apostel*¹²³ the organization of the whole church stands beside the organization of the local church with equal rights, Harnack gives priority to the universal church structure in 1908. At this later stage Harnack defines church as a heavenly being and characterizes the local church as a manifestation of the universal church.¹²⁴ This view is very much reminiscent of Sohm.

While according to Harnack's earlier view the relationship between local and universal church was characterized as being neutral Harnack mentions "tension" and "permanent argument between these two powers"¹²⁵ in 1908. The local church sometimes seems to be rather a concession which of necessity is a devaluation of it.¹²⁶ In 1908 Harnack concedes that at the beginning of the gentile Christian structure of these churches they were organized

¹²³Harnack, *Lehre*, 88-93: "Die Christenheit oder die Kirche"; 137-140: "Die Einzelgemeinde"; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 22.

¹²⁴Harnack, 'Verfassung', 520,7ff.: "Die Christenheit in jeder einzelnen Stadt ist nicht nur ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ, sondern sie gehört wie diese eigentlich in den Himmel; (...) Sie ist also eine himmlische Größe d.h. heißt im Grunde nicht Einzelgemeinde, sondern Erscheinung des Ganzen in dem Teil"; *Entstehung*, 39: "(...) Gewißheit, daß sich in jeder noch so kleinen christlichen Genossenschaft die Kirche Christi selbst darstellen könne."

¹²⁵Harnack, 'Verfassung', 518: (518,44) "Zentralorganisation und Lokalorganisation sind in stetem Streit wider einander". (ET C.C.).

¹²⁶Harnack, 'Verfassung', 520,47ff.; *Entstehung*, 38f.: "Die Entwicklung geht zunächst vom Ganzen zum Teil. (...) Von hier aus gesehen war alles Mission, mußte alles in Fluß bleiben (bis das nahe Ende kommt), mußte alles, was sich lokal gestaltete und stabilisierte, eben nur in den Kauf genommen werden, weil es eigentlich schon ein fremdes Element hineinbrachte, das durch die Fiktion der Identität mit dem Universalen doch nicht ganz beseitigt werden konnte"; 'Verfassung', 529,46ff.: "Man fühlte sich als Christ der Gesamtkirche angehörig und empfand die Zugehörigkeit zur Einzelgemeinde, da sie etwas Stabliertes, Irdisches ist, fast als etwas Nicht-sein-sollendes."

in a charismatic way. This comes very close to Sohm's charismatic structure.¹²⁷ By saying that the legal organization came into being first in the second century Harnack even picks up Sohm's opinion that church and law, 'charisma' and 'office' are in contrast with one another. Harnack himself describes the tension between

central and local organization (...), spirit and office, charisma and a system of laws, the tension between pneumatics and officials, between personal bearers and virtuosi of religion on one side and professional representatives on the other side, (...) the same tension, which expresses itself in the contrast between spirit and letter, religious freedom and confession, (...) between laymen and clergy, between democracy and aristocracy (monarchy).¹²⁸

According to Sohm this contrast appeared in a historical succession with the first Epistle of Clement as the turning point while Harnack proclaims these contrasts to be simultaneous. Harnack describes this diverse tension as a central point for the whole development of the structure of the church. He says: "The entire history of the constitution of the church can also be described within the framework of the conflict between Spirit and 'office'."¹²⁹

To summarize the discussion between Harnack and Sohm it can be said that Harnack adopted the main parts of Sohm's theory into his own view and uses it to describe more clearly one side of his double organization of the Early

¹²⁷Harnack, 'Verfassung', 529,49f.: "Bei dieser Betrachtung stand die Regierung durch den Geist, stand die ganze Gemeinde der Erwählten, standen endlich die Charismaen im Vordergrund, die alles organisierten"; 520,22ff.: "Was man die pneumatische Demokratie innerhalb der ganzen Kirche und darum auch in der Einzelgemeinde *cum grano salis* nennen kann, tritt sehr deutlich in der Art, wie Paulus sich in den Briefen an die Gemeinden richtet, zu Tage."

¹²⁸Harnack, 'Verfassung', 518,44ff. (ET C.C.).

¹²⁹Harnack, 'Verfassung', 518,44f.: "Auch in dem Rahmen des Widerstreits zwischen Geist und Amt kann die ganze Verfassungsgeschichte der Kirche zur Darstellung gebracht werden." (ET C.C.).

Church, the charismatic one. However, he does not exclude the other side, the legal organization, as Sohm did, but describes their relationship as a tension.¹³⁰

Both contributions, Harnack's and Sohm's were very important for the ongoing research. However, we will see further on that neither of them survived unchanged.¹³¹

§ 7. Hans von Campenhausen

7.1 Account

In 1953 H.v.Campenhausen published his main work about 'charisma' and 'Amt', entitled *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*.¹³²

Campenhausen makes a distinction between two forms of organization of early churches: The presbyterial organization of the Judaeo-Christian churches and the charismatic organization of the Pauline churches. The following summary is mainly about the second one, the organization of the Pauline churches.

Campenhausen mainly focuses on three types of ministries in the early churches: Apostles, prophets and teachers. According to Campenhausen the apostle has a unique vocation. They are not really charismatic persons because their authority is not based on a certain gift but on a

¹³⁰ Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 24f.; Schmitz, *Frühkatholizismus*, 122f.

¹³¹ Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 24.

¹³² Campenhausen, *Amt*; cf. also his article: 'Apostelbegriff'.

historical meeting with the risen Lord Jesus Christ.¹³³ Thus their number is limited. They belong to a historically closed circle of persons.¹³⁴ Campenhausen mainly follows Luke's definition of apostles as being witnesses of the historical and risen Lord¹³⁵. However, he concedes the strong emphasis, that Luke puts on Paul as being a witness of the same rank as the twelve apostles.¹³⁶ According to Campenhausen the apostle is the missionary and spiritual father of a large group of local churches.¹³⁷ The apostles are above the local churches and are not just normal members.¹³⁸ However, the authority of the apostles was not caused by a doctrine of infallibility (*Dogma von der Unfehlbarkeit des Lehramtes*). They themselves had to be proved by the churches. On the one hand the church always remained dependent on the witness of the apostles, but on the other hand the church is faced with Christ himself and is only under him in the end. Its attitude to the apostles is a dialectical one.¹³⁹

In the second position under the apostles there are the prophets. Their ministry is to preach and bring revelation freely, to speak directly to the church. It was based on a

¹³³ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 325f.: "denn ihre [der Apostel] Vollmacht entspringt keiner besonderen geistlichen 'Gabe', sondern gründet sich auf ihre geschichtliche Begegnung mit dem auferstandenen Herrn (...). Aber sie sind auch keine Amtspersonen; denn diese Berufung ist einmalig, namentlich und von dem Herrn der Kirche selbst vollzogen und bezeichnet in einer so nie wieder möglichen Weise den Ursprung aller kirchlichen Tradition."

¹³⁴ Campenhausen, 'Apostelbegriff', 261.

¹³⁵ Acts 1.21f.; 13.31; Campenhausen, 'Apostelbegriff', 261.

¹³⁶ Campenhausen, 'Apostelbegriff', 262ff.

¹³⁷ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 65.

¹³⁸ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 67.

¹³⁹ Campenhausen, 'Apostelbegriff', 266-272.

spiritual gift.¹⁴⁰ Campenhausen says that it seems to be more likely that the 'offices' of the prophets and the teachers belonged to certain local churches.¹⁴¹

The third rank was formed by the teachers. Their ministry was also based on a spiritual gift and they had to teach the tradition of the gospel of Christ, to deliver commands and the content of Christian faith and to interpret the Old Testament.¹⁴²

Prophets, teachers and the other spiritual ministers are normal members of local churches and are committed to the testimony they received through the apostles.¹⁴³

Campenhausen points out that there was no real 'Amt' in the early Pauline churches, but only a charismatic organization.¹⁴⁴ However, he concedes that there were already helpers, stewards and chairmen and counts them among spiritual gifts.¹⁴⁵ He defines church as a body of Christians who each of them have received the Holy Spirit. Receiving the Holy Spirit is not to be understood in an abstract way but means receiving concrete gifts. Therefore

¹⁴⁰ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 66: "Die Prophetie bewirkt die freie verkündende und offenbarende Rede und Anrede, mit der Christus gepredigt wird"; "die 'Prophetie' ist nach Paulus diejenige Geistesgabe, um die man sich vor allem bemühen sollte".

¹⁴¹ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 65f.

¹⁴² Campenhausen, *Amt*, 66: "die Lehre aber betrifft die Überlieferung und Auslegung der Christus-Tradition, die Einprägung der Gebote und Glaubenssätze und vor allem die geistliche Auslegung des Alten Testaments im Sinne der jungen Kirche."

¹⁴³ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 67: "Die Propheten - und ebenso die Lehrer und alle sonstigen Geistesmänner - stehen aber durchaus innerhalb der Gemeinde und damit auch unterhalb des verpflichtenden Zeugnisses, das sie von den Aposteln erhalten haben."

¹⁴⁴ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 74f.; 326f.

¹⁴⁵ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 69; 72: However, he denies the existence of any economic officers (against Sohm), because some people had to be elected in Corinth and in Philippi in order to collect the offering.

the Holy Spirit is the organizing principle of the church.¹⁴⁶ Campenhausen does not see the early Pauline church as static organization but as a living organism of free spiritual gifts, which serve and supply each other. A permanent command of certain persons is excluded.¹⁴⁷ Campenhausen denies any kind of order or formal authority.¹⁴⁸ These thoughts are very much reminiscent of Sohm.

Campenhausen claims a relationship between the Pauline structure of the Early Church and Paul's theology as allegedly rejecting any kind of statutes and commands.¹⁴⁹ According to Campenhausen Paul does not only reject the Jewish law but also any kind of order and constitution.¹⁵⁰

However, later on, elders, which were already institutionalized in Judaeo-Christian churches in the very early times, also appeared in the Pauline Churches. A fusion of the charismatic organization with the Judaeo-Christian organization became necessary to remain as a

¹⁴⁶ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 61ff.; 62: "Sie [die Kirche] wird nicht soziologisch verstanden oder gesehen, und der Geist, der sie regiert, bestätigt sich nicht im Rahmen einer bestimmten Kirchenordnung oder -verfassung."

¹⁴⁷ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 69.

¹⁴⁸ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 75f.: "Der auffallendste Zug der paulinischen Gemeindeanschauung ist das völlige Fehlen einer rechtlichen Ordnung, die grundsätzliche Ausschaltung jeder formellen Autorität innerhalb der Einzelgemeinde."

¹⁴⁹ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 76.

¹⁵⁰ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 76: "Der auffallendste Zug der paulinischen Gemeindeanschauung ist das völlige Fehlen einer rechtlichen Ordnung, die grundsätzliche Ausschaltung jeder formellen Autorität innerhalb der Einzelgemeinde. Dies kann kein bloßer Zufall sein, und es paßt zu der Betonung des nicht mehr menschlichen, neuen Seins der Kirche, zur Verwerfung der äußeren Satzungen und Gebote, zu dem vorbehaltlosen Bekenntnis zur Liebe, zur Demut und Freiheit."; 76, n1: "In dieser Grundsätzlichkeit liegt das Neue gegenüber dem bloßen Fehlen verfassungsmäßigen Denkens, das die Anfänge der Kirche überhaupt kennzeichnet". Cf. 30f.

historical community.¹⁵¹ Campenhausen also focuses on the first Epistle of Clement as it shows the development of formal 'Amt' and church order. He does not see this development as a "fall" but as a need.¹⁵²

7.2 Discussion

(1) The question whether the apostle was as strong and above all as Campenhausen describes it, but without 'Amt' or 'charisma' must be asked later on. It seems to be questionable whether Paul was really against any kind of order or constitution.¹⁵³

(2) It is certainly an important contribution that Campenhausen points out that 'charisma' and 'Amt' belong to and need each other. In opposition to Sohm he argues that there is no real contrast between these categories, but there is a historical tension which drove out the 'charismata' more and more.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Campenhausen, *Amt*, 327.

¹⁵² Against Sohm, who saw the development from "Charisma" towards "Amt" as an "Abfall", Campenhausen, *Amt*, 328, describes the development during the second century: "Die prinzipielle Verdrängung und Nichtberücksichtigung der freien Geistesgaben bleibt aber trotzdem eine verhängnisvolle Verschiebung im geistlichen Gesamtverständnis der Kirche, die nicht ohne tiefgreifende Folgen bleiben konnte"; but on the other hand he judges this development as very understandable ("freilich sehr begreiflich") according to the circumstances in those times caused by the gnostic movement.

¹⁵³ Cf. Paul's orders concerning glossolalia and prophecy in 1Cor 14.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 36f.

§ 8. Ernst Käsemann

8.1 Account

E. Käsemann actually left behind the framework of discussion that had been set up by Harnack and Sohm.¹⁵⁵ He conceded that it had been especially Sohm's merit to point out that the early Christianity had no legal code for their organization, administration, discipline or cult. However, Käsemann does not agree with Sohm who claimed that the Holy Spirit and law were antithetical according to Paul's theology.¹⁵⁶

On the other side Käsemann also denies a distinction between spiritual and administrative ministries as it can be seen in the work of Harnack.¹⁵⁷

However, how did Käsemann himself describe Early Church order? He points out that there was nothing like our 'Amt' in the Early Church. The people who contributed to its life had no special 'office'. There were no privileged people in these ministries.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand all the baptized are 'office' bearers as well. Each of them is endowed with 'charisma' and therefore has his special responsibility.¹⁵⁹ So every Christian may be therefore called an 'office' bearer.¹⁶⁰ However, there is "not even a prerogative of official proclamation, vested in some specially commissioned individual or other. For the Pauline community, the diversity of charismatic functions is normative even for the ministry of preaching; all in their

¹⁵⁵Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 39, n214.

¹⁵⁶Käsemann, 'Sätze', 101. Also against Campenhausen; see above.

¹⁵⁷Käsemann, *Amt*, 49: Unterscheidung zwischen "pneumatischen und technischen Diensten" bei Harnack.

¹⁵⁸Käsemann, *Amt*, 47.

¹⁵⁹Käsemann, *Amt*, 47; 'Ministry', 80.

¹⁶⁰Käsemann, *Amt*, 47.

different modes, according to their different grades and within mutually recognized limits, are bearers of the Word of God and contribute to the edification of the community".¹⁶¹

Käsemann's view shows a very unique dialectic: on the one hand he denies 'Amt' in the Early Church. On the other hand he expands the understanding of 'Amt' so that every Christian can be seen as an 'office' bearer. He proclaims a priesthood of all believers already in the very early days of the church.¹⁶² So Käsemann concludes that if everybody is an 'office' bearer it can be said as well that actually nobody is a real 'office' bearer.¹⁶³ However, Käsemann recognizes very well "that the Pauline community knows as ministries certain functions which we should describe as fixed 'offices' within the community, for example, the bishops and deacons of Phil 1.1";¹⁶⁴ "and secondly, that the series of 'charismata' show distinct marks of a grading process. Certainly a universal obligation to service does not imply the equality of all".¹⁶⁵ Käsemann tries to differentiate the Pauline view very accurately. He in no way denies that Paul tried very hard to establish a basis for authority. People exercising authority were for example first converts at each place, Paul's delegates,

¹⁶¹Käsemann, 'Ministry', 81.

¹⁶²Käsemann, *Amt*, 47; 'Ministry', 80. However Käsemann defines the priesthood of all believers not in the same sense as the modern Protestantism which understands it "merely as the private relationship of the individual Christian to his God and has seen private prayer as the fulfilment of its chief function." - Ministry, - 80. He points out that the priesthood of all believers in the early church was more public. As an example Käsemann points out the dutiful and public acknowledgement of people, who had been healed or delivered, that "he has personally experienced the gracious power of the Godhead manifest." - Ministry, - 80.

¹⁶³Käsemann, *Amt*, 48.

¹⁶⁴Käsemann, 'Ministry', 81.

¹⁶⁵Käsemann, 'Ministry', 82.

collaborators or he himself as apostle.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand according to Käsemann Paul does not hesitate to challenge Peter's position at Antioch and

he adopts as critical an attitude towards the authorities of the Jerusalem church as he does in I Cor. 14 towards those who speak with tongues at Corinth.¹⁶⁷

Käsemann describes how Paul establishes authority and charismatic freedom on the one hand, but does not hesitate to challenge authoritative positions of individuals and to limit the contributions of certain charismatically endowed persons in the congregation, like for example prophetesses or people who speak in tongues unless there is somebody beside them who can interpret.¹⁶⁸ As already has been said: This view shows a very unique dialectic.

Käsemann denies the existence of a presbytery during the Apostle Paul's lifetime. Otherwise he would have surely have mentioned this institution in his own letters.¹⁶⁹

In strict opposition to Sohm Käsemann proclaims a charismatic law. Käsemann points out that Paul himself puts the charismatic gifts in their place and therefore limits the freedom of the spirit in order to fight enthusiastic tendencies.¹⁷⁰ Referring to himself as a charismatic and to the Spirit, Paul sets up an order for services in 1 Cor 14 and thus uses a style that became significant for the later church order.¹⁷¹ As a representative of his Lord the charismatic is even allowed to bless but also to curse or

¹⁶⁶ Käsemann, *Amt*, 48.

¹⁶⁷ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 82.

¹⁶⁸ Käsemann, *Amt*, 48f.

¹⁶⁹ Käsemann, *Amt*, 52. According to Acts Paul himself already set up bishops and councils of presbyters (*Presbyterium*) in his own churches. Cf. Acts 14.23; 20.28. However Käsemann prefers the witness of Paul's own letters, where councils of presbyters are not mentioned.

¹⁷⁰ Käsemann, *Amt*, 51.

¹⁷¹ Käsemann, 'Sätze', 98.

even to commit somebody to Satan. The charismatic can anticipate the judgment of the Last Judgment. However, this is not human right but divine right, and God himself is the one who acts through the charismatic.¹⁷²

Love and law are no antitheses for Käsemann. Agape is rather the authority that puts all the spiritual gifts into their right framework. Käsemann predicts that all '*charismata*' "are always liable to over-estimate or to abuse their endowment and to confuse their own authority with that of the Lord over his gifts and his servants. But only when this divine authority is set over these gifts and these servants and acknowledged by them have they themselves authority. For only then is this authority understood as belonging properly to the Giver and Lord alone and as given in trust to the servant by him."¹⁷³ According to Käsemann agape is the authority that judges the practice of Christians as charismatically endowed persons and reminds them of their dependence on Jesus Christ, the giver and Lord of them and their gifts.

Käsemann emphasizes the relationship between Paul's doctrine of justification and his doctrine of '*charisma*'.

Paul's doctrine of the *charismata* is to be understood as the projection into ecclesiology of the doctrine of justification by faith.¹⁷⁴

According to Käsemann's dialectic doctrine it means that judgment and grace, authority and freedom, law and spirit are no antithetical opponents but belong to each other in a dialectic tension.¹⁷⁵

The Apostle's theory of order is not a static one, resting on offices, institutions, ranks and dignities; in his view, authority resides only within the concrete act of ministry as it occurs, because it is only within

¹⁷² Käsemann, *Amt*, 98ff.

¹⁷³ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 83; *Amt*, 49f.

¹⁷⁴ Käsemann, E., 'Ministry', 76f.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Käsemann, 'Sätze', 101; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 39.

this concrete act that the *Kyrios* announces his lordship and his presence.¹⁷⁶

The same applies to the charismatic law. It is no legal code but is only in force in relation to the demands of the corresponding situation.¹⁷⁷

Käsemann sees Paul's doctrines of justification and '*charisma*' in an eschatological context. He notes that all the decisions Paul has to make according to the Early Church's order are not just human decisions but part of the order given by the Holy Spirit. Although the apostle writes them down in his letters to different churches they are in the end not his orders and decrees but God's regulations. Their purpose is not just the opposite of disorder but peace.¹⁷⁸

However, Käsemann notes that the Pauline church order did not survive the first century. "For it can scarcely be denied that the Pauline communities - those which did not entrust themselves, more or less voluntarily, to other leadership - were, within one generation, swallowed up by Enthusiasm".¹⁷⁹

Already Paul himself had to defend his concept on two fronts: On one side there was a misunderstanding of what Paul meant when he said *πνευματικά*. According to Käsemann, the early interpreters of Paul's letters "have always presupposed that it is the Hellenistic concept of *πνευματικά* which lies at the root of his [Paul's] discussions."¹⁸⁰ However, there is an important difference: the Pauline '*charismata*' "are validated not by the *fascinosum* of the preternatural but by the edification of

¹⁷⁶ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 83. Cf. very similar Grau, 'Begriff', 79f.

¹⁷⁷ Käsemann, 'Sätze', 103; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 40, n219.

¹⁷⁸ Käsemann, 'Sätze', 103; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 40.

¹⁷⁹ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 93.

¹⁸⁰ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 83; 93.

the community."¹⁸¹ For Paul the mode in which the 'charisma' is exercised is decisive but not the mere possession.¹⁸² The overemphasizing of the merely charismatic misled one part of the Pauline churches into Enthusiasm.¹⁸³

On the other side, especially as a reaction to Enthusiasm and Gnosis, Käsemann describes the historical need for a change towards more emphasis on 'Amt'.¹⁸⁴ However, it cannot be doubted that this concept stands in opposition to Paul's teaching. Käsemann strictly rejects any attempt to harmonize Paul's "conception of the essence and order" of the church with the early Catholic view.¹⁸⁵ However, he concedes that already Paul himself became a precursor of these early Catholic changes.¹⁸⁶

8.2 Discussion

(1) E. Käsemann was the first theologian who actually got over Sohm's antitheses of Spirit and law, 'charisma' and

¹⁸¹ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 66.

¹⁸² Käsemann, 'Ministry', 82.

¹⁸³ Käsemann, *Amt*, 57f.

¹⁸⁴ Käsemann, *Paulus*, 190f. In opposition to Sohm, Käsemann does not see this later development as a fall but as a historical need for change.

¹⁸⁵ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 92: "Thus his [Paul's] conception of the essence and order of the church cannot possibly be harmonized with that which comes to prevail in early Catholicism. It is in the starkest contradiction to it. The clearest proof of this lies in the fact that the Pauline concept of charisma was not understood by posterity."

¹⁸⁶ Käsemann, *Paulus*, 181: "Ich [Käsemann] stelle zunächst die für einen Protestanten gewiß ungewöhnliche These auf, daß Paulus rein historisch betrachtet, direkt und indirekt, mit und gegen seinen Willen, zum mindesten seiner Wirkung nach selber ein Wegbereiter des Frühkatholizismus gewesen ist."

'Amt', which exclude one another.¹⁸⁷ He tried to apply these antithetical oppositions one to the other and therefore set up a dialectical tension between them. The unification of these oppositions takes place in concrete and practical service.

(2) However, Käsemann's view cannot avoid one main difficulty, that has already been mentioned in the discussion of Sohm: What about the comparison of Paul's doctrine and the reality in the Pauline churches. Is Käsemann's dialectical tension just the theoretical and perhaps too idealistic doctrine of the apostle Paul? The reality in the church of Corinth for example looks rather different: There were obviously some power struggles between different authorities (2 Cor 3.1).

(3) Like in other publications as well Käsemann gives the impression that Paul was the anti-enthusiastic apostle fighting against enthusiasm in the early churches. One may question whether Käsemann perhaps overemphasizes the churches' struggle against enthusiasm. However, protection against enthusiasm can hardly be seen as the only reason for the emergence of early Catholicism. There were certainly other reasons like the passing of the founder generation, growth of the Church or the persecution from outside.¹⁸⁸

(4) In some cases Käsemann uses Lutheran terminology like "universal priesthood of all believers",¹⁸⁹ "justificatio impii",¹⁹⁰ "theologia crucis et viatorum",¹⁹¹ "theologia gloriae" in contrast to "theologia crucis",¹⁹² or "regnum Christi" in contrast to "regnum Satanae".¹⁹³ Undoubtedly

¹⁸⁷ Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 41.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Harrington, *Käsemann II*, 366.

¹⁸⁹ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 80.

¹⁹⁰ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 75.

¹⁹¹ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 83.

¹⁹² Käsemann, 'Ministry', 92.

¹⁹³ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 72.

Käsemann is a Lutheran theologian. However, it seems to be a necessary question whether Käsemann's view was perhaps too much influenced by his Lutheran background, because his view fits sometimes almost too well into his background.¹⁹⁴ This may have led Käsemann to "overemphasize the differences not only between Paul and 'Early Catholicism' but also among Christian confessions today."¹⁹⁵

§ 9. Eduard Schweizer

9.1 Account

Already Käsemann himself recognized the similarities between his own view and "earlier" publications by E. Schweizer.¹⁹⁶ Schweizer sets up a dialectical system as well. He makes a distinction between two different views

¹⁹⁴ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 81: On the other hand Käsemann knows very well that there are some differences between the Lutheran and the Pauline view. In the context of "the universal priesthood of all believers" (80f.) according to Paul he says: "We must not ignore the fact that such a statement is in direct contradiction to the modern Lutheran understanding of ecclesiastical 'office'; neither can it easily be reconciled with the language used in many pronouncements of the Reformation."

¹⁹⁵ Harrington, *Käsemann II*, 374. In fact modern Catholic theologians like Küng, *Church*, 363-480 or Hasenhüttl, *Charisma*, show that Käsemann's description of ministry in the New Testament have been taken very seriously by contemporary German Catholic theologians. This could open up a more fruitful dialogue than Käsemann's absolute rejection of early Catholicism provokes.

¹⁹⁶ Käsemann, 'Ministry', 63, n1: "It will be equally obvious that my [Käsemann's] views have much in common with the presentation of the problem by E. Schweizer, *Das Leben des Herrn in der Gemeinde und ihren Diensten* (ATANT 8), 1946, [...]. But my own approach has been along the road of exegesis, before I became acquainted with the available literature on the subject." Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 42, n229.

the disciples and the primitive church held among themselves.¹⁹⁷ On the one hand they regard themselves "as necessarily belonging to Israel. [...] The message about Jesus, the risen Lord, must be proclaimed, and Israel must be called to repentance."¹⁹⁸ That means that they belong to a certain contemporary situation and that they have to deal with their history. In the context of this view "the Church's historicity", "continuation of Israel", "tradition" and "the settlement made with the historical circumstances and dangers"¹⁹⁹ are mainly emphasized.

On the other side "the church's newness is emphasized. It is the company belonging to the risen Lord, in its faith and life necessarily taken out of time and history; by its oneness with the heavenly Lord it already shares in the world of eternity, and thereby it is a witness in the world like a light in the darkness."²⁰⁰ The

testimony of this fundamental newness, of this otherness over against the world, here becomes especially prominent. The miracle of the Holy Spirit's presence must be given the fullest possible scope. [...] the church's order leaves as wide scope as possible to the free working of the Spirit.²⁰¹

As an example of the first view Schweizer refers to credal formulae, which confess and look back to cross and resurrection and confess expectation of parousia. The second view is represented by formulations like hymns "in which the church looks now 'upwards' to the Lord who has now risen".²⁰² Main characteristics of this line are "incarnation" and "exaltation".²⁰³

¹⁹⁷Schweizer, *Church*, 164f., reconstructs a "twofold view that, in general, shapes the church of the New Testament" (164f.)

¹⁹⁸Schweizer, *Church*, 164.

¹⁹⁹Schweizer, *Church*, 166.

²⁰⁰Schweizer, 'Ministry', 166; cf. 164.

²⁰¹Schweizer, *Church*, 166f.

²⁰²Schweizer, *Church*, 165.

²⁰³Schweizer, *Church*, 165.

According to Schweizer the first view can be seen in the writings by Luke and the Pastoral Letters at a later stage.²⁰⁴ The main danger that appears if this view is overemphasized is Ebionitism. The "Church regards itself simply as a historical earthly entity [...] and deals with its problems according to the laws of this world".²⁰⁵

Schweizer regards John as a typical representative of the second view, which is always in temptation of misleading the Church into Docetism and Gnosis. If this view is given too much emphasis then "the Church disintegrates into a company of perfect people who are already living in heaven, who no longer need each other and have already written off the unbelieving world."²⁰⁶

According to Schweizer Paul stands right in the middle of the two dangerous enemies called Ebionitism and Docetism: "As in the mediaeval town the market square can be regarded as the centre, so might be Paul in the witness of the New Testament."²⁰⁷

However, what does structure in the Pauline church look like? Schweizer says that "official priesthood, which exists to conciliate and mediate between God and the community is found in Judaism and paganism".²⁰⁸ However, within Christianity Jesus Christ is the only one with such an 'office'. According to the members of the congregation they take part in "common priesthood, with no laity".²⁰⁹ According to Schweizer a main characteristic of Pauline church order is "the freedom of the Spirit".²¹⁰ Every single Christian has got the Spirit and therefore everyone,

²⁰⁴ Schweizer, *Church*, 166.

²⁰⁵ Schweizer, *Church*, 167.

²⁰⁶ Schweizer, *Church*, 167.

²⁰⁷ Schweizer, *Church*, 168.

²⁰⁸ Schweizer, *Church*, 176.

²⁰⁹ Schweizer, *Church*, 176.

²¹⁰ Schweizer, *Church*, 100.

"without any exception, is given his ministry".²¹¹ They are all regarded as being "fundamentally equal, and superiority and subordination are to be regarded as only incidental."²¹² Schweizer describes 'Amt' in the New Testament very much in terms of *διακονία*.²¹³ However, he specifies that the Pauline Church did not have certain 'offices' (*Ämter*), which distinguish the Christians one from another according to their ministry.²¹⁴

Schweizer describes Pauline Church order as given and organized by God himself. "All order is an 'afterwards', an attempt to follow what God has already designed."²¹⁵ First, God gives somebody a 'charisma'; second, this person can exercise his or her ministry. People are not in the first case chosen to exercise a certain ministry but they are given a gift. According to Schweizer it does not matter for how long this order may be given. May be "such order is expected to last only for an hour, for a few weeks, or without a time limit."²¹⁶ However, on the other hand the Church is called upon to acknowledge all those people who have as a result of their gift exercised a certain ministry for a longer period of time in order to enable them to "perform their ministry as widely as possible, with no time limit."²¹⁷ The Church is even called on to take care of the livelihood of some of their members who have

²¹¹ Schweizer, *Church*, 100.

²¹² Schweizer, *Church*, 100.

²¹³ Schweizer, *Church*, 174.

²¹⁴ Schweizer, 'Geist', 23; *Church*, 206: "If we like, we can call such ministry ['Dienst'] an office ['Amt']; but we must be clear that this is simply a matter of order, and that an 'office' is not on principle separated from a 'ministry' which, although it is not part of order, may in certain circumstances be much more important and fruitful."; cf. Schweizer, *Gemeinde*, 187.

²¹⁵ Schweizer, *Church*, 102.

²¹⁶ Schweizer, *Church*, 103.

²¹⁷ Schweizer, *Church*, 103.

got a full-time ministry.²¹⁸ It is obvious that this can mean a constant and at the same time a charismatic type of church order. Schweizer points out that Paul recognizes the authority of the apostles in Jerusalem very well and that he is not strictly against authority, tradition or duration concerning the Early Church's order.²¹⁹

However, at this point a slight difference between Käsemann and Schweizer can be seen. While Käsemann sets up a strict dialectical tension between '*charisma*' and order Schweizer has not a real tension between someone's spiritual gift on one side and his ministry - possibly almost static, without a time limit and even full-time - on the other side. At least if there is any tension then it seems to be much smaller. According to Schweizer order is no real antithesis to the freedom of the Spirit. Order more likely appears as a concession to "certain necessary things".²²⁰

However, Schweizer regards the Spirit as the main point concerning Pauline church order. We have seen that Schweizer in no way denies some constant aspects of this order. However, this order is not the primarily important thing but just like an answer to "certain necessary things" and "outward circumstances".²²¹ According to Schweizer Paul puts the main emphasis on "the vitality of the ever-present Spirit in the Church of the last days."²²² Not tradition, authority and "everything that is merely conservative and retrospective"²²³ gives the Church its

²¹⁸Schweizer, *Church*, 103.

²¹⁹Schweizer, *Church*, 98; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 43.

²²⁰Schweizer, *Church*, 103: "Whether a ministry is especially regulated or not depends very largely on outward circumstances"; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 44.

²²¹Schweizer, *Church*, 103.

²²²Schweizer, *Church*, 99.

²²³Schweizer, *Church*, 99.

significant identity but "the repeated action of the Spirit".²²⁴

Schweizer gives some examples as reasons for his view: Firstly, Paul's omitting to mention any elders is regarded by Schweizer as a demonstration that Paul rejects older traditions of an authoritative 'Amt'.²²⁵

Secondly, Schweizer judges the fact that Paul did not apply to any leader in the Church of Corinth because the Apostle rejects any kind of "blind submission in the Church"²²⁶ and therefore "he can only appeal to the Church as a whole."²²⁷

Thirdly, Schweizer argues that the absence of any specific ordination is a characteristic of Pauline church order. "Probably, however, the most important observation about this aspect of Church order ['freedom of the Spirit'] is that for Paul an ordination, any explicit appointment to undertake a form of service, is impossible."²²⁸

Therefore it is obvious according to Schweizer that Paul did not really act and teach within the dialectical tension between Spirit and order: "[...] such order can be interrupted at once if the Spirit wants to speak through another person (1 Cor 14.30)."²²⁹ The important 'starting point' is the active presence of the Spirit.

²²⁴ Schweizer, *Church*, 99.

²²⁵ Schweizer, *Church*, 99: "Paul' omitting to mention them [the elders] is in fact a demonstration in which he throws overboard everything that is merely conservative and retrospective".

²²⁶ Schweizer, *Church*, 101.

²²⁷ Schweizer, *Church*, 101; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 44.

²²⁸ Schweizer, *Church*, 101.

²²⁹ Schweizer, *Church*, 102.

9.2 Discussion

(1) Schweizer stands much more in the tradition of Sohm²³⁰ than Käsemann. Schweizer still sets up the antithesis of caring love against order. Similar to Sohm he does not see Paul in favour of a continuous 'office'.

(2) Schweizer's position is marked by a symbiosis of 'charisma' and order. He finds this position in the Pauline literature. It is one of Schweizer's special merits having shown the diversity of New Testament church order.

(3) Especially for the later discussion of the sect-type church-type dichotomy it will be very interesting to compare Schweizer's different type of early Christian social set-up with the one Sociology has provided.

§ 10. James D.G. Dunn

10.1 Account

James D.G. Dunn published his book *Jesus and the Spirit* in 1975.²³¹ We want to divide this review in three parts: firstly, we want to deal with the 'charismata', secondly, with the charismatic community and thirdly with the question of authority in the charismatic community.

Dunn starts by pointing out that the Pauline concept of 'charisma' is rooted in the dynamic concept of grace. He talks of the 'charismata' as expressions of grace.²³² Describing the whole range of spiritual gifts he says that "all the charismata are acts of service, all are actions

²³⁰ Sohm, *Kirchenrecht I*, 28: "Liebespflicht, nicht Rechtspflicht!"

²³¹ Although Dunn's book does not fit into our chronology he takes up a lot of thoughts from Käsemann and Schweizer. Therefore, we seem to be justified to summarize Dunn's views at this point.

²³² Dunn, *Jesus*, 205.

wrought by God, all are manifestations of the Spirit for the common good."²³³ He defines:

*Charisma is an event, an action enabled by divine power; charisma is divine energy accomplishing a particular result (in word or deed) through the individual.*²³⁴

Dunn discusses the following 'charismata':

Miracles,²³⁵ i.e. *dunameis*,²³⁶ gifts of healing,²³⁷ faith;²³⁸

inspired utterance,²³⁹ i.e. prophecy²⁴⁰ and linked to this the evaluation of inspired utterances,²⁴¹ teaching,²⁴² *glossolalia*²⁴³ and the interpretation of tongues;²⁴⁴ service,²⁴⁵ i.e. *diakonia*,²⁴⁶ giving and caring,²⁴⁷ helping

²³³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 209.

²³⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 209. Cf. 209, n53: "Similarly *ἐνέργεια* and *ἐνεργέω* in Gal. 2.8; 3.5; 5.6; Eph. 1.19; 3.7, 20; 4.16; Col. 1.29; I Thess. 2.13." (Italics here and in the following quotations by author).

²³⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 209-212.

²³⁶ Dunn, *Jesus*, 209 f.: "*δυνάμεις* - I Cor. 12.10, 28 f" (209).

²³⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 210 f.: "*χαρίσματα* *ἰαμάτων* - I Cor. 12.9, 28, 30" (210).

²³⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 211f.: "*πίστις* - I Cor. 12.9; Rom. 12.3, 6" (211).

²³⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 225-248.

²⁴⁰ Dunn, *Jesus*, 227-233: "*προφητεία* - Rom.12.6; I Cor.12.10; 13.2; 14.6; I Thess.5.20" (227).

²⁴¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 233-236: "*διακρίσεις* *πνευμάτων* - I Cor.12.10" (233).

²⁴² Dunn, *Jesus*, 236-238: "*διδασχὴ* - I Cor.14.6, 26" (236).

²⁴³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 242-246: "*γέννη* *γλωσσῶν* - I Cor.12.10, 28; *γλῶσσαί* - I Cor.12.30; 13.1, 8; 14.5 f., 18, 22 f., 39; *γλῶσσα* - I Cor.14.2, 4, 9, 13 f., 19, 26 f." (242).

²⁴⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 246-248: "*ἐρμηνεῖα* *γλωσσῶν* - I Cor.12.10; 14.26; (*δι*)*ερμηνευτής* - 14.28; *διερμηνεύω* - 12.30; 14.5, 13, 27" (246).

²⁴⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 248-253.

²⁴⁶ Dunn, *Jesus*, 249f.: "*διακονία* - Rom.12.7; cf. I Peter 4.11" (249).

²⁴⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 250-252: "*μεταδιδούς, προϊστάμενος, ἐλεῶν*" (250) - Rom.12.8.

and guiding.²⁴⁸

It is very important for Dunn's understanding of 'charisma' that it is

*not a latent power or ability which may be sometimes displayed and sometimes not. Only the actual deed or word is the charisma.*²⁴⁹

He points out that the "*charismata are the functions, not the people.*"²⁵⁰

Dunn formulates four conclusions describing his understanding of 'charisma':

(1) "*charisma is always an event, the gracious activity (ἐνέργημα) of God through a man;*"²⁵¹

(2) "*charisma is always a specific act of God, of God's Spirit through a man;*"²⁵²

(3) "*charisma is typically an experience (...) of something being accomplished through me;*"²⁵³

(4) "*charisma is not to be confused with human talent and natural ability.*"²⁵⁴

How does Dunn describe Paul's concept of early Christian communities:

The Pauline Christian community was first of all a community of individual believers who shared "the common experience of the Spirit (...) as the one necessary and

²⁴⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 252f.: ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις - I Cor.12.28 (252).

In addition to this Dunn also talks about "vision and ecstasy" (213-216), "knowledge and wisdom" (217-222), "guidance" (222-225), "proclamation" (226-227), "singing" (238-239), "prayer" (239-242) he does not claim that they were 'charismata' according to Paul (cf. for example 221).

²⁴⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 253.

²⁵⁰ Dunn, *Jesus*, 253.

²⁵¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 254.

²⁵² Dunn, *Jesus*, 254.

²⁵³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 255.

²⁵⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 255.

sufficient term in Paul's definition of belonging to Christ (Rom.8.9)."²⁵⁵

Secondly, the Christian community at one place was independent from other churches.

Paul did not see the Christian community at Corinth as dependent on other churches for its life and worship as community, far less on some central organization in Jerusalem or Antioch.²⁵⁶

Dunn writes that according to Paul the local Christian community is the body of Christ at this particular place.²⁵⁷ He points out that in Paul's "earlier letters 'the church' almost always means all the Christians living or gathered in one place."²⁵⁸ According to Paul to belong to the body is to have a function (*πρᾶξις*) within the body (Rom.12.4), a contribution which the member must make. It is indispensable that all members of the body of Christ let the Spirit's gifts be exercised as the "*living movements of Christ's body*."²⁵⁹ Thus the nature of this community is a dynamic one. It is "*an ongoing creative event, constantly dependent on the Spirit manifesting his manifold interacting charismata*."²⁶⁰ Dunn goes so far to claim that there is no unity and no body apart from charismata and calls the early Christian communities charismatic communities. Every believer in the community is a charismatic and therefore exists as charismatic only for the community.²⁶¹

Dunn sums up:

*The church as charismatic community means unity in and through diversity - the unity of charis in and through the diversity of charismata.*²⁶²

²⁵⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 260. For fuller treatment see: Dunn, *Baptism*.

²⁵⁶ Dunn, *Jesus*, 263.

²⁵⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 262.

²⁵⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 263.

²⁵⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 264.

²⁶⁰ Dunn, *Jesus*, 264.

²⁶¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 264.

²⁶² Dunn, *Jesus*, 265.

Finally, this part will confront us with the question of how authority was exercised in the early Christian churches. In contrast to the previous two areas which mainly dealt with Paul's theory the following lines will focus on the actual practice. "How did Paul's concept of charismatic community work out in the churches he himself established?"²⁶³

Dunn analyzes that the *charismata* were actually a threat to the life of the community.²⁶⁴ Viewing the situation in the churches of Corinth, Rome, Thessalonica he concludes that

Paul's theory of a Christian community bonded together into a developing unity by the diversity of *charismata* did not translate very well into practice.²⁶⁵

Dunn states the following reason:

*Even genuine charismata of the most striking nature when exercised without love made for strife within the community and stunted the growth of the body.*²⁶⁶ This

brings Dunn to the question of how the charismatic community was controlled: the question of the exercise of authority in the community. Dunn underlines Paul's recognition of the need to 'test' any claim to '*charisma*'.

First of all apostolic authority provided one control on the charismatic threat to community.

*The apostle exercised authority within a community not as an 'apostle of the universal church', but as founder of that community.*²⁶⁷

Dunn says that Paul derived his apostolic authority from his personal commissioning of the risen Lord²⁶⁸ and from the decisive events of the past.²⁶⁹

²⁶³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 266.

²⁶⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 266.

²⁶⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 270.

²⁶⁶ Dunn, *Jesus*, 271.

²⁶⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 274. Cf. 1 Cor 4.15.

²⁶⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 276.

²⁶⁹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 277; 279.

Secondly, there were prophets and teachers who exercised some authority. The prophets derived their authority only from prophetic inspiration.²⁷⁰ Thus, their authority was charismatic authority, "not the authority of office".²⁷¹ "*The prophetic authority was subject to the assessment of the wider community.*"²⁷²

According to Dunn the teacher's authority was mainly based on the tradition he was passing on. His "*teaching function had more the character of 'office' than any other of the regular ministries*"²⁷³ However, his authority does not lie in his appointment and "far less in his 'office', but only in his teaching." As he moved beyond this passing on to interpreting the tradition this would be based more on the '*charisma*' of teaching.²⁷⁴

Summing up, Dunn comes to the following conclusions:

*Paul recognizes the importance of regular ministries within the charismatic community. (...) But in the earlier years of the Hellenistic mission there were no specific and well defined ministries apart from those of prophet and teacher.*²⁷⁵

Dunn stresses the charismatic character of these ministries and therefore does not agree to describe them in terms of designated 'offices'.²⁷⁶

Thirdly, Dunn points out that some authority lay on the side of the charismatic community.²⁷⁷ Each member has got a "function within that congregation and a *responsibility* for its common life and worship."²⁷⁸ They are all called to assess everything that is happening within the life of the congregation.

²⁷⁰ Dunn, *Jesus*, 281.

²⁷¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 282.

²⁷² Dunn, *Jesus*, 281.

²⁷³ Dunn, *Jesus*, 283.

²⁷⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 283; cf. Rom 12.7.

²⁷⁵ Dunn, *Jesus*, 290.

²⁷⁶ Dunn, *Jesus*, 290.

²⁷⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 291-297.

²⁷⁸ Dunn, *Jesus*, 292; cf. 1 Cor 12.25f.

*The community as a whole has the authority to evaluate its words and actions by the criteria of kerygmatic tradition, love and oikodomē.*²⁷⁹

10.2 Discussion

(1) Dunn's study tries to hold the balance between 'one-off' charisms and regular ministries. He is certainly right to stress the point that these early Christian ministries can not yet be seen as 'offices'.

(2) In comparison with the treatment of Schweizer and Käsemann it can be seen as an important step forward that in this study not mainly individual members of the congregation are described in terms of 'charisma' and 'office' but the also the life of the whole community and its structure of authority is analyzed.

(3) Therefore Dunn's contribution is especially helpful as a link between the traditional theological studies which he takes up and the later discussion which is influenced by sociology. Although this study does not yet fit into the categories of socio-historical or sociological approaches it gives a lot of time to discussing authority,²⁸⁰ including the issue of evaluating charisms,²⁸¹ especially prophecy, and the authority of the congregation.²⁸² Particularly the questions of authority and institutionalization were later on dealt with by theologians making use of sociological methodology like B. Holmberg and J.H. Schütz.²⁸³

²⁷⁹Dunn, *Jesus*, 299; 293-279.

²⁸⁰Dunn, *Jesus*, 271-300.

²⁸¹Dunn, *Jesus*, 233-236.

²⁸²Dunn, *Jesus*, 291-297.

²⁸³See below.

§ 11. Gerhard Friedrich

11.1 Account

G. Friedrich emphasizes in a rather strong way the unity of Spirit and 'Amt' in the New Testament.²⁸⁴ He describes this unity especially concerning the Pauline Churches by making five statements:

First, the Spirit, and 'Amt' as well, have an eschatological character. They are only for the period of time until the parousia of Christ.²⁸⁵

Second, Spirit and 'Amt' have a direct relationship to Christ. A biblical doctrine about 'office' is only regarded as being right if it is a doctrine about Christ as well.²⁸⁶

Third, as any Christian has received the Spirit he has a certain function within the Church as well. Every baptized Christian is an 'office' bearer. There are no privileged people and no laymen in the Church.²⁸⁷

Fourth, 'office' and Church come into being at the same time and belong one to another. The Church is never without 'offices' and 'offices' never without the Church. This seems to be obvious if every single Christian has an 'office'. The value of a certain spiritual gift depends on ability to edify the congregation.²⁸⁸

Fifth, as Spirit and God's word belong to each other, so 'office' and God's word do as well. Although there is no special hierarchy according to the spiritual gifts the gifts and 'offices' of preaching are regarded as the most important ones.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴Friedrich, *Amt*, 424.

²⁸⁵Friedrich, *Amt*, 424.

²⁸⁶Friedrich, *Amt*, 424f.

²⁸⁷Friedrich, *Amt*, 425f.

²⁸⁸Friedrich, *Amt*, 426f.

²⁸⁹Friedrich, *Amt*, 427f.

Friedrich defines 'office' not as much as a position but in terms of conduct (*Verhalten*).²⁹⁰ He links the *χαρίσματα* entirely with both the Spirit and the 'office'. 'Charisma' and 'Amt' are not opposites any longer.²⁹¹

According to Friedrich Paul turns the true "Spirit bearer" into an 'office' bearer. Paul fights against Judaic opponents as well as against pneumatic opponents for the unity of Spirit and 'office'.²⁹²

Friedrich shares the views of Käsemann and Schweizer²⁹³ to a high degree. However, he holds a different view on the relationship between 'charisma' and 'office'. His congregation consists of people who are spirit-filled and therefore all 'office' bearers.²⁹⁴

11.2 Discussion

(1) Friedrich's view is valuable in pointing out the differences between Paul's doctrine and the actual tension between Spirit and 'office' in the New Testament and in the Early Church.²⁹⁵

(2) However, it seems to be not very helpful to describe the relationship of 'charisma' and 'office' in terms of

²⁹⁰Friedrich, *Amt*, 422.

²⁹¹Friedrich, *Amt*, 424: "Weil es Paulus auf das *χάρισμα* ankommt, nicht aber auf *πνευματικά* oder *τόπος*, darum sind für ihn Amt und Geist keine Gegensätze, sondern sie gehören ganz zusammen. Wie die *χαρίσματα* ganz auf die Seite des Geistes gehören, so können sie, wie die Aufzählung der verschiedenen Gnadengaben 1.Kor. 12,28 zeigt auch ganz zum Amt gezählt werden."

²⁹²Friedrich, *Amt*, 428.

²⁹³Friedrich, *Amt*, 417, n6: Friedrich himself mentions the earlier works of Käsemann, Schweizer and Campenhausen as well in one of his first notes.

²⁹⁴Friedrich, *Amt*, 425: "Alle Christen sind Pneumatiker, alle also 'Geistliche'"; 426: "Grundsätzlich besteht zwischen den einzelnen Gliedern in der Gemeinde kein Unterschied."

²⁹⁵Friedrich, *Amt*, 428f.; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 54.

complete unity. Already Paul's doctrine presents some dialectical tension between occasional and more regular charismatic contributions.²⁹⁶ In order to recognize the dangers of overemphasizing one or the other side, one should be prepared to face this tension.²⁹⁷

§ 12. Heinrich Greeven

12.1 Account

According to H. Greeven²⁹⁸ church order in the early Pauline churches is mainly based on three 'offices': apostles, prophets and teachers. He describes them as charismatics²⁹⁹ and recognizes other '*charismata*' as for example the gifts of tongues, powerful deeds or healing. However, in contrast with the first three '*charismata*' the last ones did not set up their own 'offices' but can be described as single events at any one time (*Einzelakt*).³⁰⁰

Greeven claims that the prophets were already on their way to becoming a clearly distinguished class although the consciousness that all believers were prophets can still be recognized.³⁰¹ So 1 Corinthians offers no uniform view of the 'office' of the prophets but Greeven tends more to the view that being a prophet in the church of Corinth was a continuous position because of the way they are mentioned

²⁹⁶Cf. § 34.

²⁹⁷Cf. Käsemann's and Schweizer's contributions in § 8f. above.

²⁹⁸Greeven, *Propheten*, 1-43.

²⁹⁹Greeven, *Propheten*, 17.

³⁰⁰Greeven, *Propheten*, 30.

³⁰¹Greeven, *Propheten*, 8: according to 1Cor. - "Neben Umrissen, in denen sich ein fest abgegrenzter Stand der Propheten abzuzeichnen beginnt, ist das Bewußtsein vom allgemeinen Prophetentum aller Gläubigen deutlich erkennbar."

in 1 Cor 12.8-10 and in 1 Cor 14.37.³⁰² The duties of these prophets were mainly to reveal hidden things such as the secrets of the future or to prove or to discover people's thoughts and to convict them.³⁰³

The teachers' duty was to keep, to pass on and to use the tradition to benefit the members of the church.³⁰⁴ Greeven believes that like the prophets they did also form a clearly distinguished group of people because of the way they are mentioned alongside other functions and because teaching is not mentioned as a duty of every member of the congregation.³⁰⁵

Greeven recognizes that Paul also talks of some leading figures in the Early Church to whom subordination is due. Their activity was named κυβερνήσεις or προϊστάμενος.³⁰⁶ Paul defines their leading of the congregation as a 'charisma'.³⁰⁷ However, Greeven denies that this 'charisma' was exercised by some additional 'office' bearers. He identifies these leaders of the church with the apostles, prophets and teachers. They were also the leaders if they were needed in this role.³⁰⁸ Thus Greeven assumes that προϊστάμενοι and ἐπίσκοποι belonged to the circle of prophets and teachers.³⁰⁹

³⁰² Greeven, *Propheten*, 7f.

³⁰³ Greeven, *Propheten*, 11: "Die Prophetie vermag Menschen bis auf den Grund ihres Herzens zu prüfen und aufzudecken und zu überführen. (...) Es versteht sich von selbst, daß die Prophetie auch enthüllend in die Zukunft greift."

³⁰⁴ Greeven, *Propheten*, 28: "Man wird also die Tätigkeit der Lehrer im allgemeinen in der Bewährung, Weitergabe und Fruchtbarmachung der Tradition erblicken dürfen".

³⁰⁵ Greeven, *Propheten*, 16.

³⁰⁶ Greeven, *Propheten*, 32.

³⁰⁷ Greeven, *Propheten*, 31ff.

³⁰⁸ Greeven, *Propheten*, 37.

³⁰⁹ Greeven, *Propheten*, 43.

12.2 Discussion

Greeven himself concedes that he mainly follows Sohm in his view.³¹⁰ He limits the number of 'office' bearers to the 'offices' of apostles, prophets and teachers and describes them as the only leading figures within the congregation. However, it seems to be questionable to identify these 'offices' generally with any kind of leading ministry. It can hardly be justified to identify prophets and teachers simply with bishops and other leading functions.

§ 13. Leonhard Goppelt

13.1 Account

Goppelt describes the Church in a twofold way: "Both the redemptive event and the Church have an eschatological-pneumatic and a historical aspect simultaneously."³¹¹ According to Goppelt on the one hand it was God who gave the ministry within the church. However, on the other hand because of the historical aspect, the message comes through historical tradition and necessitates as a responsibility for the Church as a whole the forming of the mission as well as the correcting pastoral care for the struggling believers. This requires "offices" along the lines of the apostolate.³¹²

³¹⁰Greeven, *Propheten*, 42.

³¹¹Goppelt, *Times*, 196.; cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 42.; Goppelt denies strictly that Church order in the early times was only charismatic; 187: "The constitution which Paul represented was not, as often has been maintained from Sohm to von Campenhausen, purely pneumatic and charismatic. Even in I Corinthians it contained a legal and institutional element."

³¹²Goppelt, *Times*, 196.

That means that Spirit and historical tradition are no antitheses for Goppelt.³¹³

Goppelt describes how the eschatological-pneumatic character of the Church unites all members to a universal priesthood while its traditional character "causes a diversity of service, especially the particular offices".³¹⁴ That seems to mean that, according to Goppelt, the different 'offices' stand more on the side of the historical tradition. However, he modifies this view a little by defining the "special service"³¹⁵ of apostolate as the model for all the other 'offices'. Goppelt predicts that right from the beginning "other offices were created to take over parts of this special service".³¹⁶ The apostolate was supplemented by the service of all but because of its unique character it cannot be replaced.³¹⁷ It is obvious that Goppelt identifies the 'office' of the apostle as having a very high and unique status.

According to Goppelt these 'offices' do not really correspond to the Spirit given to any Christian but they are "special ministries".³¹⁸ However, "the Spirit gives different charismata" which are "not a supernatural power but the call of the Spirit to a service, a call which also enables one for a specific task."³¹⁹ Therefore a '*charisma*' seems to be not really identical with the Spirit given to the baptized. According to Goppelt the '*charisma*' for a

³¹³ Goppelt, *Times*, 187, n22: "We must rather add that this revelation is given as a personal witness and the Church in her essence is not only eschatological-pneumatic but also historical-physical, since it has pleased God to save those who believe through the weakness of the human message."

³¹⁴ Goppelt, *Times*, 196.

³¹⁵ Goppelt, *Times*, 196.

³¹⁶ Goppelt, *Times*, 182.

³¹⁷ Goppelt, *Times*, 182.

³¹⁸ Goppelt, *Times*, 197.

³¹⁹ Goppelt, *Times*, 183.

certain 'office' is given during the ordination of the 'office' bearer. "This laying on of hands imparted the charisma for carrying out the functions of the office."³²⁰

Goppelt describes the services in the Early Church as following: "This was a church which had arisen under Paul's mission in the Hellenistic area and in which there was already a service shared by all as well as special service."³²¹ Obviously not every Christian in this order is an 'office' bearer.

But how does Goppelt describe Paul's attitude to this structure? Goppelt claims that Paul himself supports the right and the necessity of such special services and 'offices'. Both "mutual service out of love" and "self-subordination"³²² are aspects of this order represented by Paul. Goppelt compares Paul's church order with the order described in Rom 13.1 and portrays it as "an order which can only be realized with the help of legal authority."³²³ Goppelt himself realizes that this view does not really fit in with the picture drawn in 1 Corinthians. He tries to solve this difficulty by setting this letter in its historical background: "I Corinthians in no way represents an authoritative ideal of the Pauline constitution, but corresponds to the strong pneumatic movement found during the initial period in Corinth and more generally to a transitory stage in the Pauline constitution."³²⁴

13.2

Discussion

(1) Goppelt does not really distinguish between Paul and the view of the rest of the New Testament. He regards the

³²⁰ Goppelt, *Times*, 200.

³²¹ Goppelt, *Times*, 183.

³²² Goppelt, *Times*, 187.

³²³ Goppelt, *Times*, 187.

³²⁴ Goppelt, *Times*, 187.

difference between "the Palestinian office of the elders and the Pauline office of those in charge, the bishops", as "simply relative".³²⁵ As an argument for this claim Goppelt consults 1 Pet which "can place the 'charisma constitution' [...] together with the constitutional office of the elders."³²⁶

(2) He also denies an antithesis between '*charisma*' in the writings of Paul on the one hand and ordination in the Pastorals on the other hand. Goppelt predicts that an ordination like that in Acts 6.1-7 "would not have [been] excluded [by Paul], even though he always challenged his readers to permit the Spirit to become effective through faith and to accept his working rather than to establish offices and fill them."³²⁷

(3) Goppelt describes the Early Church order according to Paul as a structure with certain special 'offices' analogous to the authority described in Rom 13. However, it seems to be questionable whether the comparison of Early Church order with such authoritarian 'offices' is suitable.³²⁸ There may very well be some rather strong contrasts between secular and Christian order. The strongest contrast is that Paul does not claim secular authority as being based on any kind of '*charisma*' although it, too, comes from God.³²⁹

(4) Additionally it must be said that there is a tension between a church described as Christ's body with the Christians of the Church as its limbs (1 Cor 12.27) and a term like "priesthood of the believers",³³⁰ on the one

³²⁵Goppelt, *Times*, 187.

³²⁶Goppelt, *Times*, 187.

³²⁷Goppelt, *Times*, 197.

³²⁸Cf. Friedrich/Pohlmann/Stuhlmacher, 'Situation', 131-166.

³²⁹Rom 13.1.

³³⁰Goppelt, *Times*, 196.

hand, and a very strong apostleship and special ministries on the other hand.

(5) Further on it may be questioned why only some Christians have a certain 'office' and therefore a 'charisma'. What about the services of the other Christians in the Church? Are they second-class Christians: being baptized, obligated to do general services but without any 'charisma'? It seems to be very questionable whether such Christians did already exist in Corinth or Rome. They seem to be more likely victims of the modern distinction of laity and clergy and therefore a projection into the Early Church.

(6) It seems to be questionable whether one can do justice to Paul's concept of church order without evaluating 1 Corinthians as somehow representative. 1 Cor 12-14 are certainly the most important passages concerning ^{the} concept of church order between 'charisma' and 'office'.

§ 14. Herman Ridderbos

14.1 Account

H. Ridderbos comes from a reformed tradition. His views on Early Church order can be found in his work *Paul. An Outline of His Theology*. Ridderbos strictly opposes any antithesis between 'charisma' and institution. He does not even want to "make a spiritualistic antithesis between 'charismatic' and 'administrative' ministries".³³¹ He concludes:

The whole distinction between charismatic and non-charismatic ministries in the church therefore cannot

³³¹Ridderbos, *Paul*, 443. He opposes namely Sohm and Harnack.

be reconciled with the Pauline conception of *charisma*.³³²

However, he makes a distinction between gifts which are linked to ministries and later 'offices'³³³ and a few other '*charismata*' like "extraordinary powers [and] glossolalia".³³⁴

Ridderbos does not only link '*charisma*' and 'office' but he concludes: "The office is itself a *charisma*".³³⁵ The '*charismata*' of continual significance are not in contrast with institutionalization but even tend to the institutional.³³⁶

According to Ridderbos there were already presbyters and *episkopoi* as identical 'offices' in the early Pauline churches.³³⁷ They do the same work as pastors in other churches.³³⁸ Also the *προιστάμενος* in Rom 12.8 and the *κυβερνήσεις* in 1 Cor 12.28 are generously identified with elders and bishops.

14.2

Discussion

Ridderbos shows an open interest in rooting the 'office' of elder already in the very early Christian

³³²Ridderbos, *Paul*, 442.

³³³Ridderbos, *Paul*, 448-460: Apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, presbyters, bishops and deacons.

³³⁴Ridderbos, *Paul*, 463-467: gifts of faith, of performing unusual deeds, of healing, glossolalia, and the gift of interpreting glossolalia. This differentiation is also made by distinguishing between *charismata* of continual significance and those of incidental significance (445).

³³⁵Ridderbos, *Paul*, 446.

³³⁶Ridderbos, *Paul*, 445.

³³⁷Ridderbos, *Paul*, 456-459.

³³⁸Cf. Eph 4.11; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 455.

congregations.³³⁹ He even comes to the conclusion that "all that Paul writes on giving leadership, etc., is applicable to the office of elder".³⁴⁰ However, by doing so he clearly gives away his reformed background. This has obviously led him to identify elders generously with 'offices' like bishops and pastors. He is misled by the later reformed church order. This anachronism must be criticized in his otherwise thorough treatment.

§ 15. Burnett Hillman Streeter

15.1 Account

In 1929 B.H. Streeter published his book *The Primitive Church*.³⁴¹ He claims his alternative suggestions to stand out against the theories of Harnack and Lightfoot.³⁴²

Streeter starts of with the first generation of Christians. He claims that they "troubled themselves little about the theory either of doctrine or of Church Order"³⁴³ because of their eschatological world view. Everything was influenced by the outpouring of the Spirit. "Inevitably in that generation the *Prophet*, the man or woman supremely inspired by the Spirit, was an outstanding figure in the

³³⁹Ridderbos, *Paul*, 455f., n85: He notices that the Anglican A.M. Farrer is very much interested in stressing the early Episcopate and that E. Schweizer's intention is "to give as little 'chance' as possible to the institutional in Paul."

³⁴⁰Ridderbos, *Paul*, 456, n85.

³⁴¹Streeter, *Church*, especially 67-83.

³⁴²Streeter, *Church*, 71.

³⁴³Streeter, *Church*, 69.

Church."³⁴⁴

He distinguishes strictly between church order in Jerusalem, Antioch and the churches founded by Paul himself.

According to Streeter Jerusalem was organized according to the set-up of a synagogue with a board of presbyters. In addition to them there were a presiding bishop and Almoners as deacons.³⁴⁵

In Antioch, the first Gentile church, Prophets and Teachers are said to have been the "titles borne by those of chief importance."³⁴⁶ He denies that there were already *Episkopoi* at the time of Paul's first missionary journey.³⁴⁷

Streeter follows the testimony of Acts and assumes on one side that Paul and Barnabas "appointed (...) elders in each congregation" (REB)³⁴⁸. However, because they are not mentioned in Paul's epistles he concludes that they were "regarded as persons of quite minor importance."³⁴⁹ Streeter assumes that these presbyters "perhaps already bore titles *Episkopoi* and Deacons." On the other side he proposes that apostles, prophets and teachers were the "three main offices of the Christian ministry."³⁵⁰ He sets apart apostles as "obviously belong[ing] to a special class" and states that "the terms Prophet and Teacher represent the two most important offices in what may be

³⁴⁴ Streeter, *Church*, 69f; Streeter states: "To the prophetic type of mind, system, whether in thought or organization, is normally uncongenial. the Apostle Paul belonged to this type; but his type was a genius of abnormal range." - 70. Cf. Grudem, *Prophecy*, 53f.; Myers/Freed, 'Paul', 40-53.

³⁴⁵ Streeter, *Church*, 74-76. Streeter relies largely on the view of Acts.

³⁴⁶ Streeter, *Church*, 76.

³⁴⁷ Streeter, *Church*, 76.

³⁴⁸ Acts 14.23; see Streeter, *Church*, 76.

³⁴⁹ Streeter, *Church*, 77.

³⁵⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 12.28; Streeter, *Church*, 77f.

called the normal ministry in a local church."³⁵¹ Later on especially in response to the "turbulence" at the Church of Corinth Paul was lead to put more emphasis on the 'offices' of *episkopoi* and deacons. In Phil 1.1 they are specially singled out.³⁵²

15.2 Discussion

(1) Streeter deals mainly with the question of church order and is not interested in the relationship between the '*charismata*' and the 'offices'. Although he names quite a few gifts of grace he does not elaborate their links to certain functions in the church. He does not hesitate to talk of 'offices' already at this very early state. On the other hand he does not assume that the '*charismata*' are of any great importance for the early church order.

However, he makes a very valuable contribution in pointing out the diversity of order in different early churches. Unlike Harnack and his followers, he does not agree with the claim that church order was already very clearly elaborated at a very early point of time. Addressing Harnack's view he says: "The facts desiderate an explanation less cut and dried and more dynamic."³⁵³

³⁵¹Streeter, *Church*, 77f., opposes the "notion that a Prophet was usually a person who led a wandering life is an entirely mistaken deduction from the *Didache*; the fact that some Prophets led that kind of life is no evidence that all or even that a majority did so."

³⁵²Streeter, *Church*, 80.

³⁵³Streeter, *Church*, 67; cf. 69f.

§ 16. Rudolph Schnackenburg

16.1 Account

A modern Catholic perspective on our topic is given by R. Schnackenburg.³⁵⁴ He tries to describe Paul's view on Early Church order within the context of the whole New Testament. "The question whether the primitive Church regarded a definite order as constitutive of its structure cannot be decided by peremptory treatment of the sources, but the whole testimony of the New Testament must be taken into account."³⁵⁵ Referring to some non-Pauline scriptures of the New Testament Schnackenburg starts with Jesus himself giving authority to his disciples. Appealing principally to Luke 10.16 and Matt.18.18 he concludes that "full sacred teaching and juridical authority"³⁵⁶ was already in the very early times given to special people like the Twelve and "then it can hardly be 'the Church as a whole' which is the 'bearer of the great authority'".³⁵⁷ Schnackenburg claims confirmation of this from the Acts of the Apostles³⁵⁸ and "also from Paul's own conception of himself as an apostle".³⁵⁹ He describes Paul not only as preacher of the word and servant of his churches, but also as the

³⁵⁴ Schnackenburg, *Church*.

³⁵⁵ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 30; Schnackenburg concedes that "as the Acts of the Apostles does not give adequate information about constitutional questions, there is a preference for using the authentic material that is available in Paul's epistles" (22f.). Nevertheless he includes the view of the Gospels (30ff.), Acts (30) and the Pastorals (29f.) in order to describe early church order.

³⁵⁶ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32, who is quoting Vögtle, 'Binden', 480-482.

³⁵⁷ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32; quotations from Campenhausen, *Amt*, 139, n30.

³⁵⁸ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32: "cf. [Acts] 5:11; 6:2-6; 15:6-29".

³⁵⁹ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32.

authorized apostle".³⁶⁰ Schnackenburg concedes that sometimes the congregation may also have been involved in more important decisions but he mainly predicts "an authoritative leadership of the apostles".³⁶¹ In addition to this Schnackenburg refers to 1 Cor 12.28 as evidence that Paul himself also supports a structure with "graded functions: '[...] first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, the miraculous powers, the gifts of healing, of giving assistance, of governing, and various kinds of languages.'"³⁶² That means obviously that Paul's order was mainly characterized as an order given by God which further on led to the later hierarchy.³⁶³ However, Schnackenburg even predicts an 'office' above this hierarchical structure: Simon Peter is described as having "occupied a special position in the college of the Twelve"³⁶⁴ above Paul and the Early Church as a whole.³⁶⁵

16.2

Discussion

(1) Schnackenburg describes the 'offices' of the Early Church much more in terms of authority than in terms of service. He recognizes the charismatic gifts in Jerusalem and within the Pauline churches,³⁶⁶ but does not think they were important for Paul. His almost hierarchical structure looks very similar to the later Catholic hierarchy and

³⁶⁰ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 30.

³⁶¹ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32.

³⁶² Schnackenburg, *Church*, 32.

³⁶³ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 33.

³⁶⁴ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 33.

³⁶⁵ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 33: "the question is neither peripheral nor to be restricted to a particular community or group in the early Church."; "But even with Paul himself the outstanding and undisputed position of Cephas is clear".

³⁶⁶ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 19-21.

Schnackenburg emphasizes the difference between Protestant and Catholic thought on church order.³⁶⁷ This distinction may very well be an important reason which explains why Schnackenburg puts so much more emphasis on 'office', hierarchy and authority than on the '*charismata*' and the freedom of the Spirit.³⁶⁸ However, his confessional background seems to have affected his exegetical research too much.

(2) In addition to this it must be asked whether Schnackenburg does justice to the diversity of church order already in the New Testament, for example the differences between the churches in Jerusalem and Corinth.

(3) It must also be criticized that Schnackenburg is not at all interested in relating the 'offices' to the Pauline doctrine of the '*charismata*'. This does certainly not do justice to Paul's concept.

§ 17. Hans Küng

17.1 Account

A quite different perspective compared with that of R. Schnackenburg but nevertheless a Catholic view has been presented by H. Küng.³⁶⁹ Küng puts very much emphasis on the charismatic structure of the Pauline church. He says: "one can speak of a *charismatic structure of the Church, which includes and goes far beyond the hierarchical*

³⁶⁷ Schnackenburg, *Church*, 24: "This is where Evangelical (Lutheran) and Catholic thought is still divided even at the present day."

³⁶⁸ Schnackenburg, *Church*, obviously argues against the Protestant view of Sohm (23), Campenhausen (23f.; 28; 32), Schweizer (24; 31) and Holl (27).

³⁶⁹ Küng, *Church*.

structure of the Church."³⁷⁰ According to this view charismatic order and hierarchy are no opponents according to Paul. Küng links them together in terms of "essence" and "form". "*The real essence of the real Church is expressed in historical form.*"³⁷¹ This paradigm is Küng's methodical starting point.³⁷²

Küng's intention is to rediscover charisms as a "rediscovery of specifically Pauline ecclesiology".³⁷³ He defines 'charisma' as "*the call of God, addressed to an individual, to a particular ministry in the community, which brings with it the ability to fulfil that ministry.*"³⁷⁴ Küng describes the relationship between "charisms", "vocation" and "services" as the first two as prerequisites for the last.³⁷⁵ Since 'charisma' in this context is used in the widest sense it is possible to subsume all 'offices' in the Church under the headline 'charisma' but not vice versa.³⁷⁶ In the opinion of Paul which Küng follows every Christian has got at least one 'charisma'.³⁷⁷ Therefore he shares the Protestant term of a "priesthood of all believers"³⁷⁸ to describe the role of the members of the congregation. Nevertheless Küng makes a distinction between some charisms which he describes as

³⁷⁰Küng, *Church*, 188. (Italics here and in the following quotations by the author).

³⁷¹Küng, *Church*, 5.

³⁷²Küng, *Church*, 6: "The essence of the Church is therefore always to be found in its historical form, and the historical form must always be understood in the light of and with reference to the essence."

³⁷³Küng, *Church*, 180.

³⁷⁴Küng, *Church*, 188.

³⁷⁵Küng, *Church*, 188.

³⁷⁶Küng, *Kirche*, 225: "Das Charisma kann nicht unter das kirchliche Amt subsumiert werden, aber die kirchlichen Ämter können unter das Charisma subsumiert werden." Cf. Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 81.

³⁷⁷Küng, *Church*, 187; 375.

³⁷⁸Küng, *Church*, 363-387; 421.

"more private gifts and virtues given by God"³⁷⁹ such as "exhorting, giving aid, faith, the utterance of wisdom and of knowledge and the discernment of spirits"³⁸⁰ on one side, and charisms which he defines as "public functions"³⁸¹ such as "apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, deacons, elders, bishops [and] pastors".³⁸² However, he concedes that concerning Paul's theology this distinction "seems to be fairly fluid in some areas".³⁸³ Although this community is described as a "community of charisms"³⁸⁴ this does not imply disorder. According to Küng there is a certain hierarchy which is "dictated by the different ministries which members of the community performed".³⁸⁵ Since these ministries in the Pauline churches have "the same characteristics as charisms"³⁸⁶ there is no contrast between hierarchy and charismatic structure as we have seen above. Rather the charismatic structure includes a certain hierarchical order according to Küng's view. As every diakonia in the church is rooted in '*charisma*' Küng defines Pauline church order not only in terms of a charismatic and hierarchical structure but also as a diaconal structure. He links "real charisma" necessarily with "responsible service for the edification and benefit of the community".³⁸⁷

³⁷⁹ Küng, *Church*, 394.

³⁸⁰ Küng, *Church*, 394.

³⁸¹ Küng, *Church*, 394.

³⁸² Küng, *Church*, 394; however, of course Küng does not say that all these offices did already exist in the early Pauline church. He knows very well that according to Paul only the offices of the apostles, prophets and teachers are emphasized; see 395ff. Here Küng just wants to distinguish between these two types of charisms.

³⁸³ Küng, *Church*, 395.

³⁸⁴ Küng, *Church*, 398.

³⁸⁵ Küng, *Church*, 398.

³⁸⁶ Küng, *Church*, 395.

³⁸⁷ Küng, *Church*, 394.

17.2 Discussion

(1) Küng describes a much more differentiated view of the New Testament than Schnackenburg does by for example noting "the sharp contrasts [...] between the Pauline and the Palestinian Church constitutions".³⁸⁸

(2) Küng's view is very much reminiscent of the research of Sohm, Käsemann and Schweizer. Nevertheless he sets his own Catholic accent by bringing charismatic structure and hierarchy together. In a good Protestant manner he goes back *ad fontes* and recognizes the differences between early and modern church order. Küng wants the church "to take note of the gulf which separates it from its origins, without fuss but perhaps a little ashamed", and to "confront the challenge of its origins".³⁸⁹

(3) However, he does not want to divide Early Church order in its contradictions and "split up the original history of the church".³⁹⁰ He opposes the view which is "unable to see the post-apostolic history of the Church in a positive light"³⁹¹ and which is "obliged instead to see an increasing falling away from the Gospel, a descent into institutionalism, sacramentalism and clericalism".³⁹²

§ 18. Summary

The whole discussion concerning the description of early church order by making use of the paradigm of '*charisma*'

³⁸⁸ Küng, *Church*, 422.

³⁸⁹ Küng, *Church*, 417.

³⁹⁰ Küng, *Church*, 416.

³⁹¹ Küng, *Church*, 416.

³⁹² Küng, *Church*, 416; probably opposing Sohm, Campenhausen, Käsemann and similar views.

and 'office' can be divided into mainly four different types of solutions.³⁹³

18.1 'charisma' contra 'office'

First, there seems almost to be an agreement on the existence of an early charismatic structure within early Christianity among the in many other ways different contributions by Harnack, Sohm, Campenhausen, Käsemann, Schweizer and Dunn. They all agree on Sohm's main point concerning the existence of a charismatic organization of the early Pauline churches. Nevertheless, none of Sohm's followers in this respect would agree in what Sohm denied according to his radical charismatic conception.

Harnack made a strong point that this charismatic organization was supplemented by a number of administrative and natural leaders. Campenhausen assumes that there were a number of helping ministries but they themselves are also part of the charismatic organization. Käsemann proposes that every Christian is at the same time endowed with 'charisma' and therefore an 'office' bearer. This view leaves no space for any distinction between spiritual and administrative ministries. Schweizer describes the 'charismata' given to everyone to concrete ministries but denies any 'offices'. His church order is most similar to Sohm's open to any changes according to the "freedom of the Spirit".³⁹⁴

Second, all contributors to this group propose an antithesis between 'charisma' and 'office'. However, they

³⁹³ There will be no further summary of the Protestant consensus and of the work of Hatch below because their contribution were only included to show the background for the later discussion. Cf. the similar structure by Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 5; 88-94.

³⁹⁴ Schweizer, *Church*, 100.

disagree in degrees of distinction. While it was Sohm who made the most radical distinction in favour of '*charisma*' denying 'office' in the Pauline churches it was Käsemann who tried to redefine and thus widen the concept of 'office' and to make it acceptable to combine it with '*charisma*'. Similar is Schweizer's combination of '*charisma*' and ministry and Campenhausen's concept of the Holy Spirit being given to every Christian in the form of concrete gifts and thus as the organizing principle of the church as a living organism. Dunn follows up from them but in addition to this focuses on social issues of the community as a whole like authority of the congregation.

However, Harnack did not hesitate to assume the 'offices' of bishops and elders already in the early Pauline churches and to set them apart from the charismatic organization of apostles, prophets and teachers.

Third, the question remains how to judge the development from some kind of charismatic organization during the early period towards the 'office' oriented organization of the early Catholic church. While Sohm saw this development simply as a fall away from the original ideal state others were more careful. Campenhausen proclaims a necessity of '*charisma*' and 'office' to belong together. Thus to protect the church against the Gnostic movement of the second century a stronger emphasis on 'office' away from '*charisma*' is judged to be a disastrous but understandable shift. Käsemann also names the Gnostic movement as the main reason for this shift.

18.2 '*charisma*' and 'office'

Especially Friedrich emphasizes the unity of the '*charisma*' and 'office'. For Friedrich every Christian according to his or her having received the Spirit is also

an 'office' bearer. This is very much reminiscent of Käsemann's view but there is no longer any distinction between '*charisma*' and 'office'.

For Greeven the ministries of being apostle, prophet or teacher and for Goppelt especially the ministry of apostle but then also the two latter show how 'office' and '*charisma*' can be identified. However, there is a difference between these special 'offices' and '*charismata*' and the Spirit given to all believers.

Thus the '*charismata*' themselves are the very reason for an order of superiority and subordination within the congregation.

Friedrich, Greeven and Goppelt do not deny the early charismatic organization of the church in general. However, this organization itself shows already some features of institutionalized church order.

18.3 '*office*' and '*charismata*' plus Elders and/or Bishops

The works of Ridderbos and Streeter are very different in concerning their treatment of '*charisma*'. While Ridderbos links each 'office' to a '*charisma*', Streeter seems only to be interested in 'offices'. However, both Ridderbos and Streeter are linked in their main interest for church order and early 'offices'. For both of them the '*charismata*' seem to be somehow an appendix of this topic.

Both have also got a similar interest to see certain 'offices' already established at a very early point of time: Streeter, from an Anglican background, shows special interest in the early 'office' of the bishop; Ridderbos, from a reformed background, assumes that "elders" came already into being very early.

18.4 Hierarchy of 'offices', - and '*charisma*'

Schnackenburg and Küng show two very different contemporary Catholic views. While Schnackenburg is not at all interested in the '*charismata*' Küng ascribes at least one of them to each Christian. However, both Schnackenburg and Küng assume a certain group of people within the congregation who have 'offices'. Küng's organization is much more dynamic compared with certain people linked to certain 'offices' according to Schnackenburg.

Both agree to assume a hierarchy already very early. For Schnackenburg it is a hierarchy of 'offices', for Küng it is a hierarchy as part of the charismatic organization. This insisting on an early hierarchy seems to reflect the Catholic background of these two scholars.

§ 19. Questions and Outlook

Both '*charisma*' and 'office' are categories which were mainly used to look at the individual Christian. However, 'office' implies a community. And also '*charisma*' has large consequences for Christian communities as groups.³⁹⁵ Therefore we want to ask sociologists about what methods and knowledge they provide for analysing the structure of religious groups.

A helpful distinction in this respect may be the sect-type church-type dichotomy. It provides a model how not just individuals may be affected by stressing '*charisma*' or 'office' or by finding a balance between both. It also analyses how different stresses may result into different types of social set-ups.

³⁹⁵Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 259-300.

Apart from Hatch none of these above scholars is very much concerned with what the early Christian communities looked like. What about their numbers? How big were the congregations? Who were the people attending the meetings? What about their social background? This may very well affect their structure. We are going to address these question to socio-historians.

Part Two

THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

III SOCIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

§ 20. Max Weber

20.1 Pure Types of Legitimate Domination

A very important contribution towards the understanding of the structure of the Early Church has been made by the German sociologist Max Weber. Many aspects of his view on the structure of early Christianity can be drawn from his work *Economy and Society* which does not deal with early Christianity in particular but with sociological concepts in general.

It must be pointed out and was in fact already noted by Weber himself that his concepts as for example the "pure types of legitimate domination"¹, which we will describe below, must be treated as ideal types.² According to Weber "sociology seeks to formulate type concepts and generalized uniformities of empirical process".³ Sociology tries "to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms" which leads to "the abstract character of the concepts" of this and every other generalizing science.⁴ Because of this

¹ Weber, *Economy I*, 215f.

² For more detailed information on Weber's concept of the "ideal type" cf.: Weiß, *Grundlegung*, especially "2.3.2 Begriff und Funktion des Idealtypus", 65-80.

³ Weber, *Economy I*, 19.

⁴ Weber, *Economy I*, 20.

abstractness "it is probably seldom if ever that a real phenomenon can be found which corresponds exactly to one of these ideally constructed pure types."⁵ Therefore it is necessary to draw any conclusion from sociological concepts for the reconstruction of individual realities with care.

Weber distinguishes between three "pure types of legitimate domination"⁶ (*legitime Herrschaft*). He is concerned with the distinction between legal, traditional and charismatic forms of authority and defines their grounds as follows:

1. Rational grounds - resting on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue command (legal authority).
2. Traditional grounds - resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); or finally,
3. Charismatic grounds - resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority).⁷

The different grounds show where the "validity of the claims to legitimacy may be based".⁸ This typology has its manifestation in reality which can be named as rational-legal, traditional and charismatic authority,⁹ but which are usually not to be found as pure ideal types.¹⁰

⁵ Weber, *Economy I*, 20, 216. Cf. Theißen, 'Einordnung', 3-34. See 23.

⁶ Weber, *Economy I*, 215.

⁷ Weber, *Economy I*, 215.

⁸ Weber, *Economy I*, 215.

⁹ Weber, *Economy I*, 217-226 deals with "legal authority", 226-241 with "traditional authority" and 241-245 with "charismatic authority".

¹⁰ Weber, *Economy I*, 216; cf. Holmberg, *Paul*, 137f.

For reasons which will be obvious later it is within our context mainly important to focus on Weber's description of charismatic authority.¹¹

20.2 'charisma'

How does Weber define 'charisma'? He draws part of his concept of 'charisma' from the work of Rudolph Sohm.¹²

Weber defines 'charisma' as

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are as such not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual is treated as a 'leader'.¹³

It is obvious that this definition has got a religious connotation which is rooted in the work of Sohm and of course in the usage of this word by Paul. However, Weber does by no means limit his understanding of 'charisma' to church history or even to a religious context. For him 'charisma' is "the specifically creative revolutionary force of history"¹⁴ in general. In contrast to Paul Weber

¹¹ Cf. Holmberg, *Paul*, 138, who makes the same decision. A brilliant description of Weber's concept of pure charismatic authority can be found in Holmberg's work on 149-150. This model will be taken into our context later on.

¹² Weber, *Economy I*, 216. Cf. *Economy III*, 1112: "It is to Rudolf Sohm's credit that he worked out the sociological character of this kind of domination (*Gewaltstruktur*) [referring to 'charismatic authority']; however, since he developed this category with regard to one historically important case - the rise of the ecclesiastic authority of the early Christian church -, his treatment was bound to be one-sided from the viewpoint of historical diversity."

¹³ Weber, *Economy I*, 241.

¹⁴ Weber, *Economy III*, 1117.

does not say that the '*charisma*' is actually a gift of God's grace. The "spirit" which stands behind Weber's '*charisma*' is

neither soul, demon, nor god, but something indeterminate, material yet invisible, nonpersonal and yet somehow endowed with volition. By entering into a concrete object, spirit endows the latter with its distinctive power. The spirit may depart from its host or vessel, leaving the latter inoperative and causing the magician's charisma to fail. In other cases, the spirit may diminish into nothingness, or it may enter into another person or thing.¹⁵

The view that stands behind this description is the presupposition that Weber uses the term '*charisma*' in a "completely value-free sense".¹⁶ Weber does not define '*charisma*' within the framework of Christian faith or value it as a gift given by God's grace as Paul did, but he works on an anthropological basis. He does not talk of God and his grace but of the "idea of God"¹⁷ and the "doctrine of religious grace" as for example the doctrine of "*gratia infusa*".¹⁸ '*Charisma*' in Weber's sense does not exist within the relationship between God, the individual Christian and the Christian community but between the individual charismatic leader on one side and his disciples or followers on the other side. God's grace as the source of "Pauline" '*charisma*' and any values are faded out of this definition. Weber argues:

How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical or aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition. What is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples'.¹⁹

¹⁵ Weber, *Economy II*, 401.

¹⁶ Weber, *Economy III*, 1112.

¹⁷ Weber, *Economy III*, 1112.

¹⁸ Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

¹⁹ Weber, *Economy I*, 241f.

Within this frame of definition Weber distinguishes between two types of 'charisma': The first type is a "natural endowment" which "inheres in an object or person".²⁰ It is not within human abilities to get this endowment. "Such primary charisma cannot be acquired by any means."²¹

The second type of 'charisma' "may be produced artificially in an object or person through some extraordinary means".²² However, it

can be developed only in people or objects in which the germ already existed but would have remained dormant unless evoked by some ascetic or other regimen.²³

Both types of Weber's 'charisma' have this in common, that it is not within the abilities of human beings to acquire them. This is especially obvious for the first type but also true for the second as it requires some hidden qualifications.²⁴

Weber's usage of 'charisma' refers to both religious prophecy and political leadership. For our purpose the religious context is of primary interest.

20.3 Charismatic Authority and Charismatic Organization

What are charismatic authority and charismatic organization like as described by Weber? There is for

²⁰ Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

²¹ Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

²² Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

²³ Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

²⁴ Weber, *Economy I*, 242: People with such a charisma are for example the "Berserk", the "Shaman", "Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism" or "Kurt Eisner", a German Social Democratic leader around 1918. Other Examples given by Weber include Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammed, Buddha or the prophets of Israel (*Economy II*, 440).

example the prophet as the main figure. Weber defines prophet as follows:

We shall understand 'prophet' to mean a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine of divine commandment. No radical distinction will be drawn between a 'renewer of religion' who preaches an older revelation, actual or suppositious, and a 'founder of religion' who claims to bring completely new deliverances.²⁵

As we have already seen before it is not of any interest for Weber whether the divine dimension does actually exist. The important point is that the prophet claims "personal revelations and charisma"²⁶ although he may as well be a "swindler".²⁷

The prophet is not elected but it is the "duty" of his followers "to recognize his charisma".

What does the pure charismatic organization itself look like? The charismatic community (=Gemeinde) at this early stage of development has got a "charismatic leader", for example a prophet. His staff is chosen in terms of charismatic qualities. The members of the charismatic community are not technically trained and there are no 'officials' for administration.

There is no such thing as appointment or dismissal, no career, no promotion. There is only a call at the instance of the leader on the basis of the charismatic qualification of those he summons. There is no hierarchy; the leader merely intervenes in general or in individual cases when he considers the members of his staff lacking in charismatic qualification for a given task.²⁸

Spheres of competence are not clearly defined but there may be "territorial or functional limits"²⁹ to the

²⁵ Weber, *Economy II*, 439f.

²⁶ Weber, *Economy II*, 440.

²⁷ Weber, *Economy I*, 242: Weber takes into consideration that Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism "may have been a very sophisticated swindler".

²⁸ Weber, *Economy I*, 243.

²⁹ Weber, *Economy I*, 243.

individual charismatic powers or missions. There is a tendency among the disciples or followers and the leader to live together in a communistic relationship which is economically based on voluntary gifts. However, there are no salaries or benefices for anybody within the community. There are no "established administrative organs". Instead of that there are "agents" (*Vertrauensmänner*) "who have been provided with charismatic authority by their chief or who may possess charisma of their own."³⁰ The whole community is very much dependent on this chief, the charismatic leader. He is the central figure. The community does not function in terms of a "system of formal rules" or "abstract legal principles" or a "process of rational judicial decision".³¹ Any judicial decisions are newly created from case to case "and are originally regarded as divine judgments and revelations."³²

Weber describes this charismatic authority in sharp opposition "to rational, and particularly bureaucratic, authority, and to traditional authority, whether in its patriarchal, patrimonial, or estate variants, all of which are everyday forms of domination."³³ Weber describes the basis of charismatic authority purely in terms of personal 'charisma'.

The only basis of legitimacy for it [charismatic authority] is personal charisma so long as it is proved; that is, as long as it receives recognition and as long as the followers and disciples prove their usefulness charismatically.³⁴

According to Weber, charismatic authority is based on mutual recognition and testing between charismatic leaders and their disciples. Thus it can be noted as an interaction with interdependence.

³⁰ Weber, *Economy I*, 243.

³¹ Weber, *Economy I*, 243.

³² Weber, *Economy I*, 243.

³³ Weber, *Economy I*, 244.

³⁴ Weber, *Economy I*, 244.

20.4

Institutionalization

Interesting for the development from the Early Church towards the Catholic Church is the question how Weber describes the development of "his" charismatic community. Weber presents this development under the headings "The Routinization of Charisma"³⁵ and "The Transformation of Charisma".³⁶ According to Weber charismatic authority in its pure form "cannot remain stable" and does not survive unless it is changed towards traditional or rational authority.³⁷ Weber names as principal motives for transforming charismatic authority the interests of all followers, disciples, members of the administrative staff or others in the continuation of the community for both ideal and material reasons. The target of this development is to achieve a stable everyday basis for all members which allows for example participation "in normal family relationships" or "social security".³⁸ According to Weber the turning point when this interest becomes evident is when the personal charismatic leader disappears "and with the problem of *succession*."³⁹

Of a particular interest for us is the last concept of succession concerning the "charisma of office".⁴⁰ The "charisma of office" which is defined as "the belief in the specific state of grace of a social institution"⁴¹ marks the point where 'charisma' and 'office' meet in Weber's

³⁵ Weber, *Economy I*, 246ff.

³⁶ Weber, *Economy I*, 266ff.

³⁷ Weber, *Economy I*, 246.

³⁸ Weber, *Economy I*, 246.

³⁹ Weber, *Economy I*, 246-248, lists the different possibilities how a new leader may be found.

⁴⁰ Weber, *Economy I*, 248.

⁴¹ Weber, *Economy III*, 1140.

development of the charismatic community. Weber himself gives some examples for the "charisma of office" in a religious context:

The most important example is the transmission of priestly charisma by anointing, consecration, or the laying on of hands; (...) The *character indelebilis* thus acquired means that the charismatic qualities and the powers of the "office" are emancipated from the personal qualities of the priest.⁴²

At this stage '*charisma*' is separated from the individual person and is linked with the institution as an 'office'.⁴³ '*Charisma*' becomes depersonalized and transformed by magic acts.⁴⁴ "From a unique gift of grace" to be found as we have seen within the charismatic community,

charisma may be transformed into a quality that is either (a) transferable or (b) personally acquirable or (c) attached to the incumbent of an "office" or to an institutional structure regardless of the persons involved.⁴⁵

However, Weber himself already takes into account that this type of '*charisma*' has very little to do with what the members of the pure charismatic community would define as '*charisma*'. He justifies his usage of '*charisma*' in this very special sense by proclaiming that "there always remains an extraordinary quality which is not accessible to everyone and which typically overshadows the charismatic subjects."⁴⁶ '*Charisma*' of this type is no longer "a personal gift that can be tested and proven but not transmitted and acquired" but "in principle, can be taught and learned."⁴⁷ "Thus charismatic qualification can become an object of *education*."⁴⁸

⁴² Weber, *Economy I*, 248f.

⁴³ Weber, *Economy III*, 1164.

⁴⁴ Weber, *Economy III*, 1141.

⁴⁵ Weber, *Economy III*, 1135.

⁴⁶ Weber, *Economy III*, 1135.

⁴⁷ Weber, *Economy III*, 1143.

⁴⁸ Weber, *Economy III*, 1143.

This development from 'charisma' towards 'office' is also the development from the prophet to the priest. While the prophet as a natural leader cannot be described as an "officeholder" or "professional" the community or its staff at this stage ordain priests as office bearers. And other 'offices' are set up as well.

The disciples or apostles of the prophets thereupon become mystagogues, teachers, priests or pastors (or a combination of them all), serving an association dedicated to exclusively religious purposes, namely the *congregation of laymen*.⁴⁹

This expansion of "offices" on one side involves in contrast to them the genesis of a group of laymen on the other side. While the charismatic community consisted of charismatics this new type of community itself becomes the bearer of the 'charisma' and transmits it to special 'office' bearers. According to this development from personal 'charisma' to the "charisma of office" Weber distinguishes between two different types of communities:

He more or less reserves the term "sect" for the charismatic community as a community of personally charismatic individuals and names the later community which is "the bearer and trustee of an office charisma" "church".⁵⁰ According to Weber, 'charisma' is bound to this

⁴⁹ Weber, *Economy II*, 454.

⁵⁰ Weber, *Economy III*, 1164. Cf. 1121: "the charismatic community of a prophet, artist, philosopher, ethical or scientific innovator may become a church, sect, academy or school". Weber seems to distinguish also between charismatic community and "sect". However, this distinction seems to be not very clear. For Weber's definition of "sect", see: *Economy II*, 456; *Economy III*, 1204: "the sect is a group whose very nature and purpose precludes universality and requires the free consensus of its members, since it aims to be an aristocratic group, an association of persons with full religious qualification. The sect does not want to be an institution dispensing grace, like a church, which includes the righteous and the unrighteous and is especially concerned with subjecting the sinner to divine law. The sect adheres to the ideal of the *ecclesia pura* (...). The typical sect rejects institutionalized salvation and office charisma." Cf.

development from its early type in the charismatic community to its transformation and death at the later stage.

Every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life that knows no economic rationality to a slow death by suffocation under the weight of material interests: every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end.⁵¹

As in the end of the development 'office' bearers are chosen in terms of democratic elections, Weber marks that at this stage "structurally the charismatic basis has been completely abandoned."⁵²

However, Weber recognizes that it is too simple to describe the different stages just in terms of a chronological succession:

Charismatic domination is by no means limited to primitive stages of development, and the three basic types of domination cannot be placed into a simple evolutionary line: they in fact appear together in the most diverse combinations. It is the fate of 'charisma', however, to recede with the development of permanent institutional structures.⁵³

By conceding that the system is not to be understood and limited in a static way Weber points out again that his concept is just an abstraction of reality and therefore may differ considerably from real cases.

the definition of "charismatic community" (*Economy I*, 243).

The fundamental distinction between church-type and sect-type was first used by Weber in his work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It was first published in 1904/1905 in German. See especially pp. 145, 152, 254. However, as Weber's friend and "student", E. Troeltsch later elaborated upon this concept. See below.

⁵¹ Weber, *Economy III*, 1120.

⁵² Weber, *Economy III*, 1128.

⁵³ Weber, *Economy III*, 1133.

What is to be criticized about Weber's concept?⁵⁴

(1) Reading Weber one can easily get the idea that charismatic authority is merely a male phenomenon. He backs his concept of charismatic authority with a huge number of examples which cover a broad field of human experiences. However, the index of historical names in his three volume *Economy and Society* gives evidence that of the some hundred human beings used as examples only five are women. Today it must be objected that this does not lead Weber to the question whether there may be any sex-specific differences concerning charismatic authority between male or female bearers of 'charisma'.⁵⁵

(2) It has often been remarked that Weber's three types of legitimate domination are not logically distinct. In fact it has been argued that these types mix with one another quite often and that different combinations can be found rather than pure types.⁵⁶ However, Weber himself has already made the concession that "pure types are very exceptional".⁵⁷ As we have already pointed out before Weber did not want to describe individual cases of reality but intended to set up an analytical classification of a highly abstract kind. Therefore it is obvious that this concept

⁵⁴ Some of the following remarks try to make use of the summary of the discussion given by Holmberg, *Paul*, 137-148, 163-165. Nevertheless Holmberg's summary itself will have to undergo a critical discussion and some points will have to be added or stressed in different ways.

⁵⁵ This is certainly not meant to accuse Weber of anti-feminist intentions. On the contrary, it is very well documented that Weber was in favour of the equality of women and encouraged his wife Marianne in that direction. See Gilcher-Holtey, 'Weber', 142-154; especially 146-149.

⁵⁶ Holmberg, *Paul*, 137f.

⁵⁷ Weber, *Economy I*, 262.

can only help to understand reality up to a certain limited degree. This must be taken into account in our further work as we examine more concrete situations like the structure of the church of Corinth. Nevertheless Weber's concept seems to be quite helpful in order to analyse or even reconstruct historical situations for which we have only a very limited number of witnesses. Yet one has to be very careful not to use such theories to generate supposed 'data'.

(3) Holmberg points out that Weber "oscillated between a psychological and a sociological definition of the charismatic phenomenon".⁵⁸ However, going back to Weber himself one cannot be quite sure whether it is useful trying to distinguish between two different types of definition of '*charisma*'. It is obvious that Weber's understanding of '*charisma*' has both sociological and psychological elements but a clear distinction between two different definitions seems to be impossible as the following example may show. Weber says: "It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma."⁵⁹ Who would be able to decide whether this recognition is based more on psychological aspects of personal devotion on the side of the followers or on the fact that there is a identifiable sociological relationship between the leader and his followers? Therefore it seems to be better not to talk about two different oscillating types of definition but to note that Weber's definition of '*charisma*' is a socio-

⁵⁸ Holmberg, *Paul*, 141.

⁵⁹ Weber, *Economy I*, 242.

psychological one.⁶⁰

(4) It has been argued that Weber's analysis does not sufficiently take into account the charismatic group but focuses more on the charismatic leader and his personal endowment.⁶¹ Weber mentions that "charismatic structure (...) arises out of the anxiety and the enthusiasm of an extraordinary situation"⁶² and that it deals with "all [kinds of] extraordinary needs".⁶³ Weber does not indeed really make an effort to describe thoroughly the conditions which lead to such a charismatic type of social movement. This would also lead to a more sociological approach if one wants to avoid psychological implications. However, this sociological investigation into the presupposition has been made by other scientists before and after Weber as well. Modern research has led to the conclusion that "charisma may be viewed as the historical product of the interaction between a leader with special qualities and a situation of acute social distress."⁶⁴

(5) It seems to be rather problematic, and therefore worth pointing out, that Weber does not clearly distinguish between charismatic leadership and charismatic authority.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Holmberg, *Paul*, 141, is a good example of how one can slightly miss the point by trying to distinguish clearly "between a psychological and a sociological definition of the charismatic phenomenon." Concerning many of his examples one cannot quite decide which of the alternatives is more appropriate. For example: "Sometimes, however, it is said [by Weber] that charisma without social validation does not exist but has to be proved time and again to the followers who may refuse to recognize any charismatic endowment." - Sociological or psychological?

⁶¹ Holmberg, *Paul*, 141f.

⁶² Weber, *Economy III*, 1117.

⁶³ Weber, *Economy III*, 1111.

⁶⁴ Holmberg, *Paul*, 142. This conclusion gives again evidence that "charisma" in terms of human sciences is both a sociological and a psychological phenomena at the same time, but not either one or the other.

⁶⁵ Holmberg, *Paul*, 142f.

Charismatic leadership focuses on the relationship between the charismatic leader and his followers. It can be characterized by its "high degree of emotional and cognitive identification of the followers with the leader and his mission".⁶⁶ Such a leader may face support by his followers as well as vehement opposition by his enemies at the same time.

Charismatic authority is described as a transitory phenomenon⁶⁷ and therefore it is better to concentrate one's analysis on the group of "disciples" and "followers" which comes into being through this kind of charismatic development. The charismatic leader in a religious context views himself as having a divine gift and calling from God. Therefore he sees himself in an extraordinary relationship to God. However, it is not only the charismatic who has this view of himself, but he is also recognized as an extraordinary person by his followers and disciples. This leads to a relationship of power and authority on the side of the leader and obedience on the side of those being subject to this authority. It is part of the group's belief that this type of rule is legitimate.

Holmberg is right to remark that "not all charismatic authority exhibits the revolutionary type of inspirational leadership that *Weber* has in mind."⁶⁸ There can also be some kind of "conservative" purpose of charismatic authority. The aim of charismatic authority is not necessarily progressive or innovative, but it may also be its aim to maintain and to protect the status quo. However, charismatic authority may almost never serve one or the other purpose solely but rather a mixture or combination of both.

⁶⁶ Holmberg, *Paul*, 142.

⁶⁷ Weber, *Economy III*, 1120.

⁶⁸ Holmberg, *Paul*, 143.

Weber stresses very much the destructive and revolutionary impact of '*charisma*'. However, in the light of this "conservative" purpose, it must be said that '*charisma*' has also a constructive aspect. Holmberg is right to point out that:

A charismatic movement should not be interpreted as a kind of rapture or as enthusiastic flight from society to a predominantly emotional, freakish way of communal life. It is an attempt to build the society (church, party) anew, from the "roots", in principle nothing less than the founding anew of society.⁶⁹

This constructive aspect should not be forgotten in Weber's account which tries to be value-free.

(6) There is a certain lack in Weber's investigation as far as the context and the specific content of '*charisma*' are concerned. '*Charisma*' is always linked to a certain historical and social situation, but Weber does not really take this into account because of his abstract and generalized view. Therefore he is not really able to explain the fascination which the charismatic leader has on his followers. Weber's avoidance of any discussion of the content and validity of '*charisma*' "forces him to emphasize the element of emotion and irrationality to such a degree that he equates it with an unthinking, frenzied flight from reason and custom."⁷⁰ This kind of psychologizing does not really explain charismatic authority but leaves it as a mere process.⁷¹

(7) The most striking criticism which has to be made from a theological point of view concerns Weber's use of the term '*charisma*' in the light of Paul. We have already noted that Weber took the concept '*charisma*' via Rudolph Sohm

⁶⁹ Holmberg, *Paul*, 146.

⁷⁰ Holmberg, *Paul*, 145.

⁷¹ Holmberg, *Paul*, 145f., tries to go beyond Weber. He defines charisma in a religious context as "contact with 'the sacred'" in order to find an appropriate category to deal with its content.

from Paul himself.⁷² As we have seen above it may well be that Weber was also influenced by Sohm in other ways: Weber's account of a development from charismatic structure to institutions is, for example, similar to Sohm's. However, Weber uses the concept of '*charisma*' in a very different way from Paul. Weber's concept of '*charisma*' is socio-psychological, analytical and general. The differences can easily be noticed if we confront Paul's and Weber's different concepts of '*charisma*' with the following three question:

- 1) Where does '*charisma*' as a gift come from?
- 2) Among which kind of people does '*charisma*' occur?
- 3) What is the purpose of '*charisma*'?

Paul's answer on the first question concerning the source of '*charisma*' is clear. According to Paul *χάρισμα* is an embodiment of *χάρις*.⁷³ Thus it is given through the Holy Spirit by God himself.⁷⁴

For Weber it is not of a major interest where the '*charisma*' comes from but that the charismatically endowed person believes that he has, and is regarded by his followers as having, a special '*charisma*'. Therefore he does not give a definite answer as to where '*charisma*' comes from.

Paul links the '*charismata*' with Christians only. In 1 Cor 12 for example where he mentions some '*charismata*' he addresses clearly his fellow Christians in the congregation in Corinth. Therefore it can be said that according to Paul the '*charismata*' are strictly linked to Christians as being members of the Christian community, the body of Christ. It must be pointed out that '*charisma*' is not to be confused with human talent and natural ability.⁷⁵

⁷² Weber, *Economy I*, 216.

⁷³ Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 201-205.

⁷⁴ Cf. Rom 12.6; 1 Cor 12.4-11; 14.1.

⁷⁵ Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 255.

Weber is much more general in his view. Charismatic structure is "found in all areas of life".⁷⁶ It is not limited to a Christian understanding of "gift of grace", not even restricted to a religious background but it can inhere in any kind of people or even in an object.⁷⁷ However, Weber concedes that '*charisma*' cannot be acquired by everybody,⁷⁸ but he does not describe or define any presuppositions one must fulfill in order to acquire '*charisma*' or to be excluded from it. This question thus coincides with the first one.

The purpose of '*charisma*' according to 1 Cor 14.3f., with reference at least to the '*charismata*' of speaking in tongues and prophecy, is the edification of the individual Christian within the community or the Christian community as a whole. According to the metaphor of the Christian community as the body of Christ, it can be said in a more general way that the '*charismata*' according to Paul are to be used in correspondence with the nature of the community as a whole as Christ's representative, which is judged in its use of them by love (1 Cor 13). The question about the purpose is of course not a value-free one. Therefore Weber does not give any answer. He just mentions that '*charisma*' can be exercised by good and evil people, whatever the purpose may be.

It can be summarized that Weber tears the term '*charisma*' away from its very limited original context and ignores some parts of its definition that are constitutive for Paul. Weber himself does not account for this shift of meaning in his use of '*charisma*' by comparing it directly with the Pauline one. Even from a more general point of view one would at least expect a distinction between

⁷⁶ Weber, *Economy III*, 1117.

⁷⁷ Weber, *Economy II*, 400.

⁷⁸ Weber, *Economy II*, 241.



secular types of 'charisma' as in political or economic contexts on the one hand and religious 'charisma' on the other hand. However, the foundation of Weber's view is not limited to one of these areas but is a general socio-anthropological one.

Facing Weber's terminology, the question which must be asked is whether theological concepts like 'charisma' and 'prophet' can be used as the basis for a sociological analysis and as a sociological tool at all.

§ 21. Ernst Troeltsch

21.1 Troeltsch's Sociological Concept of Christian Social Settings

In 1912 the German theologian, historian, and sociologist Ernst Troeltsch published his work *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*.⁷⁹ Troeltsch devotes only very little space to the Early Church or to the Pauline churches.⁸⁰ His description is much more of a general sociological kind. As we shall see in the following, sociology has related the distinction between 'charisma' and 'office' which focuses mainly on the individual to categories which apply to whole communities.

Thus Troeltsch's ideal-typical distinction between three different social settings of Christian faith has been rather influential on later research.⁸¹ Troeltsch distinguishes between sect-type, church-type and mystic

⁷⁹ Troeltsch, *Soziallehren*. ET: *Teaching*, 2 Vols.

⁸⁰ Troeltsch, *Soziallehren*, 58-83.

⁸¹ Cf. Kehrer, *Einführung*, 158-162: "Die Kirche-Sekte-Dichotomie".

enthusiasm, which can also be called spiritualism.⁸² It must be noticed that Troeltsch develops his distinction between sect-type and church-type with reference to the medieval church and sects.⁸³ However, because he sees "the final cause for this dualistic development"⁸⁴ already rooted within primitive Christianity itself we will be able to draw conclusions from his description for the Early Church.

21.2 Sect-Type

Troeltsch describes sects as follows: Sects, as compared with churches, are much smaller groups. Their aims are "personal inward perfection" and "direct personal fellowship between the members of each group".⁸⁵ They do not aim to dominate the world as a whole. Even more, their attitude towards world, state or society may be "indifferent, tolerant, or hostile, since they have no desire to control and incorporate these forms of social life".⁸⁶ The sect-type is more a type of its own within, but not of, the world. "The sect is lay Christianity, independent of the world, and is therefore inclined towards

⁸² Theißen uses all three types of different social settings of Christian faith in order to describe early Christianity. See especially: Theißen, 'Wanderradikalismus', 79-105. Cf. 104f.

However, he especially uses Troeltsch understanding of "Christian patriarchalism" and creates the term "love-patriarchalism" which Theißen claims has the same meaning as Troeltsch's term. See especially: Theißen, 'Starken', 272-289, especially 288, n26.

Cf. also: 'Einordnung', 3-34, especially 23f; 'Schichtung', 231-271, especially 268ff.

⁸³ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 333.

⁸⁴ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 333.

⁸⁵ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

⁸⁶ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

asceticism and mysticism."⁸⁷ Troeltsch proclaims that the sects are "connected with the lower classes, or at least with those elements in Society which are opposed to the State and to Society".⁸⁸ Concerning the members of a sect Troeltsch says that their relationship to the supernatural is a direct one. They are directly related to the "supernatural aim of life".⁸⁹ Corresponding to this "in them the individualistic, directly religious character of asceticism, as a means of union with God, is developed more strongly and fully."⁹⁰ Since the sect focuses on the individual it is oriented towards a "direct intercourse of the individual with God."⁹¹ The asceticism goes back to the basic ideal of the sects - the Sermon on the Mount: "they lay stress on the simple but radical opposition of the Kingdom of God to all secular interests and institutions."⁹² The individualistic character of the sect can also be noticed in its emphasis and realization of "the idea of subjective holiness" instead of proclaiming universal grace.⁹³

The terms "literal obedience and radicalism" used by Troeltsch himself characterize the sect-type most significantly.⁹⁴ "The sect is a voluntary community whose members join it of their own free will."⁹⁵ Therefore, especially if one wants to avoid any objections caused by the term sect, it can also be called a voluntary church.⁹⁶ The sect is rooted already in primitive Christianity

⁸⁷ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

⁸⁸ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331; 337.

⁸⁹ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

⁹⁰ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331f.

⁹¹ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

⁹² Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 332.

⁹³ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 337.

⁹⁴ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 337. Cf. 329f.

⁹⁵ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 339.

⁹⁶ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 340.

itself.⁹⁷ "Very often in the so-called 'sects' it is precisely the essential elements of the Gospel which are fully expressed".⁹⁸ According to Troeltsch "the sect-type is rooted in the teaching of Jesus"⁹⁹ himself rather than in early Paulinism.¹⁰⁰

21.3 Church-Type

How does Troeltsch describe the church-type in contrast to the sect-type? The church is much more involved in the affairs of state and society. Troeltsch proclaims the reason for this already in early Paulinism as

it came to terms with the order of the State by interpreting it as an institution ordained and permitted by God; it accepted the existing order with its profession and its habits and customs.¹⁰¹

The church-type tries to utilize state and society and therefore becomes an "integral part of the existing social order".¹⁰² This involvement makes the church dependent upon the upper classes. The church even accepts to a certain extent the secular order and "dominates the masses".¹⁰³ Since "it desires to cover the whole life of humanity"¹⁰⁴ the church is said to intend universality. The "whole of the secular order" gets related to the church "as a means and a preparation to the supernatural aim of life".¹⁰⁵ Ascetism is just one of the elements in this preparation.

⁹⁷ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 333.

⁹⁸ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 334. Cf. especially p. 336 where Troeltsch summarizes the aspects of the Gospel which are mainly emphasized by the sects.

⁹⁹ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 340.

¹⁰⁰ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

¹⁰¹ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 334.

¹⁰² Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

¹⁰³ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

¹⁰⁴ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

¹⁰⁵ Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 331.

"The Church has its priests and its sacraments; it dominates the world and is therefore also dominated by the world.¹⁰⁶ It can be described as institutionalized Christianity. According to Troeltsch, the most useful terms for characterizing the church-type are "compromise"¹⁰⁷ and "institutional".¹⁰⁸ Normally the individual does not join the church consciously but he is born into it.¹⁰⁹ Therefore in contrast to the sect as a voluntary church the church-type can be called institutional church.¹¹⁰ While Troeltsch does not mention the ruling structure of the sect he proclaims that within the church priesthood and hierarchy "represent the objective treasury of grace" as they "hold the key to the tradition of the Church, to sacramental grace and ecclesiastical jurisdiction."¹¹¹

Therefore this kind of domination seems to be typical for the church-type rather than for the sect-type. Troeltsch sees the church-type rooted in the teaching of early Paulinism rather than in the teaching of Jesus.¹¹²

Troeltsch proclaims that both sect-type and church-type are right to claim "that the final cause for this dualistic development must lie within primitive Christianity itself".¹¹³ Consequently, he does not join in the common devaluation of the sect-type. He judges sect as a second type of Christian setting. Although already rooted so early it established itself clearly beside the church not before the medieval times but ever since.¹¹⁴ The reason for this

¹⁰⁶Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

¹⁰⁷Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 329f.; 335.

¹⁰⁸Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 338f.

¹⁰⁹Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 338.

¹¹⁰Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 340.

¹¹¹Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 338. This stage obviously does not apply to the very early church but rather to the middle ages.

¹¹²Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

¹¹³Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 333.

¹¹⁴Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 333.

development and increase of the second type was that the church did not allow such radical ideas.

Since the Church, in its organization of a universal Christian society and of civilization, allowed no scope for these radical ideas [like for example those proposed in the sermon on the mount], or, rather, was only able to tolerate them as a special class, serving her own purposes, i.e. in monasticism, these ideas were forced to find a way of development alongside the Church.¹¹⁵

However, as the sect also represents a legitimate formal social setting of Christianity, Troeltsch does not agree to accept only the church just because it represents the main stream of Christian development. Sect and church have to be viewed as two different types which are, according to Troeltsch, "both (...) a logical result of the Gospel, and only conjointly do they exhaust the whole range of its sociological influence".¹¹⁶ Already Troeltsch himself conceded that these two types do not only occur in pure forms but sometimes also impinge upon one another.¹¹⁷

21.4 Mystic-Type¹¹⁸

The third type of Christian social setting can be described much more briefly than the much more influential church-sect-dichotomy. It can be named as 'mystic-type'. It is in some ways very similar to the sect-type but more

¹¹⁵Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 330; cf. 334.

¹¹⁶Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 340.

¹¹⁷Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 340.

¹¹⁸Troeltsch does not use the term 'mystic-type'. In *Teaching* on p. 348 he referred to "purely enthusiastic and purely mystical phenomena". However, to keep in line with church-type and sect-type we chose this term. 'Spiritualism' would have been another appropriate term.

radical and entirely individualistic.¹¹⁹ Troeltsch says that the mystic-type can

appeal to the enthusiasm of the New Testament, but (...) again and again, by the New Testament itself, are thrown back upon either the ecclesiastical institutional type or upon the voluntary community of the sect.¹²⁰

Therefore it is obvious that according to Troeltsch the main Christian social settings which legitimately claim to be rooted in the New Testament are the sect-type and the church-type.¹²¹

21.5 Criticism of Troeltsch's Views

(1) Although Troeltsch himself already conceded that Paulinism "contained some very unecclesiastical elements in its pneumatic enthusiasm, and in its urgent demand for the personal holiness of the 'new creature'"¹²² it still seems to be a bit too schematic to link the sect-type mainly with Jesus' teaching and the church-type mainly with the early Paulinism. Where would this for example leave Jesus and Israel? Israel can hardly be described in terms of sect-type. And Jesus might be seen much more as a reformer within Judaism than as the indirect founder of a sect-type community. Therefore Troeltsch's view seems at this point to be rather questionable. There may very well be some truth in it as it would probably be impossible to show any evidence that Jesus wanted to set up a church. However, concerning early Paulinism one would like some more differentiation than Troeltsch offers.

¹¹⁹Theißen, 'Wanderradikalismus', 105. According to G. Theißen this type which he calls spiritualism can for example be recognized in gnostic radicalism.

¹²⁰Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 348.

¹²¹For further interest see Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342f. Cf. Hill, M., *Sociology*, 55f.

¹²²Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 342.

(2) Troeltsch deals mainly with the external relationships of the Christian social settings, such as for example their attitude towards state and society. However, he does not really describe the interior structure of the church-type and the sect-type. There is a certain lack of information in Troeltsch's work as far as the organization of these Christian communities is concerned.

(3) There is no real attempt to explain the reasons why later Christians set up such different types of groups apart from their roots in the New Testament. Troeltsch remains at this point content simply to describe things but without giving real explanations.

(4) Especially for our purpose it is a lack that Troeltsch does not include the different '*charismata*' of different Christians. This might have helped him to give some deeper insight into the reasons for different kinds of Christian communities and also into their structure. However, as Troeltsch's church-sect-dichotomy has been very influential for later contributions we have decided to include his work. The dichotomy has especially been useful to get a clearer impression of what institutionalization means.

§ 22. H. Richard Niebuhr

The view of H.R. Niebuhr gives some indication why the sect-type community normally becomes a church-type community. He gives mainly two reasons for this development:

First, as a consequence of discipline and ascetism in work the wealth of the members of the sect-type community increases. This leads to compromise with secular ethics. Further the sect-type community starts to replace lay

leadership with official clergy, another sign of institutionalization.¹²³

Second, change comes about with the second generation joining the community. They do not join the community voluntarily but are usually born into it. For them the community has to be an

educational and disciplinary institution, with the purpose of bringing the new generation into conformity with ideals and customs which have become traditional.¹²⁴

This is another significant step from sect-type towards a institutionalized and traditionalized church-type community.¹²⁵

§ 23. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann

23.1 Berger's Quasi-geographical Location of the Spirit in Church-type and Sect-type

Already Weber proposed the thesis that church-type and sect-type can be distinguished on the "membership principle".¹²⁶ He names the membership principle of the sect-type "exclusive" and the one of the church-type "inclusive". "Inclusive" in this context means that the religious group accepts low standards of admission while "exclusive" refers to "demanding rigorous tests of entry".¹²⁷ This concept must be known in order to

¹²³Niebuhr, *Sources*, 20.

¹²⁴Niebuhr, *Sources*, 19f.

¹²⁵The church-type sect-type has been much more elaborated and differentiated since the times of Weber and Troeltsch. For further interest please see the summaries in: Hill, M., *Sociology*, 71-75; 'Sect', 154-159; Robertson, *Interpretation*, 119ff.

¹²⁶Weber, *Economy I*, 56. Cf. Troeltsch, *Teaching*, 338-339.

¹²⁷Hill, M., *Sociology*, 90.

understand the background against which Berger is to be seen.

Berger traces back the concepts of church and sect to Weber's interest in Anglo-Saxon sects.¹²⁸ However, this leads Berger to note some of the weaknesses that have their reason in this geographical focus. Weber is "forced to classify present-day Baptists as a sect, merely because of their conception of church membership."¹²⁹ The same would apply even to main stream churches if Barthian ideas to abandon infant baptism became more widely accepted. Berger concludes that the membership principle cannot be the only or the main criteria to define a Christian community as church or sect.¹³⁰ This leads Berger to "pry deeper into the nature of both these phenomena in order to grasp them fully."¹³¹

Berger is proposing a new paradigm for distinguishing between different kinds of religious communities. He chooses as the guiding principle for his definition "the inner meaning of the religious phenomena (...), not certain historical accidents of their social structure. He defines sect and church as follows:

The sect (...) may be defined as a religious grouping based on the belief that *the spirit is immediately present*.

And the church (...) may be defined as a religious grouping based on the belief that *the spirit is remote*.¹³²

Berger defines the spirit as

the religious object as such, that object which will always, of course, appear to faith as a subject in action.¹³³

¹²⁸ Berger, 'Study', 469.

¹²⁹ Berger, 'Study', 470.

¹³⁰ Berger, 'Study', 470.

¹³¹ Berger, 'Study', 470.

¹³² Berger, 'Study', 474. Cf. Hill, M., *Sociology*, 92.

¹³³ Berger, 'Study', 474.

What are the results looking at the matter from Berger's point of view? First of all "this quasi-geographical character of the spirit (...) [makes] it possible to view religious groupings under the aspect of space."¹³⁴ This does not necessarily mean actual physical space but can also be taken as an analogy.

Second, Berger's distinction makes it possible not only to see church-type and sect-type in contrast to each other but also to describe sect-type groups within a church-type community. Berger draws a graphic representation of such a phenomenon:

Imagine a figure of concentric circles, the innermost designating the location of the spirit; the next circle is that of the sect, the next is the circle of the church, and beyond that is the world.(...) Only within the closed circle of the sect can the sacred, the spirit, be experienced as immediately present. The church, on the other hand, sees the spirit as remote, having to be brought near by its apparatus of mediation.¹³⁵

Berger sees this concept as a dynamic one. The spirit may become manifest in a new environment at any moment in the world or within the old and set structure of a church.¹³⁶ "The spirit blows where it wills."¹³⁷

Concerning the time aspect the sect may be a lasting or a transitory grouping, while the church is a lasting setting.¹³⁸

Berger's concept gives the opportunity to break up the very static boundaries resulting from setting church-type and sect-type communities opposite one another.

One has to keep in mind that "spirit" as used by Berger is not necessarily to be identified with what Christians

¹³⁴Berger, 'Study', 474. Cf. Hill, M., *Sociology*, 92.

¹³⁵Berger, 'Study', 475.

¹³⁶Cf. Wach, *Sociology*, 75, who describes Ph.J. Speners *collegia pietatis* as *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, i.e as a sect-type community within a church.

¹³⁷Berger, 'Study', 475. Cf. John 3.8.

¹³⁸Berger, 'Study', 475f.

understand as the third person of the Trinity. Berger uses "spirit" in a much wider sense.¹³⁹

We shall now have a closer look how Berger and his fellow sociologist Luckmann describe the development from sect-type to church-type communities from an anthropological point of view.

23.2 Berger and Luckmann on "Institutionalization"

Since Weber proclaimed that 'charisma' cannot remain stable and therefore "becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both"¹⁴⁰ many sociologists have followed him on this line. Parallel to this Weber and others also proclaimed a development from sect-type to church-type.

Concerning the development of individuals and groups Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann¹⁴¹ have tried to describe this as institutionalization.¹⁴² They come from an anthropological starting point. They assume that "all human activity is subject to habitualization."¹⁴³ That means that "any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern."¹⁴⁴ The reason for this habitualization is a psychological one. The individual does no longer have to

¹³⁹Cf. Berger, 'Study', 474: "The spirit may be said, then, to create the religious experience in which man encounters that which is sacred - the *numen*, to use Otto's term."

¹⁴⁰Weber, *Economy I*, 246.

¹⁴¹Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*.

¹⁴²Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 65-109. This description owes quite a lot to modern anthropology. Berger and Luckmann make especially use of the work of the anthropologists H. Plessner and A. Gehlen. Cf. 18.

¹⁴³Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 70.

¹⁴⁴Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 70.

make new decision each time a situation occurs for a second time or even more frequently. Thus the direction and the specialization of activity is provided that is lacking in man's undirected instinctual structure, "in man's biological equipment".¹⁴⁵ This brings psychological relief. Habitualization results in a building up of

a stable background in which human activity may proceed with a minimum of decision-making most of the time, [and] it frees energy for such decisions as may be necessary on certain occasions. In other words, the background of habitualized activity opens up a foreground for deliberation and innovation.¹⁴⁶

The important step from habitualization, which applies to the individual, towards institutionalization, which applies also to a group,

occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution.¹⁴⁷

That means that a certain type of people constitute a certain type of action. Berger and Luckmann stress that the reciprocity of typification and typicality does not only apply to the actions but also to the actors in institutions. They make it even clearer by saying: "The institution posits the actions of type X will be performed by actors of type X."¹⁴⁸

Or to define it more theoretically:

The typifications of habitualized actions (...) are *available* to all members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions.¹⁴⁹

Institutions come into being under certain historical conditions. According to Berger and Luckmann, they are the products of history. Therefore they can only be understood

¹⁴⁵ Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 71.

¹⁴⁶ Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 71.

¹⁴⁷ Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 72.

¹⁴⁸ Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 72.

¹⁴⁹ Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 72.

by understanding their historical process in which they were produced.

Institutions narrow the directions in which actions could be exercised theoretically. "Institutions, by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction".¹⁵⁰ This kind of social control and additional control through laws for example function in order to maintain the reciprocity of certain actions in an institution.

Institutions can contain a considerably high number of people. However, Berger and Luckmann stress the point that institutionalizing would also occur "even if [only] two individuals began to interact *de novo*".¹⁵¹

The last step in the process of institutionalization occurs when a new generation arises.¹⁵² While habitualizations and typifications were so far the result of direct interaction - Berger and Luckmann talk of "*ad hoc* conceptions"¹⁵³ - these formations now become historical institutions. They are passed on to another generation which was not involved in setting up them.

And another quality becomes obvious:

With the acquisition of historicity, these formations also acquire another crucial quality, or, more accurately, perfect a quality that was incipient as soon as [the 'founders' of the institution] A and B began the reciprocal typification of their conduct: this quality is objectivity.¹⁵⁴

At this stage it becomes obvious that individual persons and institutions are separable.

This means that the institutions that have now been crystallized (for instance the institutions of paternity as it is encountered by the children) are

¹⁵⁰Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 72.

¹⁵¹Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 73.

¹⁵²Cf. Niebuhr's view above.

¹⁵³Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 76.

¹⁵⁴Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 76.

experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who 'happen to' embody them at the moment.¹⁵⁵

This development is very much reminiscent of the Weberian shift from '*charisma*' to "office charisma".

23.3 Conclusion

P.L. Berger has shown that church-type and sect-type groups do not only stand opposite one another. Groups with some affinity to the sect-type can exist within church-type organizations.

From a theological point of view P.L. Berger's approach to distinguish church-type and sect-type according to their attitude towards the spirit as the sacred centre point seems to be a helpful contribution.¹⁵⁶

Later on Berger's and Luckmann's view on the development of an institution has especially been used by Bengt Holmberg.¹⁵⁷

§ 24. Summary

The views of Weber, Troeltsch and others represent a whole range of sociological research which has been done in order to describe the structure of religions. We have tried to summarize their description of early Christianity.

¹⁵⁵Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 76. "In other words, the institutions are now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact."

¹⁵⁶However, one has to acknowledge that Berger's contribution does certainly not apply to all kinds of sects, especially those from non-Christian backgrounds. It is therefore up to a certain extent built on an arbitrary criterion which nevertheless applies to many Christian sects.

¹⁵⁷Holmberg, *Paul*.

As a main point it can be seen that these sociologists do not really describe early Christianity within the framework of '*charisma*' and 'office' although one of them, Max Weber, brought the term '*charisma*' to attention.

Nevertheless there is a very significant parallel between some of the mainly theological approaches which we have summarized above. According to Sohm, we have seen a decline from a charismatic community towards the Catholic Church which is ruled according to canon law. This contrast has been described as one between the poles of '*charisma*' and 'office', virtuosity and professionalism, spirit and letter, religious freedom and confession, laymen and clergy and so on. The contrast can be abstracted in terms of the tension between progressive on one side and conservative on the other side.¹⁵⁸

The above examples of sociology of religions also know this kind of tension. They describe it in terms of sect-type and church-type,¹⁵⁹ a contrast which has been very

¹⁵⁸ We recognize that the terms "progressive" and "conservative" may involve difficulties. They may not be seen as value-free and may evoke very different connotations for different people. We therefore want to clarify them. The term "progressive" in our usage is meant to point out the newness of the sect-type community. A sect-type community normally emphasizes its being close to the starting point or its origin, or just its new start in history. It could be characterized as living more in the immediacy of new and fresh experience and inspiration.

On the other side a church-type community is more likely to emphasize its past, the traditions it has been built on. Therefore it is often concerned with the conservation of traditional issues in the present time.

However, we want to use both terms in a value-free sense.

¹⁵⁹ The less important types of Monasticism and Mysticism have been left out in order to stress the main points of comparison.

influential for the later sociology of religions.¹⁶⁰ The sect-type represents the progressive stage of a religious community and the church-type stands for the conservative stage. The chronological development from 'charisma' towards 'office' as it has been described by Sohm and others can in sociological terms be described in terms of the development from sect-type towards church-type.

For our purposes it seems to be possible to make use of sociological contributions in three areas:

(1) Charismatic authority and the charismatic community (Weber):

M. Weber has provided some insight into the characteristics of charismatic authority. We have noted some differences to the Pauline concept of 'charisma'. The interdependence and interaction between charismatic leader and the charismatic community will be looked at later on concerning the gift of prophecy and its discerning according to Paul.

(2) The sect-type church-type dichotomy (Troeltsch; Berger):

The church-type sect-type dichotomy shows how the same tension that exists between 'charisma' and 'office' influences not only individuals but the whole structure of communities. It shifts our focus from individuals to groups. In addition to this Berger has shown that sect-type and church-type communities can not just be distinguished by means of formal criteria like membership but that also a distinction concerning the centre is possible: a quasi-geographical distinction concerning the location of the sacred corresponding to the belief.

¹⁶⁰ See Kehrer, *Einführung*, 158ff.; Wilson, *Religion; Sects*; Wilson offers a treatment of modern sects. However, his investigation does not deal with our area of interest, e.g. the relationship between 'charisma' and 'office'. See also Niebuhr, *Sources*.

Church-type and sect-type are especially in the later sociological discussion no longer necessarily referring to groups which strictly oppose each other (Niebuhr; Berger). Thus we will have to face the question whether also '*charisma*' and 'office' or at least elements of them characterize different parts of the early Pauline churches.

(3) The reasons for institutionalization (Weber; Niebuhr; Berger/Luckmann): Sociology has given us further reasons why the development from sect-type to church-type or in theological terms from charismatic structure to institutionalization happens. Weber first of all contributed an elaborated description of how institutionalization happens. Reasons why it happens were contributed by Niebuhr and Berger/Luckmann. Some are the changes caused by wealth, the shift happening through the rise of the second generation and a general human need for habitualization.

However unlike the theological judgment that this development was a decline or fall the sociologists try to describe it in a value-free way.¹⁶¹

As we will see in the next chapter many theologians have made use of sociological methodology and knowledge. Therefore it will be useful to review some of their research.

¹⁶¹ Especially Weber's view faces the difficulty that '*charisma*' was originally by no means a value-free term. According to Paul, '*charisma*' must be judged as a positive thing because it is God's gift of grace. Therefore, with reference to Paul, the development from a charismatic community towards the institutionalized church is in danger of being understood as a negative decline.

Part Three

THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES MAKING USE OF SOCIOLOGY

§ 25. Introduction

Troeltsch is a good example of a theologian who has also been working as a sociologist. However, at a later stage biblical scholars began to make more and more use of scientific methods developed by the human sciences.

At this point it is important to make a distinction between socio-historical and sociological approaches. We shall understand in the following that socio-historical approaches are characterized by their use of the social situation which really existed in history as opposed to constructing ideas or hypothetical models. Concerning our area we shall have to look at social structures like "family", "state", "society", "association" or "household". This approach can mainly be seen in the works of E.A. Judge, C. Hill, G. Theißen, W. Meeks, D. Tidball and R. Banks.¹ In the following we shall make use especially of Judge's, C. Hill's and Theißen's contributions.

In contrast to this we shall define as sociological approaches those which describe their object by using abstract concepts such as we have seen mainly in the work of Weber. An ideal-typical approach can be seen in the work of B. Holmberg. We are conscious that many works can not clearly be put in one or the other category but sometimes make use of both approaches.

¹ See bibliography.

The contributions of Judge, Hill and Theißen are not primarily concerned with the question of 'charisma' and 'office'. However, we have decided that they are important for a fuller understanding of early church structures mainly for two reasons:

Firstly, we have seen that the paradigm of 'charisma' and 'office' has been very helpful in gaining some understanding of the regularity of certain ministries. However, on the whole this antithesis is an abstract concept which from a historical perspective is alien to the biblical texts.² The same applies from a different perspective to sociological concepts which also try to analyze the historical settings from a modern perspective by using abstract concepts. We do not by any means deny that both the above concepts have been helpful in gaining a fuller understanding of early Christian church structures. However, this leaves us with the question of what kind of concepts the people in biblical times may have used to describe the early Christian groups. Therefore we have decided to involve the socio-historical contributions of Judge, Hill and Theißen. They will offer us more concrete ideas of historical social settings and a different perspective of early church order. Thus these contributions may be seen as an important supplement to the debate concerning 'charisma' and 'office'.

Secondly, some relationships between 'charisma' such as *glossolalia* and a certain stratum have been claimed.³ Therefore we seem to be justified in looking at these aspects of socio-historical contributions as well.

² Cf. Ellis, E.E., *Theology*, 88: "But one may question whether the antithesis between charism and office, Spirit and form, that they [certain Continental theologians] postulated is a proper perspective from which to understand the Pauline conception or praxis." However, we have tried to show that this antithesis offers a helpful perspective.

³ Cf. § 27.5 and § 28.3.

IV THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL APPROACH IN A
THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

§ 26. E. A. Judge

26.1 Judge's Socio-historical Approach

When the ancient historian Edwin A. Judge published his book *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century* and his article 'The Early Christians as a Scholastic Community'⁴ in 1960 there was hardly any up-to-date work in this area.

We have seen in the sociological views above that social transition - for example from sect-type to church-type - is of very special interest for the sociologist. Judge points out that the

New Testament is itself the product of [such kinds of] (...) shift. Its writers are mainly Jews of Palestinian associations, their readers the Greek-speaking members of Hellenistic communities. It interprets the religious significance of certain events in Judaea to a public unfamiliar with that situation.⁵

To put it more bluntly: the New Testament shows Christianity on its way from Jews in Judaea to Hellenists in the rest of the ancient world. Christianity moves into a new environment. According to Judge, this shift involves cultural adjustments. Once Christianity is established up to the stage of a sect "it belongs inevitably, as a social phenomenon, to the Hellenistic republics."⁶ Judge claims

⁴ German translation: 'Die frühen Christen als scholastische Gemeinschaft'.

⁵ Judge, *Pattern*, 9.

⁶ Judge, *Pattern*, 14. However, it seems to be a bit anachronistic to speak of "republics" at this stage.

that the sect's "thinking and behaviour naturally reflect the social institutions of these states."⁷ In order to detect the influence that the Hellenistic environment had on the early Christian communities Judge compares it with other social settings of that time. He describes the republican institutions (*politeia*),⁸ the household community (*oikonomia*) and the unofficial associations (*koinonia*).⁹ In order to answer the question how people outside the Christian communities might have classified these groups Judge describes especially the Pauline churches in terms of a "scholastic community".¹⁰ We will summarize his descriptions in the following but only as far as our topic is concerned.

26.2 The Household Community: οἰκονομία¹¹

Judge points out the importance of the social setting of the household especially in the very particular situation in Judaea.

But in an area where the republican institutions had never been established, the autonomy of the household under its despotic head was still taken for granted in New Testament times. Lords and masters, servants and stewards; they are familiar figures in the parables of Jesus.¹²

However, it was not only in this area that the household was an important social unit of society. The Roman republic

⁷ Judge, *Pattern*, 14.

⁸ We will leave out the republican institutions (*politeia*) - Judge, *Pattern*, 18-29 - as it seems to give no contribution to our area of interest. However, a good summary may be found in: Tidball, *Introduction*, 76-79.

⁹ Judge, *Pattern*, 18-48.

¹⁰ Judge, 'Christen', 131-164.

¹¹ Judge, *Pattern*, 30-39.

¹² Judge, *Pattern*, 30. However, it is not at all obvious that republican institutions would have caused the decline in the dominance of the *pater familias*. Judge's view seems to be rather questionable at this point.

also recognized the powers the Roman *pater familias* enjoyed over his family and "the rights and duties imposed by the relationship of *clientela*."¹³

Not only the relatives of the *pater familias* were members of this kind of household, but freedmen and other people also associated themselves with this social setting for mutual benefit. They had to show loyalty towards the head of the family and therefore they could expect their material and social needs to be met. "The intimacy of this grouping offered the kind of security that an over-extended republic was no longer felt to afford."¹⁴

Not just smaller social settings like families were organized in this way. Although Judge hesitates to say that the whole republic was organized as a universal *clientela* he points out that Augustus in his *Res Gestae* expresses his relationship to the public in terms of "the formal and universal acknowledgement of him as *Pater Patriae*."¹⁵ This shows the paternalism which was the important basis of the power of the Caesar. Judge draws the conclusion that

The perpetuation of the Caesarian system was not the result of a sinister dynasticism: it was the product of the family's obligations to its own tradition, and the loyalty of the dependents to the patronal household.¹⁶

This gives the impression that the importance of the *clientela*-system can hardly be overestimated in that period of time. The household community was fundamental in ancient society.

Like the republic the household was also linked together by religion. The household "expressed its solidarity in a common religion."¹⁷ This is also very important for the early Christian groups: Many conversions at this early

¹³ Judge, *Pattern*, 31.

¹⁴ Judge, *Pattern*, 31.

¹⁵ Judge, *Pattern*, 32.

¹⁶ Judge, *Pattern*, 33.

¹⁷ Judge, *Pattern*, 35.

stage were in fact household conversions. Judge gives the households of the Roman army officer Cornelius (Acts 10.1-48), that of Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16.14f.), that of the Corinthian city's jailer (Acts 16.33), that of Stephanas (1 Cor 1.16) and that of the chief ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18.8) as examples for such conversions of households. The social setting of a household was not only of some importance as far as people's conversions were concerned.

Not only was the conversion of a household the natural or even necessary way of establishing the new cult in unfamiliar surroundings, but the household remained the soundest basis for the meetings of Christians.¹⁸

Christians did not exist as undifferentiated units but they were much more likely household groups. Judge supposes that the New Testament phrase "the church (sc. meeting) in one's house"¹⁹ denotes either "the meeting of a larger body of Christians through the hospitality of a particular household, or the members of the Christian meeting as separately constituted who happen to belong to the household concerned."²⁰

New Testament writers do not just use this social setting to describe these Christian gatherings. They also use it to express their theological ideas. They talk for example of "God's household" (Eph 2.19) and "the household of faith" (Gal 6.10).

Unfortunately Judge does not describe any concrete consequences that the household setting might have had on the structure of the early Christian communities.²¹

¹⁸ Judge, *Pattern*, 36.

¹⁹ Judge, *Pattern*, 37.

²⁰ Judge, *Pattern*, 37.

²¹ Cf. Filson, 'Significance', 105-112.

As we have already seen in the work of E. Hatch a parallel to Christian communities were the "religious societies (...) [which] gave formal expression to their unity in the worship of a god."²³ There were religious societies whose members belonged to a common profession or industry, as for example the silversmiths at Ephesus (Acts 19.24,27). They were linked together in worshipping a god or goddess. Apart from that these societies offered "occasion for convivial gathering" and as a characteristic activity they celebrated dinners under the aegis of the deity they worshipped.²⁴ "They also acted as friendly societies, holding common funds for charity, and in particular offering security of burial."²⁵ Judge concedes "that there is a serious lack of information about their membership and activities in themselves."²⁶

Also the Christian groups can be thought of in terms of religious societies. They were probably different from other societies in two areas. Although they maintained international links they had no "recognized national seat for their cult".²⁷ And as another abnormal peculiarity their members were drawn from a very broad geographical area.²⁸

However, like the others they could be named after "the god whose patronage they claimed."²⁹ Although, according to Judge, they did not like to be named as Christians it

²² Judge, *Pattern*, 40-48.

²³ Judge, *Pattern*, 40.

²⁴ Judge, *Pattern*, 40.

²⁵ Judge, *Pattern*, 40.

²⁶ Judge, *Pattern*, 41.

²⁷ Judge, *Pattern*, 44.

²⁸ Judge, *Pattern*, 44.

²⁹ Judge, *Pattern*, 44.

"certainly does not mean that they were unwilling to be thought of as forming an association of the usual kind."³⁰

Judge describes the Christian community in Jerusalem as modeled on a regular system of government. They had a "board of special commissioners who administered the community", an additional board (...) to deal with financial affairs" and an "advisory council of senior members."³¹ Vacancies were filled "by the recognized republican method of sortition from a preselected field"³² (Acts 1.23,26) or by election by the membership plus confirmation by the original board (Acts 6.2-6).³³

According to Judge, the Christian group at Antioch "seems to be constituted simply as an assembly, under charismatic leadership"³⁴

Judge concludes that the "Christian associations were themselves incorporated, and recognized as part of the

³⁰ Judge, *Pattern*, 45.

³¹ Judge, *Pattern*, 45 f.

³² Judge, *Pattern*, 45.

³³ Cf. Fitzmyer, 'Christianity', 250f.: Fitzmyer shows that the "commission is given to Matthias by the 'Lord' himself (2:24) through the casting of the lot" (250). This method was well known in the OT both for priestly functions in the temple (cf. 1 Chron 24.5; 26.13f.; Neh 10.34; etc.) and for service in the army (Judg 20.9). It was also in use in the Essene community. Therefore the method applied to the election of Matthias has its parallels rather in these areas than in the republic.

³⁴ Judge, *Pattern*, 46. Unfortunately Judge does not define what he means by "charismatic leadership". However, as he does not expect "any constitutional novelty" it may be that he follows Max Weber's socio-psychological concept of the "charismatic leader". Judge does not give the impression that he thinks of a community where all members participate in the life of the group according to their individual gifts of grace.

normal social order".³⁵ He describes their social settings in terms of the contemporary societies.³⁶

26.4 The Early Churches as Scholastic Communities

Facing the question "what their contemporaries would have made of them"³⁷ Judge tries to describe the early churches, especially the Pauline ones, as scholastic communities. He argues that the early Christian churches "were founded and to some extent carried on under the auspices of professional preachers, which makes them parallel in some respects to the philosophical movements of the day."³⁸ According to Judge, the character of the Christian mission was mainly an academic one which he claims is also the reason why we know so much more about this movement than about all the other religious movement of those days. He judges that Christian literature deals almost entirely with these intellectual aspects and that we therefore know much more about ethical and theological topics than about the questions of religious practice.³⁹

³⁵ Judge, *Pattern*, 48.

³⁶ Judge, 'Christen', 136: He describes the main thesis of his book *Pattern* as follows: "Man kann sagen, daß die ersten Kirchen in den von der paulinischen Mission berührten heidnischen Städten Genossenschaften waren, die von lokalen Standespersonen gefördert wurden und deren Mitgliedschaft sich aus den Angehörigen der verschiedenen sozialen Abstufungen zusammensetzte."

³⁷ Judge, 'Christians', 8. Cf. 'Christen', 137: "Wir müssen nicht nur feststellen, wer die Christen waren und welches Verhältnis sie als Gruppe zur gesellschaftlichen Struktur hatten, sondern auch, wofür sie als Gruppe existierten, welche Aktivitäten sie pflegten, und was ihre Zeitgenossen wohl über sie gedacht haben."

³⁸ Judge, 'Christians', 125. Cf. 'Christen', 148.

³⁹ Judge, 'Christen', 148.

Later on some people were also elected to deal with the finances. The sects developed towards churches which were looked after by professional preachers travelling from one Christian community to the other.⁵¹

26.7 Discussion of Judge's Views

(1) The view that has probably been most influential for the later discussion was the thesis that Christianity at its very beginnings was not just a movement of protesting proletarians but that it contained people from a broad variety of social backgrounds. Malherbe has called this thesis a "new consensus". We will have to ask later on whether this social structure affected the structure of the Christian groups. This question was not really faced by Judge.

(2) Unfortunately Judge does not really elaborate on what the influence of their contemporary social setting was on the structure of the individual Christian communities. How did the already existing structure of the household in which the Christians met affect the ruling of the whole congregation? Were the more wealthy people more influential when it comes to questions of power and authority? Judge does not answer these questions. We will have to keep his conclusions in mind and to see whether they will lead us to answers of our questions about the structure of the Early Church.

(3) Judge's view is very much based on the impression given by Luke in Acts. Meeks offers the criticism that

Judge's sketch is bold and impressionistic, based more on the account in Acts than on the evidence in the letters and ignores critical questions about both kinds of sources.⁵²

⁵¹ Judge, 'Christen', 148.

⁵² Meeks, *Christians*, 82.

Indeed Judge pays hardly any attention to these differences. To give an example: Judge bases on the evidence of Acts his argument that Paul was recognized as a sophist with a good ability as an orator. It can hardly be doubted that Luke presents Paul in Acts at least as a splendid orator having arguments with Greek philosophers (Acts 17.18), giving even a speech in the Athenian Court of the Areopagus (Acts 17.19ff.) and quoting Greek poets (Acts 17.28).⁵³ However, Judge does not face the contrast that the Christians in Corinth were certainly not impressed by Paul's rhetoric. Paul himself quotes them: "'His letters', so it is said, 'are weighty and powerful; but as a speaker he is beneath contempt'" (2 Cor 10.10 REB). This is certainly not Paul, the great sophistic orator. Judge should take this contrast into account.

(4) Judge emphasizes the intellectual side of Paul's teaching where questions of ethics and doctrine are discussed. This is one of the main reasons which leads him to describe the early Christians in terms of a scholastic community. As Malherbe puts it: "[Judge] suggests that the issues between Paul and his Christian rivals involved academic belief rather than religious practice."⁵⁴ However, it seems to be doubtful whether these two aspects were actually separated in Paul's letters.

Just to give two example: what about the very important passage Rom 6.1-11 on baptism? Does Paul in these verses deal with ethical questions or with ritual questions or with doctrinal questions? Is it just an intellectual issue or also practical? One would find it rather difficult to decide about these different categories. Or what about the regulation concerning meat which had been consecrated to heathen deities (1 Cor 8). Just ethical or also ritual? One

⁵³ Judge, 'Christen', 153.

⁵⁴ Malherbe, *Aspects*, 53.

would again find it rather difficult to decide about these different categories. Concentration exclusively on any one of these aspects blinds us to the others which are also present.

26.8 Conclusion

Judge's view as a whole must be viewed as an early step forwards concerning the horizon of our contemporary attempts to describe early Christianity in socio-historical terms. Judge was certainly very much ahead of the discussion when he published his views from 1960 onwards.

As we have seen above, the work lacks in some areas elaboration and differentiation. This must be criticized from our later point of view. Nevertheless, it has evoked considerable discussion as we will see further on and is still valuable as far as some of the contributions are concerned. Especially his views on the social stratification of early Christianity are still very valuable.⁵⁵

§ 27. Clifford Hill

27.1 Introduction

Clifford S. Hill submitted his Ph.D.-thesis with the title 'The Sociology of the New Testament Church to A.D. 62: An Examination of the Early New Testament Church in Relation to its Contemporary Social Setting' at the University of Nottingham in 1972.

⁵⁵ Note for example Malherbe, *Aspects*, 31, who even calls Judge's views on the social stratification of early Christianity a "new consensus".

Hill does by no means deny the spiritual nature of the Early Church as the teaching of Paul shows it.⁵⁶ However, he also does not want to deny or ignore the social influences of social settings of that times.⁵⁷

Hill mainly focuses on the existence of rich and poor. However, there are three areas in his thesis which are of some interest for us: contemporary social settings to the Early Church and their influence, the question of unity or diversity of early Christianity, and of course the existence of rich and poor.

27.2 The Influence of Other Social Settings on the Structure of the Early Church

Hill investigates the social settings of *oikonomia* and *koinonia*. For our purposes the social setting of the household is of some interest.⁵⁸

As it has already been pointed out by Judge, many conversions into early Christianity were household conversions. Following this line, Hill assumes the existence of house-churches, but not only because of the testimony of Acts. He is very much aware of the problems of Acts as source material for the Early Church.⁵⁹ Therefore he locates not only several house-churches which occur in the Pauline letters⁶⁰ but also tries to draw conclusions from the list of greeting in Rom 16. In Rom 16.11 Paul

⁵⁶ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 13.

⁵⁷ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 15: "The members of the primitive church were not only products of a theological idea (...) [but] also products of their time."

⁵⁸ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 207-267.

⁵⁹ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 21-43.

⁶⁰ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 234: He refers to Rom 16.5,23; 2 Cor 16.19; Col 4.15; Phlm 1-3 where different house-churches are mentioned.

mentions "those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord's fellowship" (REB). Hill argues that Narcissus as the householder was not a Christian and that only some of his household had accepted Christ. However, this was obviously not a household-conversion as the householder obviously had not been the leading figure towards Christianity. Therefore, Hill argues, Paul had to mention the Christians in this household in this extraordinary way. Paul did not name them personally but as "individuals only have significance as members of their own particular group",⁶¹ he used the name of their householder Narcissus.⁶² This notice leads Hill to the conclusion that the other single persons in the list are not ordinary members of households but householders who represent a converted household.

The fact that Christians mainly met in smaller groups like households - Hill also uses the term *koinonia* in order to describe this social setting - also led to some problems which we will discuss in the following: It is the fragmentation of Christianity into numerous small-groups rather than its overall unity.⁶³

⁶¹ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 227.

⁶² Wedderburn, *Reasons*, 16: "The household of Narcissus (16.11) may be that of Claudius' former freedman; true, he too had died by then, shortly after his master, but his household also may have been absorbed into the imperial household"; Therefore this "might well simply be [a reference] to a group of people designated by that name; it need not imply that they met separately as a church. Yet this too would be possible" (45).

⁶³ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 303: Hill notes that the unity of the early church as it is presented in Acts is more a theological concept than reality. He says: "Nevertheless we were forced to the view that the *koinonia* on a universal scale existed only in the idealized picture of the church in the theology of the writer of Acts." Later on he shows that also Paul tried to encourage the individual house-groups to share in a universal identity. Cf. 304.

27.3 Unity or Diversity of Early Christianity?

Hill points out that the "koinonia was essentially a small-group ethos."⁶⁴ As we have seen above the early Christians mainly met in smaller groups like households. "The Christians were not organized into a community either geographically or socially."⁶⁵ Hill names four elements which characterized the *koinonia* of the Christian house-groups:

(1) "There was a sense of 'common belongingness' among the members of the group similar to the ties of kinship within the household but extending beyond blood relationships to include all the believers in the particular group."⁶⁶

(2) "Those who were closely linked in the Christian house-churches felt impelled to share their material possessions and to practise a form of communism in relation to property."⁶⁷

(3) "The common life experienced by the members of the groups was strongly religiously orientated and was believed by the members to be an expression of the life of Christ in the world."⁶⁸

(4) "The house-congregations were motivated by a powerful sense of mission."⁶⁹

Although these elements in reality mainly applied to the individual Christian groups Hill notices that

Paul worked hard to extend it [the *koinonia*] on a church universal scale particularly in such matters as Christian giving but he did not find it easy.⁷⁰

Therefore a contrast between Paul's universal understanding of the church and the reality of many small groups can be seen.

⁶⁴ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304.

⁶⁵ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 245.

⁶⁶ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 246.

⁶⁷ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 247.

⁶⁸ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 247.

⁶⁹ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 247f.

⁷⁰ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304.

Hill describes the implications of these small-groups for the participants from a socio-psychological point of view. He tries to draw the conclusion "that man can only react meaningfully within a very small circle of personal relationships."⁷¹ A natural limit to the numbers of people within these groups seems to be given by the human capacity to engage only in a certain limited number of deep personal relationships. Nevertheless, Hill does not reject Paul's aim. He tries to understand him in such a way that

the establishment of a relationship of brotherly love and mutual acceptance to the degree of sharing one another's burdens is possible between a multiplicity of small-groups.⁷²

In order to describe the concept of having a contrast between a narrower and a broader kind of community Hill defines the "social ethos of the Early Church as being directed towards the creation of a 'community within a community'".⁷³

Early Christianity created community where in a sociological context community did not exist before. The basic principle for being able to participate in the Christian community can be described as follows:

Christianity recognized only the relationship between the individual and God-in-Christ as a valid and significant form of differentiation.⁷⁴

Therefore Christianity did not only make use of already existing links as for example through building on the household system but it also created community in new areas. As we will see in the following part Christianity overcame for example the stratification which was based on material wealth.

⁷¹ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304.

⁷² Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304.

⁷³ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304.

⁷⁴ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 305.

27.4 The Existence of Rich and Poor within Early
Christian Groups

We have already seen in the work of E.A. Judge that early Christianity was not just a movement of poor and economically depressed people. Hill agrees with this view. He concludes.

"Christianity in its earliest days was not just a workers' revolutionary organization as it has sometimes been represented."⁷⁵ He clearly opposes Weber, Troeltsch, Engels, Marx, and Kautsky at this point.⁷⁶

In addition to many arguments that we have already seen in Judge's elaboration Hill also quotes the early Second Century witness Pliny who in his correspondence with the Emperor Trajan during the latter's period of office as proconsul of Bithynia and Pontus, 111-112 A.D.⁷⁷ mentions the Christians. With reference to persecutions of Christians he reports that "many of every age, every class, and of both sexes are being accused and will continue to be accused".⁷⁸ This confirms the view that the stratification of early Christianity included people from all social classes but not just from the bottom of society.

One argument that has sometimes been used as an indicator for the existence of people with a lower education within the Early Church has been *glossolalia*.⁷⁹ Hill discusses the

⁷⁵ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 293.

⁷⁶ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 293-297, for Hill's further discussion arguing against the views of Weber, Troeltsch, Engels, Marx, and Kautsky concerning this point.

⁷⁷ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 297.

⁷⁸ Pliny, *Ep.* X.96, §9: "Multi enim omnis aetatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexus etiam vocantur in periculum et vocabuntur."

⁷⁹ Cf. Theißen, *Aspects*, 301, who assumes that "glossolalia could have exerted great attraction precisely for the less educated and the weak."

different possibilities of its assumed significance for different strata. This discussion will be summarized in the following lines.

27.5 *Glossolalia* as an Indicator for a Certain Strata?

The basic view that is to be questioned is that it is widely assumed in sociological literature that the phenomenon of the practice of tongues is confined exclusively to the lower social ranks in society.⁸⁰

However, we have seen above that Christianity tried to overcome the distinction of human beings according to wealth and rank. Therefore, from a theological point of view, one must ask the question why a gift of grace like *glossolalia* should be limited to such 'old' strata.

Facing the testimony of the New Testament Hill describes three possibilities:

(1) "Glossolalia was only practiced among the lower social-classes in the Christian community. (...) But we are then left with the difficulty of interpreting Paul's correspondence with the Corinthians. His strictures on the practice of tongues there indicate that it was the more influential members who were finding more satisfaction in ecstatic utterance than in using their intellectual gifts for the erudition of the church."⁸¹

(2) "Glossolalia was common to all social classes. Paul himself claims to have possessed the gift of ecstatic utterance. (...) we may account for the phenomenon being found amongst all social-classes due to a shared sense of social insecurity. (...) glossolalia could be a religious expression"

of this personal insecurity which was common to all classes in those days in the Graeco-Roman world.

(3) "Glossolalia was common to all members of the early church, the privileged as well as the under-privileged,

⁸⁰ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 299.

⁸¹ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 299f.

the socially secure as well as the insecure. Perhaps sociologists have so far failed properly to evaluate the whole religious phenomena of tongues due to a failure to see it within its cultural context."⁸²

These considerations do not lead Hill to any certain answer. However, he supposes that *glossolalia* was at some time common to all members of the church in all places. He assumes further on that this practice was discontinued at a fairly early date.⁸³

27.6 Discussion of Hill's views

(1) Hill's investigation of the question of the existence of poor and rich in the Early Church helps to substantiate Judge's view that there were people from all social strata in those Christian groups.

(2) Hill is definitely right to emphasize the importance of the households for the gatherings of Christians in those times. However, one must question whether he overstates this view. According to Hill, the household seems to be the only really important social setting which had influence on the structure of early Christianity. One may ask the question whether other social settings, like the religious societies for example, were also at least of some influence.

(3) Although Hill's summary of the different possibilities concerning the question whether *glossolalia* was confined specifically to one stratum he fails to come to a clear conclusion. One would like him to emphasize more that there is no evidence in the New Testament at all that

⁸² Hill, C., 'Sociology', 300. Hill points out that in modern times the movement of tongue-speaking "is cutting across all socio-economic classes." Cf. Theißen, *Aspects*, 301, n14.

⁸³ Hill, C., 'Sociology', 301.

the gift of tongues was restricted to any class. It must rather be said that not only grace applies to all different kinds of human beings (Gal 3.28) but of course also the gifts of grace.

27.7 Conclusion

Hill's thesis seems to be especially valuable in areas where he gives further substantiation to views which have already been expressed before. This is certainly true for the question of poor and rich which was his main question. Although he raises many other questions as well one would want further elaboration in many areas like the questions concerning *glossolalia*, the community of goods or the concrete structure of the house-churches. However, one must not forget that Hill wrote his thesis at a time when the whole sociological approach to the New Testament was still at a very early stage of development.

§ 28. Gerd Theißen

28.1 Introduction

G. Theißen has published a number of articles in which he deals mainly with the social stratification of the Corinthian church.⁸⁴ His main thesis is that the tensions which characterize the communal life of the church in Corinth are a result of the social stratification.⁸⁵ This confronts us with the question how much economic factors

⁸⁴ Theißen, 'Integration'; 'Legitimation'; 'Starken'; 'Schichtung'; ET in: *Setting*.

⁸⁵ Cf. Malherbe, *Aspects*, 71. Malherbe also presents a summary of Theißen's views: 71-84.

may have influenced the structure of the early Christian communities.⁸⁶

First of all we should have a look at Theißen's description of the stratification in the Corinthian church which he regards as characteristic for the Hellenistic congregations as such.⁸⁷

28.2 The Stratification of the Corinthian Church

Theißen's starting point is Paul's own description of the Corinthian congregation:

⁸⁶ This question was first dealt with from a Marxist perspective. The Marxist K. Kautsky in his work *Foundations of Christianity* (in German already in 1908) has made mainly two contributions to the sociological analysis and interpretation of early Christianity:

First, it shows that religious consciousness may be dependent on non-religious conditions like, for example economic aspects. In a theological way this could also lead to the conclusion that God's actions stand in a relationship with non religious factors or are somehow provoked or even determined by non-religious and earthly conditions.

Second, the hypothesis of struggle between these non-religious factors has been influential for the later discussion and will be discussed below.

For Kautsky early Christianity was a movement of depressed and poor proletarians.

Other non-Marxist scholars agreed about the social level of earliest Christians. However, they denied that they had any proletarian consciousness. Cf. Dibelius, *Urchristentum*, 20f.

However, more recent contributions from a Marxist background have sometimes come to the conclusion that lower classes like most of the slaves were not really of any importance within early Christianity. Cf. Kyrtatas, *Structure*, 181-186. Especially Aristocrats were "persistently and warmly encouraged to join the Christian churches" (182). Thus even some Marxist writers have moved away from the myth that early Christianity was a movement of economically deprived revolutionary proletarians.

⁸⁷ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 231.

My friends, think what sort of people you are, whom God has called. Few of you are wise by any human standard, few powerful or of noble birth. Yet, to shame the wise, God has chosen what the world counts folly, and to shame what is strong, God has chosen what the world counts weakness. He has chosen things without rank or standing in the world, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order.(REB)⁸⁸

Theißen points out that there were at least some members of influential and educated classes of higher social status.⁸⁹ He draws upon four arguments to give clearer evidence for the existence of these people.

Firstly, there are for example some 'offices' mentioned like Crispus' 'office' of being a synagogue ruler.⁹⁰ Since such people were responsible for the upkeep of the building they were usually wealthy. Another example is Erastus who may have occupied the 'office' of οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως. Theißen assumes that this Erastus can be identified with a Christian of that name mentioned in Rom 16.23. Thus he would be another example of a Christian belonging to an influential class.⁹¹

Secondly, Theißen refers to the "houses".⁹² According to Theißen this refers to larger family units including male and female slaves and servants. This is regarded as a probable criterion for a higher social status of the head of the family.⁹³

Thirdly, Theißen refers to services rendered. Some cases of material expenditure are mentioned. Theißen points out to the Jerusalem collection.⁹⁴ He assumes that Paul got some material support from Stephanas. Others provided hospitality to Paul or to the whole congregation like for

⁸⁸ 1 Cor 1.26-28.

⁸⁹ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 233f.

⁹⁰ Acts 18.8. Cf. Acts 13.14. Theißen, 'Schichtung', 235.

⁹¹ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 236-245.

⁹² Acts 18.8; 1 Cor 1.16; cf. 16.15ff.

⁹³ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 245-249.

⁹⁴ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 249.

example Gaius in Corinth.⁹⁵ Since there were a lot of Christians in Corinth⁹⁶ he must have had enough space to accommodate Paul and the whole congregation.⁹⁷ Thus these people providing material support or hospitality may have been of considerable wealth.⁹⁸

Forthly, some Corinthian are reported to have been travelling.⁹⁹ Theißen assumes that some of them may have been merchants or travelling for other business reasons. Theißen concludes that some Christians must have been of upper social status to afford travel.¹⁰⁰

Theißen concedes that these criteria are not sufficient one by one. However if more than one of them applies to the same person like for example Stephanas being the head of a "house" and being reported as travelling then he was very likely a member of a higher social class.¹⁰¹

Theißen lists seventeen people being named and belonging to the Corinthian congregation. He points out that nine of these people were according to the above criteria Christians of upper social status. The people of lower social strata scarcely appear as individuals in the Corinthian correspondence.¹⁰²

However, Theißen finds them mentioned where divisions in the Corinthian congregaton are mentioned. At the Lord's supper the rich bring their own meals while the poor have

⁹⁵ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 250f.

⁹⁶ Acts 18.10.

⁹⁷ Rom 16.23.

⁹⁸ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 249-252.

⁹⁹ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 252: "Aquila and Priscilla (Rom 16.3; 1 Cor 16.19; Acts 18.18f.); Phoebe (Rom 16.1-2); Erastus (Acts 19.22); Stephanas with Achaicus and Fortunatus (1 Cor 16.15-18); Chloe's people (1 Cor 1.11). Perhaps Sothenes (1 Cor 1.1) should be added if he is identical with the Corinthian synagogue ruler of the same name (Acts 18.17)."

¹⁰⁰ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 253.

¹⁰¹ Theißen, 'Schichtung', 252.

¹⁰² Theißen, 'Schichtung', 257.

nothing.¹⁰³ Paul's rejection of material support from the Corinthians was probably only criticized by the wealthier members of the congregation.¹⁰⁴ The litigation we hear about in 1 Cor 6.1-11 probably concerned affairs of property and was probably undertaken by wealthier people.¹⁰⁵ Theißen assumes that also knowledge and wisdom, important topics in the correspondence with the Corinthians are not just to be understood theologically but refer to wise people of higher social status. At last advice is given to slaves.¹⁰⁶ This is evidence that these people of low social status were also members of the Corinthian congregation. Theißen draws also conclusions from the social structure of the city of Corinth¹⁰⁷ and from the social conditions of Paul's mission¹⁰⁸ which give further support to his main conclusion:

Hellenistic primitive Christianity was neither a proletarian movement among the lower classes nor an affair of the upper classes. On the contrary, what is characteristic for its social structure is the fact that it encompassed various strata - and thus various interests, customs, and assumptions.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³Theißen, 'Schichtung', 257. Cf. 1 Cor 11.22.

¹⁰⁴Theißen, 'Schichtung', 258. Cf. 1 Cor 9.1ff.; 2 Cor 10-13.

¹⁰⁵Theißen, 'Schichtung', 258.

¹⁰⁶Theißen, 'Schichtung', 260. Cf. 1 Cor 7.21ff.; cf. 1 Cor 12.13.

¹⁰⁷Theißen, 'Schichtung', 260-263.

¹⁰⁸Theißen, 'Schichtung', 263-267.

¹⁰⁹Theißen, *Setting*, 106. Cf. Judge, *Pattern*. In two other articles Theißen argues in a similar way. In 'Starcken' he argues that the theological quarrel concerning the consumption of meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8.4ff.) is also a quarrel between people belonging to different classes (278f.). In 'Integration' he argues that the conflict in the Corinthian congregation concerning the Lord's supper

"is to be understood as a conflict between two different patterns of conduct, both of which could be expressed by the wealthier Christians as the expectation rooted in social reality. The conflict is one between class-specific expectations on the one hand and on the other the norms of a community of love which encompasses men of different social strata" (*Setting*, 162).

However, how did this stratification of the Corinthian congregation affect its structure?

28.3 Social Strata and 'charismata'

As an example Theißen focuses on the connection between *glossolalia* and different social strata in the Corinthian church.¹¹⁰ Theißen claims that *glossolalia* was a gift especially common among the less educated and the weak Christians in Corinth.¹¹¹ He argues:

It is a plausible assumption that the separatist tendencies (...) have the same social location, that is, that ascetic inclinations, anxiety about ritual meat, and glossolalia were prevalent in the same groups as were rejection of asceticism, of food taboos, and of overestimated glossolalia. Then one could draw the following conclusion by way of analogy. The 'strong' who were free with regard to ancient food taboos probably belonged to the higher classes in Corinth, which were comparatively well integrated into the 'world' and which were reluctant to refrain from contacts and invitations. The critics of glossolalia should probably be sought in the same classes; one who favoured openness to the world in eating would probably also feel repelled by an esoteric group language. Conversely, glossolalia could have exerted great attraction precisely for the less educated and the weak.¹¹²

Theißen also points out that "ecstatic phenomena are attested precisely for women in early Christianity."¹¹³ He refers to 1 Cor 14.33b-36 - "(...) women should keep silent at the meeting (...)" (REB) - and points out that although this may be an interpolation "it is hardly coincidental that it stands in this place"¹¹⁴ where the surrounding

¹¹⁰Theißen, *Aspects*, 300-302.

¹¹¹Theißen, *Aspects*, 300-302.

¹¹²Theißen, *Aspects*, 300f.

¹¹³Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

¹¹⁴Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

context deals with *glossolalia*. Theißen also refers to other "ecstatic phenomena" like "the soothsaying girl (Acts 16:16), the prophesying daughter of Philip (Acts 21:9), the prophetess Jezebel in Thyatira (Rev. 2.20),"¹¹⁵ and examples in Montanism, Gnosticism, the Early church and also in Hellenistic cults. He points out that women who were prophesying are well attested in Corinth¹¹⁶ and proposes that glossolalia may have been "widespread among the Corinthian women."¹¹⁷ However, Theißen concedes that the "phenomenon was certainly in principle independent of sexual boundaries."¹¹⁸

28.4 Discussion

(1) Theißen contribution is certainly most valuable in describing the social stratification of the Church in Corinth. Although Theißen concedes that it is "doubtless proper to look for theological reasons, on the assumption that at the root of different behaviour are to be found different convictions about humanity, the world and God"¹¹⁹ he does not do so. Theißen mainly focuses on the sociological analysis. Thus he certainly provides a welcome new perspective. However, this can not be seen as an alternative to a theological perspective. Theißen argues that the "social analysis of a theological quarrel does not, in my [Theißen's] opinion, mean reducing it to social factors."¹²⁰ However, precisely this would happen if Theißen's views are not seen as one but not the only

¹¹⁵Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

¹¹⁶1 Cor 11.2ff.

¹¹⁷Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

¹¹⁸Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

¹¹⁹Theißen, *Setting*, 122.

¹²⁰Theißen, *Setting*, 123.

contribution to the whole discussion. One may even decide in favour of "higher estimate of the importance of the theological grounds as compared to sociological grounds on the conflicts in Corinth."¹²¹ This cannot be discussed more extensively in our framework. However, Theißen's view are very valuable in supporting E.A. Judge's and C. Hill's description of the social stratification of early Christian communities.

(2) Very questionable seems to be Theißen's attempt to see a connection between *glossolalia* and the lower classes. It is difficult to see why *glossolalia* should be mentioned in one line with asceticism or food taboos. While it is obvious for the latter that they can provoke difficulties concerning the contacts between Christians and their non-Christian friends or partners in business this does not really apply to *glossolalia*. Why should anybody speak in tongues while he is together with non-Christians? *Glossolalia* would not necessarily come in contact with non-Christians apart from their attendance at a service where *glossolalia* was used. But not even then is it clear why it should to a lesser degree distance the poor Christians from their non-Christian friends than the wealthy. Therefore it seems not to be convincing to link *glossolalia* to a certain class.¹²²

(3) Theißen is right in his observation that prophesying is remarkably often mentioned in connection with women. However, his argumentation that this should also apply to *glossolalia* seems not to be convincing. His argument is built on what is very likely a later interpolation¹²³ and thus not useful for any conclusions concerning the Corinthian church Paul had in mind. In addition to this

¹²¹ Malherbe, *Aspects*, 119.

¹²² For the discussion concerning *glossolalia* see Hill, C., 'Sociology', 299-301.

¹²³ 1 Cor 14.33b-35.

Theißen does unfortunately not offer sufficient reason why such phenomena which were "certainly in principle independent of sexual boundaries"¹²⁴ should in the Corinthian congregation be widespread especially among women.

§ 29. Summary

The contributions making use of a socio-historical approach help to describe the actual form of the early Christian communities. They have provided us mainly with three insights:

(1) The early Christians met in small groups like for example extended households.

(2) The early Christians were not limited to the lower strata of society (Judge; Hill; Theißen). They came from a wide range of different classes. This resulted in problems because of differences in wealth (Theißen).

(3) It cannot be verified that 'charismata', like for example *glossolalia*, were limited to the lower classes of society.

These three points are very important for reconstructing the communities and their members to whom Paul was writing. It seems to be much easier to imagine that small house-churches had a charismatic structure than for example communities of several hundred or more members. Charismatic interaction may work better in such small communities because it gets support by deep personal relationships of

¹²⁴Theißen, *Aspects*, 302.

the participants.¹²⁵

And it is also important to notice that such charismatic communities were by no means restricted to certain groups within society. Everybody was called to be a part of the body of Christ exercising particular gifts.

¹²⁵This assumption is based on the socio-psychological thesis, "that man can only react meaningfully within a very small circle of personal relationships." See Hill, C., 'Sociology', 304. This view seems also to be supported by the fact that Paul interrupts his lines on the spiritual gifts and their exercise in worship in 1 Cor 12 and 14 by chapter 13. 1 Cor 13 deals with the crucial importance of love among those exercising '*charismata*'. Cf. especially 1 Cor 13.1-3.

V THE SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH IN A THEOLOGICAL
CONTEXT

§ 30. John Howard Schütz

30.1 Account

Schütz published his book *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* first in 1975. In some areas he relies heavily especially on Käsemann's work. However, in addition to these parts he offers some valuable contributions in discussions with Max Weber's views. We shall examine especially these parts.

Three sociological terms are setting the framework for Schütz concept: Power, authority and legitimacy. He uses these terms as his conceptional coordinates to analyze Paul's understanding of apostolic authority.

Schütz defines and interrelates them as follows:

"Power is the source of authority"¹²⁶;
"Authority (...) [is the] interpretation of power"¹²⁷;
"Legitimacy (...) is a formalization of authority in those circumstances where the shape and texture of the social aggregate allows or demands such formalization."¹²⁸

According to Schütz "authority is a version of power as it interprets power and makes it accessible"¹²⁹ for the community. Concerning early Christianity authority becomes more formalized only after Paul. Authority becomes formalized and is then to be interpreted as legitimacy. "Legitimacy is thus the institutional application or embodiment of charisma"¹³⁰. This state can be found in nascent Catholicism and is evident in 1 Clement.

¹²⁶ Schütz, *Paul*, 21.

¹²⁷ Schütz, *Paul*, 14.

¹²⁸ Schütz, *Paul*, 21.

¹²⁹ Schütz, *Paul*, 21.

¹³⁰ Schütz, *Paul*, 20.

Therefore Schütz' main thesis is that Paul's apostleship is to be understood as interpreting his concept of authority but not yet the concept of legitimacy.

Schütz asserts that Paul's authority is rooted in the gospel. How does Schütz describe this relationship?

The relationship between gospel as missionary proclamation and gospel as the normative framework of Christian communal existence is reflected in the relationship between gospel and apostle."¹³¹

However, the gospel as the pattern of authority does not apply to Paul alone. It applies to every Christian. According to Schütz the same "response of obedient service is expected alike from each."¹³² Schütz puts it:

Ultimately, all are responsible and obedient to the same thing: the gospel; for the same purpose: service to the Church.¹³³

Thus all Christians, and Paul does not make any distinction in this respect, participate directly in the same gospel.¹³⁴ Nevertheless Paul has a specific authority within the church. Schütz says that Paul as apostle "is owned and authorized by the gospel." The apostle does not stand between the gospel and the Christian but he mediates between them. This evolves to a certain relationship between apostolic authority and social structure. Schütz says:

The basic structure of that community and its relationship to Paul as one who 'authors' the ordering arrangement which the community itself manifests is the sociology of apostolic authority.¹³⁵

How do 'charisma' and 'office' fit into this discussion? Schütz describes the "spiritual gifts as a power phenomenon".¹³⁶ These 'charismata' lead to the exercise of

¹³¹ Schütz, *Paul*, 250.
¹³² Schütz, *Paul*, 258.
¹³³ Schütz, *Paul*, 258.
¹³⁴ Schütz, *Paul*, 249.
¹³⁵ Schütz, *Paul*, 249.
¹³⁶ Schütz, *Paul*, 252.

authority, "authority as the interpretation of power."¹³⁷ Thus spirit and power are almost seen to be synonymous.¹³⁸ The '*charismata*' are seen as the individuation of the one Spirit that every Christian is given in baptism.¹³⁹ This results in practical consequences for the social setting, the Christian community. The '*charismata*' enable every Christian to serve and edify the community. The '*charisma*' thus is the ordering principle. "It orders the common life by establishing priorities and discriminating among competing manifestations of the spirit."¹⁴⁰

'Office' belongs to a later state when the "notion that charisma is a common experience" erodes and '*charisma*' thus becomes identified with "office and status". This brings about "a qualitative distinction between clergy, the ones truly 'called' and all others, the laity."¹⁴¹ Schütz sees the primary reason for this development in the

failure to perceive the essential separation between power and authority, or, to put the matter more clearly, between the power to which the apostle is subject and which he manifests, and his own person.¹⁴²

This means that 'office' bearers get in between the gospel and the newly evolving laity.

30.2

Discussion

(1) Schütz's concept is in many ways not just close to Käsemann but also to Sohm. His concept of early church

¹³⁷Schütz, *Paul*, 252.

¹³⁸Schütz, *Paul*, 253.

¹³⁹Schütz, *Paul*, 255. However, "this sense of individuation does not give license to individualism. (...) the self is submerged only in the larger *body* where it does not lose, but finally gains, its true identity."

¹⁴⁰Schütz, *Paul*, 257.

¹⁴¹Schütz, *Paul*, 278.

¹⁴²Schütz, *Paul*, 283.

order is essentially a charismatic structure. However, and here lies a very valuable contribution, it does not exist in contrast to authority. Quite on the contrary, backed up by the gospel and the Spirit as power it gives authority to all Christians as they participate in gospel and spirit.

(2) Like others Schütz describes the development of the Early Church as a fall from 'charisma' to 'office'. However, as the direct experience of all early Christians could hardly be repeated, the apostle became an exalted figure in history.

(3) Especially the description of early church order in terms of power, authority and legitimacy in clear distinction from Weber seems to be a valuable contribution for understanding the structure and development of the early Christian communities.¹⁴³

§ 31. Bengt Holmberg

31.1 Introduction

In 1978 Bengt Holmberg published his earlier Ph.D.-thesis *Paul and Power*. His main point of interest is the distribution of power in the Early Church. He investigates five different areas:

- (1) "The Distribution of Power within the Church - Paul and Jerusalem";¹⁴⁴
- (2) "The Distribution of Power within the Pauline Region of the Church" focussing especially on Paul's own authority;¹⁴⁵
- (3) "The Distribution of Power within the Local Pauline Churches" with special reference to the functional differentiation between apostles, prophets, teachers and administrators;¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³Schütz, *Paul*, 269f.: See Schütz criticizing Weber.

¹⁴⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 15-56.

¹⁴⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 57-93.

¹⁴⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 95-121.

(4) "Institutionalization of Charismatic Authority in general"¹⁴⁷

(5) "The Institutionalization of Charismatic Authority in the Primitive Church".¹⁴⁸

In addition to this Holmberg provides a broad reflection on his methodology.¹⁴⁹ We shall especially be interested in four areas of his study:

(1) His methodology;

(2) Paul's own authority as an example of authority in the Early Church;

(3) the structure of authority in the Early Church with special reference to the individual functions and 'charismata';

(4) the question of institutionalization.

31.2 B. Holmberg's Methodology

31.2.1 The Dialectical Approach

Holmberg derives his method from social anthropology.¹⁵⁰ In contrast to many other theologians - Holmberg explicitly names "the tradition stretching from Rudolf Sohm to Hans Freiherr von Campenhausen, Ernst Käsemann and Eduard Schweizer"¹⁵¹ - the sociological analysis does not start with the self-understanding of the Early Church or with "ideas or conceptions thought to be behind the interaction of the local churches, but with the interaction itself."¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 161-179.

¹⁴⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 179-192.

¹⁴⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 1-7; 125-148; 201-204.

¹⁵⁰Cf. Kee, *Truth*, 42-43.

¹⁵¹Holmberg, 'Analysis', 188f.

¹⁵²Holmberg, 'Analysis', 196. Holmberg points out that in contrast to his own investigation Sohm takes the self-understanding of the Primitive Church as his starting point. Cf. 189.

Holmberg strongly opposes any kind of idealism in historical research which as he presumes has influenced unconsciously "even some of the best of" scholarly works.¹⁵³ Although he concedes that "on most points of historical fact there is no fundamental disagreement between these works and (...) [his] work"¹⁵⁴ he accuses the "theologically determined historical construction[s]"¹⁵⁵ of not being aware "of the continuous dialectic between ideas and social structures."¹⁵⁶

Thus Holmberg develops a dialectical approach. He sees the need to advance from a purely theological investigation to an "investigation of the actual structure of authority" and from "a purely 'historical' account of the phenomena to an analysis of the nature of authority in the Primitive Church."¹⁵⁷ The nub of the matter is:

The interdependence and dialectical development of theology and social structure is the central fact that must be taken as a starting point for historical research.¹⁵⁸

It becomes clear that Holmberg does not actually oppose the merely theologically determined work but wants to point out the influence of socio-anthropological phenomena such as social structures of reality. Holmberg does not want to describe or explain the structure of the Primitive Church just on the basis of theological ideas but also on the basis of the social reality. For him it works quite the other way round as the following example shows:

Paul's theology of charisma probably did have an effect on the Corinthian church, but not before it had been

¹⁵³Holmberg, *Paul*, 201. Holmberg names Bultmann, von Campenhausen, Hainz, Käsemann, Schütz and Schweizer.

¹⁵⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 201.

¹⁵⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 202.

¹⁵⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 202. This methodological basis is very much reminiscent of C. Hill's starting point: Cf. Hill, 'Sociology', 15.

¹⁵⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 203.

¹⁵⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 203.

formulated and certainly not in any simple, straightforward fashion as if ideas could act directly on social structures.¹⁵⁹

To summarize it in a more systematic way: according to Holmberg, theology seems to provide the answer to a concrete situation¹⁶⁰ rather than to create or influence the situation.

31.2.2 The Sociological Background

Holmberg develops his socio-anthropological approach on the background of Max Weber's classical sociology of authority. However, he also tries to profit from the broad discussion after Weber.

In order to show the background for the later investigation of Paul's role as a leader and the structure of the Primitive Church it seems to be useful to take Holmberg's "model of pure charismatic (religious) authority" according to Weber into our discussion:

Pure charismatic authority is characterized by:

1. *The leader's person and way of life:*

He is considered by himself and by the subordinate members of the group

- (a) to have a personal calling direct from God,
- (b) to have magical or other superhuman powers, and
- (c) to be the group's personal 'saviour'.
- (d) He lives 'extraordinarily' ('ausseralltaglich'), has no paid or organized work, no family life, no property and does not conform to traditional custom and belief.

2. *The leader's mission:*

His God-given mission is radical, destructive and innovating; he proclaims a new message of salvation, attacks the old order ('you have heard ..., but I say'), and formulates rules for a new life. Ultimately

¹⁵⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 202.

¹⁶⁰However, this methodology seems not to take into account that theology such as the Gospel's had a part in bringing about the situation to which Paul's theology of 'charisma' reacts.

his mission aims at founding the whole social order anew.

3. *The relation of the followers to the leader:*

His adherents regard him as a 'hero' or superhuman, participating in divine reality through superior insight, strength, goodness. Their relationship to him is one of devotion, awe and absolute trust and they give priority to his words before those of all others. Obedience and support are the natural manifestations of this attitude.

4. *The behavior of the charismatic group:*

(a) All believe, obey and support the leader as stated above.

(b) All have experienced an internal revolution and been converted from ordinary life to 'the new life', which is manifested in various concrete ways.

(c) All have in common an awareness of belonging to an élite, of being holy and elect, in possession of 'salvation' and its consequences.

5. *The differentiation within the charismatic group:*

(A) The outer group, consisting of adherents who continue their ordinary way of life (work, family, property, local traditional life).

(B) The inner group, the 'staff', those who share the 'extraordinary' existence of the leader:

(a) They are personally called by the leader to be his disciples and co-workers on the basis of their charismatic qualification.

(b) They abandon family, occupation, property and tradition to live in a communistic relationship with the leader.

(c) They are appointed to their tasks directly by the leader, none of them has any authority, rank or sphere of competence of his own independent of the leader.

(d) As a consequence of (a)-(c) the staff has an élite-consciousness of a more accentuated type: they are the élite of the élite, in all respects closely related to the leader.¹⁶¹

This very thorough model will help us later on to describe Holmberg's view on the structure of authority in the Primitive Church.

¹⁶¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 149-150. In order not to overload our summary we will not especially focus on all the people belonging to the staff of the Primitive Church. Paul will be described as an example of them. For further interest one may draw attention to 151-152.

31.2.3 Restriction of Holmberg's Investigation

Before we start having a look at the application of the above methodology it seems to be necessary to draw attention to two restrictions that Holmberg himself has placed on his work.

The first concerns the historical material he looks at in his work. Holmberg restricts his investigation to "the genuine Pauline epistles, and as such (...) [he] consider[s] Rom, 1 and 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess and Philem."¹⁶² He uses only these seven letters because he wants to avoid burdening his work with the discussion of authenticity.¹⁶³

However, he also involves the Acts of the Apostles. Holmberg acknowledges the shift towards more confidence in the testimony of Acts.¹⁶⁴ He uses the information from Acts in order to supplement the sources but he is aware that he has to sift it critically.¹⁶⁵

The other restriction concerns the historical area on which his investigation focuses. With regard to the historical material Holmberg chooses for his study it is very obvious that he only treats information "concerning the Pauline sphere or region of the Church."¹⁶⁶

Holmberg's reason for focussing on the Pauline trajectory¹⁶⁷ in dealing with the question of the structure of authority in the Primitive Church derives from the whole earlier discussion of this topic. He notices that for many Protestant and some Catholic scholars the Pauline

¹⁶²Holmberg, *Paul*, 4.

¹⁶³Holmberg, *Paul*, 4, n9.

¹⁶⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 13.

¹⁶⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 4.

¹⁶⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 4.

¹⁶⁷The term "trajectory" has been introduced by Köster/Robinson, *Trajectories*.

trajectory seems to be even of "normative importance within the New Testament."¹⁶⁸

31.3 "Paul's Charismatic Authority within His Churches"¹⁶⁹

Holmberg describes Paul's charismatic authority by comparing the biblical testimony concerning the apostle with the model of pure charismatic authority according to Weber. Therefore we may in our summary also refer back to this model which can be found above.

According to Holmberg, Jesus is the only person in the New Testament with pure charismatic authority.¹⁷⁰ There is no successor to Jesus in this respect. Paul regards himself "as having received a personal call to his apostolate, direct from God (1a)".¹⁷¹ In 2 Cor 12.12 and in Rom 15.18f. the apostle is referring to superhuman powers (1b) which are "taken for granted by himself and others".¹⁷²

"But paradoxically, his power is a power in weakness, it is divine power, clearly separable from his own person".¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 4. Holmberg judges: "It might not be unfair to say that, to many Protestant scholars from *Rudolph Sohm* to *von Campenhausen* and *Käsemann*, and to some Catholic ones, e.g. *Küng* (1967), the Pauline trajectory is even of normative importance within the New Testament. Any result or view-point, any valid criticism of prevailing opinions in this field thus promises to be of importance for the whole discussion of the ministry and authority in the Primitive Church." Holmberg gives a summary of the earlier research in his first part (9-56).

¹⁶⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 154-160.

¹⁷⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 150-151. For further discussion on Jesus as a charismatic leader see Hengel, *Leader*.

¹⁷¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 154. The numbers are referring back to the above model of pure charismatic authority.

¹⁷²Holmberg, *Paul*, 154.

¹⁷³Holmberg, *Paul*, 154-155.

Paul's self-understanding is marked by "his insistence on the fact that it is God who really speaks."¹⁷⁴ This claim of having authority applies also to Paul's ethical instructions.¹⁷⁵ The basis for this is "Paul's own assurance of being an apostle of Christ."¹⁷⁶ However, Paul does not describe his authority in terms of being the charismatic leader of "his" churches. He rather prefers to be known as a slave to his Lord.¹⁷⁷ Paul is endowed with extraordinary pneumatic gifts.¹⁷⁸

However, Paul himself does in fact not appear to be a powerful personality. "He admits himself that his bodily presence is weak and that he is unskilled in speaking."¹⁷⁹ As the Corinthians noticed Paul was visibly a sick man. His illness tended to throw discredit on his power.¹⁸⁰ Facing this situation Paul "regards [himself] as an unusually clear example of the gulf between the divine and the human, widened to a painful extreme."¹⁸¹ As Paul in himself appears weak and disease-ridden nobody would think that his mighty and powerful ministry is due to his own efforts. The only conclusion that can be drawn upon Paul's work is: "it is God who works through His apostle".¹⁸²

Holmberg regards this type of authority Paul exercises not as the pure, original form of charismatic authority but

¹⁷⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 74. Cf. 1 Cor 14.37; 2 Cor 5.18-20; 1 Thess 2.3-4,15.

¹⁷⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 74. Cf. 1 Thess 4; especially V.3: "this is the will of God".

¹⁷⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 74.

¹⁷⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 74-75. Cf. Gal 1.10, 1 Cor 9.16-23, Rom 1.1.

¹⁷⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 75. Cf. 'gift of tongues': 1 Cor 14.18, 2 Cor 5.13; 'gift of prophecy': 1 Thess 3.4, 1 Cor 15.51, Rom 11.25f., Gal 5.21; 'the gift of performing miracles': 2 Cor 12.12, Gal 3.5, Rom 15.19.

¹⁷⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 76. Cf. 2 Cor 10.10; 11.6.

¹⁸⁰Cf. 2 Cor 10-13.

¹⁸¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 77.

¹⁸²Holmberg, *Paul*, 77.

rather in terms of Weber as the "depersonalized, routinized charisma."¹⁸³

Paul by no means regards himself "as the 'saviour' of the Gentiles in the real sense of the word."¹⁸⁴ However, Paul claims to be the "father" or "mother" of his churches.¹⁸⁵ Holmberg points out that in a sociological sense Paul undoubtedly functions as a "saviour".

[Paul] is the 'minor founder' of a charismatic movement in many different places, he is the 'father' of the Christians in Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonika, etc. He has 'begotten' them and given them the 'new life' and led them out of their distress and darkness into light and eternal life.¹⁸⁶

However, Holmberg concedes that Paul "clearly distinguishes between the source of his authority and his own person."¹⁸⁷ Although ideally "all Christians participate directly in the Gospel itself"¹⁸⁸ this does not mean that the apostle has no direct authority over his churches. He is their "authoritative head".¹⁸⁹

Confronting Paul with the description of point 1d of the model of charismatic authority Holmberg points out that the apostle is

a celibate, a travelling preacher of Jewish descent but in radical opposition to traditional Torah piety; he has no ordered economy or occupation, he sometimes receives financial support from Christians he has converted, sometimes he stays for months in a town working with his own hands for his living.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³Holmberg, *Paul*, 155.

¹⁸⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 155.

¹⁸⁵Cf. 1 Cor 3.1-3a, 4.14-16; 2 Cor 6.11-13; 12.14; Gal 4.19; 1 Thess 2.5-12. Paul does not speak of himself as father or mother in all these texts but the metaphor of "parent-child-relationship" appears consistently. For a broader discussion see Holmberg, *Paul*, 77-79.

¹⁸⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 155.

¹⁸⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 155. Cf. 1 Cor 7,10-12.25; 2 Cor 4.5-7; Gal 1.8.

¹⁸⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 155, but originally a quotation from Schütz, *Paul*.

¹⁸⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 156.

¹⁹⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 156.

Therefore his lifestyle can rightfully be marked as "extraordinary".¹⁹¹

Paul's message is regarded by him himself as having been received from God. This does certainly fit into the Weberian description of "The leader's mission" (2). However, not being the saviour restricts Paul from proclaiming the Gospel in terms of "you have heard..., but I say." The apostle exercises rather "a transmission of the Christian Gospel about Jesus, whose vital contents are common to all the apostles."¹⁹² Paul uses even some fixed blocks of tradition - something that would be rather untypical for a charismatic leader of the pure type.

In contrast to the model Paul's teaching in the fields of social ethics and politics cannot be described as revolutionary.¹⁹³

Paul's followers certainly show respect, imitation, and trust towards the apostle as their "father" or "mother". However, he is not their "hero". In contrast to Jesus Paul's person is separated from the source of his authority. Paul "is the messenger of a great Lord and must not be personally over-rated."¹⁹⁴

Holmberg describes Paul's attitude towards the financial support from his churches as "pragmatic" and "calculating" which is not typical compared with the model (4a).¹⁹⁵

Having a look at Paul's staff (5B) Holmberg notices that some of them like "Timothy and (probably) Titus, and

¹⁹¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 156. However, Holmberg concedes that Paul does not fully fit into this point of the model: "But that he [Paul] periodically works for his livelihood is uncharismatic."

¹⁹²Holmberg, *Paul*, 156. Cf. 1 Cor 15.11.

¹⁹³Holmberg, *Paul*, 156.

¹⁹⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 157. Cf. 1 Cor 3.5-7; 2 Cor 1.24; 4.5.

¹⁹⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 157. For another even shorter summary of the features which make Paul less charismatic in a sociological sense than a "purely charismatic leader" or even less charismatic than some of his colleagues one may be referred to 160.

perhaps (...) Epaphras"¹⁹⁶ have been personally called by the apostle. Others like Barnabas, Apollos, Silvanus, Priscilla and Aquila have "not been recruited by Paul, and they work independently of him both before and after their period of cooperation with him."¹⁹⁷

Although there may have been some kind of "communistic relationship" (5Bb) "the only relationship of this kind of any considerable permanency seems to be that between Timothy and Paul and, to a lesser degree, that between Paul and Titus."¹⁹⁸

Concerning the junior members of Paul's staff Holmberg comes to the conclusion that

"they have no authority, rank or sphere of competence of their own independent of Paul (5Bc)".¹⁹⁹

Finally Holmberg states that we "have no concrete information about whether Paul's staff has any kind of élite-consciousness (...) [5Bd], or even a group consciousness."²⁰⁰

31.4 "Charismatic Authority within Local Churches"

Holmberg focuses on the early churches during the lifetime of the apostle Paul. Paul himself is the real leader of these local charismatic communities. Therefore Holmberg comes to the conclusion: "During Paul's lifetime his churches are not autonomous with an independent leadership worth mentioning."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 157.

¹⁹⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 157.

¹⁹⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 157-158.

¹⁹⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 158. "But this statement does not apply to Barnabas, Apollos, Silvanus and some others."

²⁰⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

The structure which we later find described in the letters of Ignatius or partly in the Pastoral letters does not apply to these very early communities. Holmberg argues that the

offices of the local church probably do not constitute an integrated leadership, with a hierarchy of cooperation between different offices.²⁰²

However, what about the functions that are actually mentioned in the Pauline letters? Holmberg assumes that the

προϊσταμενοι have no formally or traditionally defined duties or rights, and as the authority they have cannot be said to be of the pure charismatic type we have to conclude that it is simply based on personal social influence of an ordinary kind.²⁰³

On the other hand there were of course the "prophets, glossolalists and miracle workers".²⁰⁴ They were regarded as having received a "'charismatic', supernatural endowment from God".²⁰⁵ However, Holmberg points out that we cannot be certain that this also entailed some kind of concrete leadership within the church, "except possibly in the common act of worship."²⁰⁶ Holmberg draws the conclusion:

"Acknowledgement of their supernatural gifts does not necessarily make them leaders of the church."²⁰⁷ Holmberg concedes later on that the prophets may have had authority up to a certain degree. They have not been appointed by the congregation or by the apostles. However, their

supernatural endowment is a fact, recognized by apostle and church alike, and this implies the existence of a certain degree of authority in these persons.²⁰⁸

The above descriptions have shown that the model of pure charismatic authority does in many ways not reflect the

²⁰²Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰³Holmberg, *Paul*, 158. However, Holmberg notices that "in Paul's *theological* interpretation this function is a *χαρασμα*."

²⁰⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 158.

²⁰⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 159.

authority structure of the local Pauline churches. Holmberg states that it is of a much higher value for the description of Jesus, the group around him, "the way of life of the Primitive Church and of the relation between the apostles and the early Christian churches."²⁰⁹

On one side we have seen that Paul does not represent the Weberian type of a pure charismatic leader and on the other side Holmberg did not find such authority in the local churches. Therefore Holmberg comes to the conclusion that one has to be very careful when describing the development from an early charismatic state onwards in sociological terms.

The rather non-charismatic character of charismatic authority in Pauline churches should warn us from being too quick to postulate a theory of development that holds that every church must pass from a chaotic, charismatic state to an ordered, non-charismatic one.²¹⁰

Holmberg's conclusion is that the Primitive Church cannot be described in terms of purely charismatic authority but is rather mixed with traditional and rational elements. This does much more represent what Weber termed "*routinized charisma*".²¹¹

31.5 Institutionalization

Already Weber proclaimed that '*charisma*' cannot remain stable and that it therefore "becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both".²¹²

²⁰⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 159. For the latter we have seen the apostle Paul as an example for some aspects of pure charismatic authority.

²¹⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 160.

²¹¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 160.

²¹²Weber, *Economy I*, 246. Holmberg redefines Weber's term "routinization" in the way that he identifies it with the term "institutionalization".

Holmberg follows Berger/Luckmann in their definition of institutionalization.²¹³ He summarizes the development from habitualization to typification and institutionalization. This is followed by what is known as legitimation. It refers to "the abstraction of principles and an ethos from the institutional behavioural pattern".²¹⁴ The result is that

through legitimation the institutional world can be explained and justified by recourse to a theory or 'myth', and this is done when the third party or new generation appears.²¹⁵

The next state contains more complex institutions than the ones that are set up by two people. One example is the "institution of matrimony".²¹⁶ As institutions, as, for example, a family, grow larger it

grows into a developed social institution that satisfies both basic bio-psychological needs and derived cultural needs and must consequently be termed a synthesis of functions.²¹⁷

Thus the growing needs of institutions cause the development of secondary institutions which stabilize the original institution. This process results in a permanent institutionalization. Holmberg refers back to Helmut Schelsky's thesis: "an institution that does not develop is already on its way to disintegrating."²¹⁸

Holmberg points out that it is very important for complex institutionalization that various "entrepreneurs" emerge. These people form an active élite. They are

²¹³Berger/Luckmann, *Construction*, 72: "Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by type and actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution."

²¹⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 169.

²¹⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 169.

²¹⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 170.

²¹⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 170.

²¹⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 171. Cf. Schelsky, 'Stabilität', 45: "Ein gleichbleibender, bloßer Bestand institutioneller Formen ist nach den dynamischen Gesetzmäßigkeiten der Stabilität von Institutionen bereits ihr Niedergang."

able to offer solutions to the new range of problems by verbalizing the collective goals and norms, establishing organizational frameworks and leading this process of innovation.²¹⁹

Holmberg links this élite with the role of the charismatic leaders according to Weber. He says:

The interesting thing about the role of an entrepreneurial élite from our point of view is that it seems to provide a good description of the role of charismatic leaders and their staffs in creating new institutional structures.²²⁰

Holmberg makes the distinction between primary and secondary institutionalization as follows: Primary institutionalization of charismatic authority happens during the lifetime of the pure charismatic leader.

He is the charismatic entrepreneur in relation to the charisma-hungry segment of society which responds to his call, his verbalization of their innermost aspirations in a new message and his salvific leadership.²²¹

Already during the lifetime of this founder and leader his charismatic authority flows over into his message. Gradually "the group, its customs, rituals, doctrine, verbal tradition, ethos, order of preference designed by the leader"²²² become themselves bearers of charismatic authority. This is known as "depersonalization" ("*Versachlichung*") of charismatic authority.²²³

The phase of secondary institutionalization is marked by the disappearance of the original leader. The rituals and institutions he founded gain in importance at this point.

Secondary institutionalization (...) transforms unconsolidated verbal tradition into a body of normative texts, ways of living and a typical ethical 'atmosphere' into a formulated code of behaviour and a

²¹⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 173.

²²⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 173.

²²¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 177.

²²²Holmberg, *Paul*, 177.

²²³Cf. Weber, *Economy I*, 243; 247.

paraenetical teaching tradition, community rites into organized forms of worship.²²⁴

At this stage "the former staff of assistants become new leaders of the group, responsible for teaching, decision-making and development".²²⁵ This re-institutionalization is necessary for the continuity and stability of the primary institution. The new leaders work as an entrepreneurial élite.

At this time "the institutionalization of charismatic authority is a medialization of contact with the 'spirit'".²²⁶ That means that according to the depersonalization of 'charisma' "the spirit has receded and can now be reached only through media such as representatives, offices, holy traditions and rituals."²²⁷

31.6 Institutionalization of Charismatic Authority Concerning the Primitive Church and the Apostle Paul

Holmberg maintains that there was already primary institutionalization in the group around Jesus. And of course there is much continuity between Jesus and His disciples and the Early Church. According to Holmberg, secondary institutionalization began after the death and resurrection of Jesus. His former staff, the disciples, "act as the entrepreneurial élite of the second order, institutionalizing the fruits of the primary institutionalization."²²⁸

²²⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 177.

²²⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 177.

²²⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 178.

²²⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 178.

²²⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 179.

Thus the set up of the staff in the Primitive Church was mainly dependent on the original institutionalization of Jesus and His disciples.

The early Gentile Christian churches in Antioch and Damascus were also not independent. Holmberg proclaims that they were

vitaly dependent on the previous institutionalization of the Jerusalem church from which it (...) [had] received its creed, christology, cult and sacraments and partly even its organization.²²⁹

Also Paul's authority is an example of secondary institutionalization. Paul is dependent on Jesus' authority. He never made any messianic claims himself. In addition to this Paul is already dependent on the Christian tradition which he does not radically reinterpret. Paul passes on formulated traditions and customs.

The endowment of a church with charismatic gifts acts in favour of independence from the apostle. Holmberg argues

that once Christians have become fully initiated in the charismatic tradition, they are familiar with it too, and can use it as a means of controlling and criticizing the apostle, or can claim some measure of independence from him.²³⁰

Holmberg claims that Paul's attitude towards the institutionalization is in line with the existence of local officials. He points out that Paul in "all cases we know of supports (...) and recognizes them."²³¹ This gives these persons their legitimation.

Holmberg stresses the point that although Paul does not accept or justify the situation in Corinth he does not correct "the existence of leadership (...), nor (...) the flowering of pneumatic gifts but their perverted development."²³² Therefore Paul exercises his function of

²²⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 181.

²³⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 185; 189.

²³¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 190. Cf. 1 Thess 5.12f.; Gal 6.6; 1 Cor 16.15f.; Rom 12.3-8; 16.1f.; Phil 1.1.

²³²Holmberg, *Paul*, 191.

"apostolic legitimation (...) to bar certain possible but undesirable developments in the institutionalization of local authority."²³³

Theologically Paul tries to achieve this by defining "both pneumatic and purely practical functions (...) as being gifts of the Holy Spirit (*χαρισματα*)."²³⁴ Holmberg calls this "the 'charismatization' of the incipient institutionalization of authority."²³⁵ Holmberg describes this in sociological terms as a

de-charismatization or rationalization (...) as it legitimates social phenomena from the body of sacred *ratio*. Thus we find Paul institutionalizing local church authority by rationalizing it.²³⁶

Holmberg proclaims that Paul's "rationalization of authority-functions facilitates and leads up to their institutionalization, i.e. the development of offices."²³⁷ This anticipates the separation of 'charisma' from 'charisma' bearer which was thus the consequence of Paul's legitimating the development.²³⁸

31.7

Criticism of Holmberg's Work

(1) The best side of Holmberg's thesis is probably his analysis of the Weberian foundations and the subsequent debate of these sociological concepts. He gives a very useful introduction and critique of the discussion over charismatic authority and its institutionalization.

In contrast to this thorough part Holmberg's summary of the theological part of the discussion, his use of

²³³Holmberg, *Paul*, 191.

²³⁴Holmberg, *Paul*, 191.

²³⁵Holmberg, *Paul*, 191.

²³⁶Holmberg, *Paul*, 191.

²³⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 192.

²³⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 192.

sociological terms, the exegetical foundations of his own contribution and the application of the sociological methods to the his exegesis show some considerable weaknesses.

(2) Holmberg may be right to try not to repeat material summarized by others. Therefore in his first chapter he mainly summarizes the theological work which has already been done without contributing hardly anything new in this area. However, by following mainly the line of Sohm, Campenhausen, Käsemann and Küng²³⁹ and similar contributors he seems to create a new consensus among those who come from the mainly theological approach. Compared with this summary the one by U. Brockhaus ²⁴⁰ seems to do more justice to the differences that still exist.

(3) This in some ways simplifying summary leads Holmberg to take some exegetical decisions for granted that are rather questionable. There is for example the role of the church in Jerusalem within early Christianity. It can hardly be said that this church was "the highest doctrinal court of the Church".²⁴¹ This sounds rather like an ecclesiological category of later canon law and therefore seems to be an anachronism. The importance and authority of the Jerusalem church for Paul seems much more likely to be based on the fact that Jerusalem was the place from which the Gospel descended. Therefore Jerusalem has got priority in terms of salvation history rather than in any legal terms.²⁴² It can not simply be assumed that the primitive church was a unified entity. However, it seems much more likely that the concept of one universal Early Church was more a concept in the theology of Luke and Paul than in reality.

²³⁹Holmberg, *Paul*, 4.

²⁴⁰Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 7-94.

²⁴¹Holmberg, *Paul*, 28.

²⁴²Cf. Merklein, 'Holmberg'.

(4) It is obvious that Paul's authority within the Early Church would be greater if one could assume that the universal church under the leadership of "Jerusalem" did not exist in this way. One may doubt whether the diversity that did already arise in the Early Church especially between Paul's gentile churches and the Judaeo Christian church in Jerusalem is recognized enough by Holmberg.

(5) Holmberg is nevertheless still right to stress the continuity between Paul and the Jerusalem church.

Phenomena such as praying in the name of Jesus, celebrating the Eucharist, baptizing and instructing converts, reading and expounding the Holy Scriptures of Israel in the Christian manner, or inculcating Christian ethos regarding the treatment of wives, children, slaves, money (...) are given elements in a sacred tradition or order.²⁴³

It is right that Paul transmits these traditions and customs and does not create them himself. However, it can hardly be said that Paul does not reinterpret some of these traditions which are still developing. For example Paul's teaching on baptism in Rom 6.1-11 links this tradition with the concept of dying and rising together with Jesus. This interpretation fits very well in Jesus teaching on *Nachfolge*.²⁴⁴ Therefore it is an invaluable contribution to the development of this doctrine. However, a weakness of Holmberg in his thesis is that Paul remained in a subservient position to Jerusalem throughout his career. This view does not do justice to Paul's own contributions.²⁴⁵

(6) Although Holmberg's knowledge and summary of the sociological background of his thesis is brilliant some

²⁴³Holmberg, *Paul*, 183.

²⁴⁴Cf. Mark 8.34b parr. Cf. Wilckens, *Römer (Röm 6-11)*, 60.

²⁴⁵See Dunn, 'Relationship', 461-478, who offers a more differentiated view about the relationship between Paul and Jerusalem. He comes to the conclusion: "By the time Paul wrote Galatians he was no longer prepared to acknowledge the authority of Jerusalem to the same extent [as earlier on]" (473).

annotations may be allowed. J.D.G. Dunn is certainly right to point out one danger of approaching the New Testament from a sociological perspective: "the categories and jargon of sociology begin to dominate the discussion in an unhelpful way."²⁴⁶ As Holmberg's study develops key terms seem to lose their clarity. This is especially confusing for terms like '*charisma*' which can have different contents of meaning. To which definition of '*charisma*' does Holmberg for example refer to in the following sentences: "One should not say, however, that the local leadership we see exercised in the Pauline congregations is in no way '*charismatic*'",²⁴⁷ or "Charisma is not merely the victim of routinization but actively seeks institutional manifestation".²⁴⁸ One would wish that he had made clearer distinctions between theological and sociological use of the term '*charisma*'.

(7) In order to avoid this confusion it would have been much better to use '*charisma*' in only one sense. Of course one cannot expect to describe Weberian sociology without this term and neither would this be possible for Pauline Theology. However, modern sociology has moved on from Weber and it would certainly be possible to describe the structure of the Early Church in terms of 'authority' and 'power' rather than in terms of '*charisma*'. This would also solve the problem of so called value-free terms. '*Charisma*' in the Pauline sense as 'gift of grace' carries a positive value. However, sociologists need a value-free terminology. If this is possible at all then certainly not with the term '*charisma*'. Holmberg does not really face this problem.

(8) At last one may ask what actually has been won by describing Jesus as a pure charismatic leader²⁴⁹ while Paul

²⁴⁶Dunn, 'Paul', 176.

²⁴⁷Holmberg, *Paul*, 159.

²⁴⁸Holmberg, *Paul*, 165.

²⁴⁹Holmberg, *Power*, 150.

is described as "less charismatic (i.e. purely charismatic) than his colleagues."²⁵⁰ Of course it is helpful to have an elaborated structure to describe authority. However, Weber is not to be seen in isolation from the biblical texts which we are examining. Therefore Holmberg is in danger of being caught in a circle. This leads him sometimes into the danger of overemphasizing certain theological positions which would need further discussion. He needs for example the contrast between Jesus and Paul to describe Paul position as of less charismatic authority. However, Holmberg does not do any further work on the position of Jesus which would be necessary to substantiate this thesis. For example the question whether Jesus was more a reformer within Judaism than actually a founder remains.²⁵¹

31.8 Conclusion

Holmberg has definitely made a very important contribution to the discussion concerning the structure of the Early Church. He shows a consistent application of a broad sociological knowledge. However, his sociological accuracy does not really match with his theological work. He certainly overemphasizes certain points like the importance of the Jerusalem church and the continuity between Jerusalem and Paul. This gives his study an unbalanced view.

²⁵⁰Holmberg, *Paul*, 160.

²⁵¹Dunn, 'Paul', 177, stresses the point that "Paul's concept of apostleship (...) resulted in the transformation of Christianity from an eschatological sect within Judaism to something distinct from Judaism". This asks Holmberg the question whether Jesus was the founder of a sect while Paul developed this body into a church. This implies a more reforming role for Jesus.

§ 32.

Summary

Schütz has shown how Paul's ministry can be described in terms of power, authority and legitimacy. His most valuable contribution for our purpose is the way he sets Paul and every other Christian in parallel. They are all dependent on the Gospel as their power. This results in the same response of obedient service expected in the same way from every Christian. Nevertheless Schütz describes Paul's special authority. Authorized by the Gospel and empowered by the spirit he exercise a special authority.

Holmberg has made valuable contributions in three areas of his study.

(1) His methodology shows a clear reception of Weberian sociology. He describes the charismatic leader and the charismatic community in general from the sociological point of view of Weber's concept of charismatic authority.

(2) Making use of (1) he looks at Paul and the early Christian communities. This shows Paul as the minor founder in contrast to and dependence on Jesus, the pure charismatic leader. As minor founder Paul exercises authority over his churches.

(3) Concerning the early Christian communities Holmberg assumes that there was no independent leadership in this churches during Paul's lifetime. Holmberg talks already of 'offices' at this early stage. For example prophets exercised a limited authority.

(4) Holmberg notices already institutionalization in the group around Jesus. He claims that permanent institutionalization is necessary for the stability and continuity of the organization. Holmberg applies this also to the early church and shows how Paul defined functions, which are parts of a process of institutionalization as '*charismata*'. Holmberg calls this "charismatization" in

theological terms, which would be a "de-charimatization" or "rationalization" in sociological terms.

In the following part we should have a look at New Testament prophets and the gift of prophecy as a test case for what we have concluded so far.

Part Four

TESTING THE RESULTS

VI PROPHECY AS A TEST-CASE FOR EARLY CHRISTIAN
CHURCH ORDER

§ 33. Itemizing Previous Results

Before we actually start making prophecy a test case of our study we would first like to itemize the questions which arise from the preceding review. These questions shall then determine our discussion.

1. Is there a distinction between regular and occasional ministry concerning prophecy? This question reflects upon the distinction between regular and one-off charisms as it can be seen in J.D.G. Dunn's contribution.¹

2. Are women allowed to prophesy? 1 Cor 14.34f. has been understood as a restriction of women's participation in the public exercise of the gift of prophecy. We will investigate whether this '*charisma*' underlies restrictions concerning different sexes.²

3. Was primary institutionalization attempted by Paul? This question arises from the work of B. Holmberg.³

1 See § 10.

2 Cf. The above discussion concerning the relationship between *glossolalia* and different wealth. See § 27.5 and § 28.3.

3 See § 31.5.

4. Is it possible to describe prophecy in terms of 'charisma' and 'office'? This question reflects on the reviews we have offered in our first part.⁴

5. How are power, authority and legitimacy related to prophecy? This question asks for an application of the categories offered by J.H. Schütz.⁵

6. Authority through Assessment? This question deals with a very special exercise of authority in relation to a 'charisma': the evaluation of prophecy.

§ 34. Prophecy as Regular and/or Occasional Ministry

34.1 Prophecy as Regular Ministry

Obviously, there were certain members of the Corinthian congregation who had a more or less frequent ministry of prophecy. 1 Cor 12.28 and 14.29-32 refer to what was very likely well defined circle of prophets.⁶ We do not know any of their names. Paul does not address them personally. And he does not mention any prophets concerning other congregations.⁷

However, Eph 2.20 mentions them as very important for the upbuilding of the Christian community.⁸

4 See § 3 - § 19.

5 See § 30.

6 Hill, D., *Testament*, 120. However, Müller, *Prophetie*, 112, rightly stresses the point that this does not mean that these groups were so clearly distinguished that a certain person was only an apostle, another only a prophet.

7 Rom 12.6 and 1 Thess 5.20 do not refer to a regular ministry of prophets but to the χάρισμα of προφητείας.

8 See also Eph 3.5; 4.11; cf. 1 Tm 1.18; 4.14.

In addition to these verses referring to Pauline churches we find similar evidence in Acts. Acts 11.27 describes a whole group of prophets travelling from Jerusalem to Antioch. In the following verse Acts 11.28 one of them is namely introduced as Agabus. His prophesying of a famine is said to have come true later on.

Other prophets and teachers of the Antioch congregation are named in Acts 13.1. Saul is among them. However, he may be referred to as one of the teachers. Thus is no clear evidence that he was seen as a prophet.

We hear about more prophets ministering in Antioch in Acts 15.32. They are named as Judas and Silas. Acts 11.27 and 15.32 support the view that there were wandering prophets in early Christianity. However, we do not have any evidence that this did also apply to the prophets in the early Pauline churches.⁹ It is striking that Acts always names the prophet whenever any prophecy is quoted.¹⁰ Altogether up to twelve specific individuals are referred to as regularly exercising the gift of prophecy or as prophets: Agabus,¹¹ Judas and Silas,¹² Barnabas, Simeon Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul,¹³ and the four virgin daughters of Philip the Evangelist.¹⁴ The reason for this is probably that the early churches were suspicious of anonymous prophecies.¹⁵

The account of Acts leads us to two conclusions. Acts substantiates the view that prophets were quite frequent in

⁹ Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 280. Against Harnack, *Expansion*, 417-444, who unjustifiably took *Didache* as the norm.

¹⁰ Acts 11.27; 13.1f.; 21.9ff. Cf. Acts 15.32.

¹¹ Acts 11.27f.; 21.10f.

¹² Acts 15.32.

¹³ Acts 13.1. These may not necessarily all have been referred to as prophets, because they appear in a group under the heading of prophets and teachers.

¹⁴ Acts 21.8f. Cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 191.

¹⁵ Cf. Dunn, 'Utterances', 179, who also points out this similarity to Jewish forebears.

early Christianity. We may therefore assume that there were also some in the other Pauline churches and not just in Corinth.¹⁶

Secondly, the prophets were prominent and important people.¹⁷ They were even known by name. By naming certain people as prophets a clear distinction between them and the rest of the community was made. Therefore we conclude that the circle of prophets was fairly well defined already in these early days.

This leaves us with two questions concerning the Pauline letters. Firstly, why did Paul refer to the prophets only so rarely if they were so important?

Secondly, why did he not refer to them by name like Acts does regularly?

Some of the answers will become obvious in the following.

34.2 Prophecy as Occasional Ministry

Paul defines prophecy as a gift of grace, a '*charisma*'.¹⁸ Paul urges the Corinthians to seek this gift.¹⁹ It can therefore be assumed that not all of them had this gift. Certainly Paul did not exclude any believer from potentially exercising this gift.²⁰ Limitations are only

¹⁶ Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 280.

¹⁷ They rank very highly next to the apostles: 1 Cor 12.28f.; cf. Eph 2.20; 4.11.

¹⁸ 1 Cor 12.10; Rom 12.4-6.

¹⁹ 1 Cor 14.1,5.

²⁰ Against Aune, *Prophecy*, 200f. who argues that not all Christians in early Christianity were potential prophets. However, this is not the question so far as Paul's intentions in 1 Cor 12-14 are concerned. Of course not all Christians were actual prophets but why should one deny that through the power of the Spirit every Christian could become a prophet. That is what "potential prophet" means in our terms. However, we rather want to talk of "possibility in principle to prophesy (*prinzipielle Möglichkeit prophetisch zu reden*)" since this seems to reflect the dynamic situation in a better way.

made to achieve order in worship.²¹ The gift was not restricted to certain 'office' bearers.

Paul urged every believer to seek this gift.²² This only makes sense if Paul believed also in the possibility that every believer could in principle receive this gift and prophesy. However, it is the Spirit who distributes the '*charismata*'.²³ Whether somebody prophesies is therefore not ultimately dependent on his or her will. No Christian can produce any kind of inspired utterance by his or her own ability. However, prophecy is subject to the authority of the prophet in question²⁴ and can be hindered.²⁵ The believer exists in a tension between seeking and openness to receive the gift of prophecy on one hand and the ultimate dependence on the self-distributing Spirit on the other hand. This tension can be named possibility in principle. Whether this possibility in principle becomes an actual reality is first of all dependent on the Spirit.²⁶

However, it is within the believer's human ability to prevent spiritual gifts from being exercised. Paul even urges somebody with a prophecy not to utter it under certain circumstances. Whenever two or three people have already prophesied in the congregation the next person who would like to prophesy should keep silent. Or at the moment when the first person prophesying is interrupted by another person who is given a prophecy the first one should stop. Paul's command: "Do not stifle inspiration" (REB)²⁷ is

²¹ 1 Cor 14.29-31.

²² 1 Cor 14.1,39.

²³ 1 Cor 12.11; Rom 12.3,6; cf. Eph 4.7.

²⁴ 1 Cor 14.32. Dunn, *Jesus*, 434, n112: "Most commentators take Paul to be speaking of each prophet's ability to control his own inspiration." Cf. Dautzenberg, *Prophetie*, 264; Brockhaus, *Charisma*, 149.

²⁵ 1 Thess 5.19f.

²⁶ 1 Cor 12.11; Rom 12.3; cf. Eph 4.7.

²⁷ 1 Thess 5.19; the NIV is even clearer: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire."

another example that human beings can hinder the action of the Spirit. One can conclude that the exercise of the gifts of grace is not only dependent on the Spirit but that it is also crucial that Christians do not hinder the Spirit to exercise the gifts of grace through them.²⁸ And even more: The gifts of the Spirit are of course dependent on the Spirit but Christians must be open towards them and seek them.²⁹ However, prophecy remains still above the level of any human ability.³⁰

To sum up: Paul wants to encourage every ordinary member of the Corinthian congregation to seek and exercise the gift of prophecy. This means in consequence that Paul wants occasional prophesying from as many people as possible.

34.3 Conclusion

There seems to be both: a regular ministry of prophets and an occasional prophesying possible in principle by every Christian. However, 1 Cor 14.34f. poses the question whether women may be excluded from exercising the gift of prophecy in public worship. This would contrast our above

²⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 12.31; 14.1,12.

²⁹ This is a good example of how God and human beings "work" together. First of all everything is dependent on God but men and women are free to say 'no'.

³⁰ Against Grudem, *Prophecy*, 235f. who uses the term "potential ability". Ability would imply something in themselves. This seems to be too strong on the human side. All we mean is that the Spirit may grace or enable all or any believer to prophesy. However, we have to take into account that "the spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets" (NIV, 1 Cor 14.32) and that it is possible on the human side to "put out the Spirit's fire [and to] (...) treat prophecies with contempt (NIV, 1 Thess 5.20). To put it in one sentence: one cannot produce prophecy out of human ability but one can hinder it, also by not seeking it.

thesis. Therefore we should have a closer look at this issue.

§ 35 Are Women Allowed to Prophecy?

In 1 Cor 14.33b-35 it is said that "women should keep silent at the meeting (REB)." This verse refers to common ecclesiastical practice.³¹ However, these verses seem to conflict with 1 Cor 11.4-16, especially 1 Cor 11.5, where Paul is critical of women praying or prophesying bareheaded.³² Here it is obviously implied that women speak, even pray or prophesy, in the congregation. It has been argued that Paul in 1 Cor 14.33b-35 is concerned with the maintenance of contemporary structures of authority.³³ Women should not have authority over men and therefore they should not exercise authority over men and evaluate prophecies in the congregation.³⁴

However, 1 Cor 11.5 does not leave any doubt that women are allowed to prophesy. Therefore the contradiction is not easily solved.

The passage is linked with the surrounding text through the keywords silence and subordination. However, vv 33b-36 do not mention two of the key issues of chapter 14, i.e. prophecy and speaking in tongues. V 37 seems to take up the argument of V 33a and before.

Some manuscripts, mainly Western, place 1 Cor 14.34f. after 1 Cor 14.40. The Codex Fuldensis even puts the verses

³¹ 1 Cor 14.33b: "As in all congregations of God's people (...) (REB)."

³² Paul is judging this custom of covering the woman's head as common ecclesiastical practice, see 1 Cor 11.16.

³³ Barton, 'Paul', 231: "Paul is obviously concerned to maintain patriarchal authority."

³⁴ Grudem, *Prophecy*, 255.

in the margin after 1 Cor 14.33.³⁵ These differences and some textual variants in addition to the above tensions have led a number of scholars to the conclusion that 1 Cor 14.34f. is a non-Pauline interpolation.³⁶

However, one must note that no manuscript actually omits these verses. Therefore one should be very careful to judge these verses as an interpolation.³⁷

More recently some scholars have argued that the evidence drawn from the textual variants is not strong enough to talk of an interpolation.³⁸

One of them E.E. Ellis mainly uses three arguments:

Firstly, he stresses the point that these verses are not lacking in any manuscript.³⁹

Secondly, he tries to explain the differences concerning the textual variants by claiming that the amanuensis Paul employed⁴⁰ or Paul himself could have added 1 Cor 14.34f. in the autograph before sending it to Corinth. This would explain why the verses do not fit smoothly into the context and why therefore later scribes may have copied the letter in different ways trying to 'improve' the text.⁴¹

Thirdly, Ellis argues that the view given in 1 Cor 14.34f. does not contradict Paul's teaching. Ellis stresses the point that Paul's instruction is directed to married women.

It is not to be seen as a prohibition of the public

³⁵ Cf. the apparatus in Nestle-Aland, 26th. ed.; cf. Ellis, 'Wives', 319, who also lists the manuscripts.

³⁶ Conzelmann, *I Korintherbrief*, 289f. Weiss, *I Korintherbrief*, 342f.

³⁷ Cf. Barrett, *First Corinthians*, 329-333. Barrett argues that an interpolation is probable. However, he carefully decides to leave the question open because there is no manuscript which lacks the verses (332).

³⁸ Ellis, 'Wives', 213-220; *Theology*, 69-71; followed by Barton, 'Paul', 229-234.

³⁹ Ellis, *Theology*, 67; 'Wives', 213.

⁴⁰ 1 Cor 16.21.

⁴¹ Ellis, 'Wives', 219f.

prophesying of women in general.⁴² According to Ellis it is rather to be seen as an ordering of the wives' ministries. This ministry should be in accordance with the submission the wives are due to their husbands.⁴³ Ellis concedes that the view shown in 1 Cor 14.34f. represents the application of an order in a particular cultural context.⁴⁴

To sum up, Ellis shows that it is possible to explain 1 Cor 14.34f. within its Pauline context. He also offers an explanation concerning the divergences among the textual variants.

Therefore we are not prepared to judge 1 Cor 14.34f. as an interpolation. The lack of any manuscript in which these verses are missing is a too strong argument to draw such a definite conclusion. Although it cannot be excluded that we might have an interpolation at this place we prefer the view that 1 Cor 14.34f. goes back to a very early note on the margin which may have been written on the autograph by Paul or his amanuensis.

Thus we conclude that according to Paul the wives were called to keep silent - with reference to the context in chapter 14 - probably especially when their husbands were prophesying and in interchange with them.⁴⁵ This would affect them in two ways: They would neither be allowed to prophesy or to evaluate prophecies of others.⁴⁶ With reference to 1 Cor 11.5 this would not apply to women in

⁴² Ellis, 'Wives', 217.

⁴³ Ellis, 'Wives', 217. Ellis refers to 1 Cor 7.4; 11.3; Eph 5.21-24; Col 3.18. *Theology*, 71.

⁴⁴ Ellis, *Theology*, 70; 'Wives', 218. Recognizing that this view was heavily influenced by its cultural context implies that our modern and certainly different cultural context requires its own application.

⁴⁵ Ellis, *Theology*, 71. Ellis paraphrases 1 Cor 14.34 as follows: "Prophets, let your gifted wives be silent in the assemblies. For it is not permitted for them to speak in interchange between the prophets."

⁴⁶ Grudem, *Gift*, 255.

general. It does not affect unmarried women and probably not those whose husbands are not present in the assembly.

Finally we claim that this Pauline limitation of wives' participation originated on cultural grounds. Concerning the wives' submission to their husbands Paul is in accordance with traditions in Judaism and in early Christendom.⁴⁷

Later on the bourgeois consolidation of the church at the time when the Pastorals were written may have led to return to conforming with contemporary customs within the society even to a higher degree.⁴⁸

However, the 'charisma' of prophecy is clearly not restricted to men. With reference to Gal 3.28 one may conclude that the final aim is certainly not to restrict women's participation in worship in general and forever but to overcome the cultural reasons which have led to such restrictions. This will then lead to the exercise of 'charismata' regardless of different race, freedom, wealth, or sex.

§ 36. Does Paul Attempt a Primary Institutionalization?⁴⁹

To deal with this issue we will have to focus on the

⁴⁷ Ellis, *Theology*, 71. Cf. 1 Cor 6.16; 11.3,7-9; Eph 5.31; 1 Tim 2.12ff.

⁴⁸ Conzelmann, *I Korintherbrief*, 290; Heine, *Women*, 134-141. Heine indicates that the Gnostic heresy may have provoked Christianity to turn its back on the original Pauline role of women in the Church. "The anti-Gnostic campaigns of the orthodox Christians therefore once again reinforced the direction of women to the household and to motherhood."(141)

⁴⁹ The term "primary institutionalization" is drawn from Holmberg, *Paul*, 177. It marks the development that the authority of the founder and leader of the charismatic community flows over into his message. During this process the group becomes itself a bearer of charismatic authority. As a concret example we want to ask the question whether Paul's authority did already flow over on certain people who were named prophets.

argumentation of 1 Cor 12-14. We will start with a brief outline:

The theme Paul is dealing with in 1 Cor 12-14 is "the gifts of the Spirit".⁵⁰ He is probably reacting to a Corinthian inquiry.⁵¹

Paul starts off in 1 Cor 12.1 by mentioning the topic: "About gifts of the Spirit." He then goes on in 12.2-30, arguing that everybody in the Corinthian church has at least one useful gift of the Spirit (12.7,11; cf. 12.18).⁵² It is good to "desire the greater gifts"(12.31a, NIV). However, it is even better to exercise these gifts in love (1 Cor 12.31b; 1 Cor 13.1-13). What this means practically is explained in 14.1-36: not overemphasizing the gift of tongues in public worship⁵³ but more emphasis on prophecy because it edifies not only those individuals in question as speaking in tongues does but the whole congregation (14.4) and eventually applies even to non-believers (14.24). In 14.37f. Paul emphasizes his own authority. He

"Secondary institution" is marked by the disappearance of the original leader. According to Holmberg, this state implies that the spirit can now be reached only through media such as "representatives, offices, holy traditions and rituals" (178).

⁵⁰ 1 Cor 12.1; Theißen, G., *Aspects*, 271.

⁵¹ 1 Cor 7.1; Bittlinger, *Kraftfeld*, 33; Theißen, *Aspects*, 271.

⁵² Cf 1 Pet 4.10. See Wagner, C.P., *Gifts*, 39-40: Wagner applies this principle to contemporary ecclesiological questions. Cf. Grudem, *Prophecy*, 57.

⁵³ On one hand Paul limits the exercise of the gift of tongues within the context of public worship to two or three, one at a time in an orderly way and followed by an interpretation (14.27). On the other hand he encourages people to prophesy because it is at once intelligible (14.24). Nevertheless Paul limits also the number of prophets prophesying to two or three at any one time (14.29).

finishes with the summary: "In short my friends, be eager to prophesy; do not forbid speaking in tongues; but let all be done decently and in order" (14.39f.).⁵⁴

To sum up: It is Paul's clear intention to encourage all members of the congregation to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, first of all the gift of prophecy. Therefore it is no surprise that Paul does not refer to the prophets more often or by naming them. This would have stressed their importance. However, this would have been in contrast to Paul's intention not to limit the gift of prophecy to this group.

We cannot be sure whether it was ever the case that all Christians or at least the large majority of members for example of the Corinthian congregation did utter inspired prophecies. However, there cannot be any doubt that this state (if it had ever existed) has almost ceased when 1 Cor was written.⁵⁵

However, confronting this with what we have found out earlier concerning prophecy as regular ministry we see the tension between reality in early Christianity and Paul's intention and theology. In reality prophecy was very likely mainly exercised by that fairly limited circle of recognized prophets. In this context Paul wants to open up prophecy to every member of the Christian congregation.

Therefore, we come to the conclusion that some institutionalization has already taken place at the time of 1 Cor. In Corinth prophecy was already limited to a fairly well defined circle of people who seem to be of some importance and recognition. This state shows already some characteristics of what can be named "secondary

⁵⁴ Cf. Grudem, *Prophecy*, 57; Theißen, *Aspects*, 271.

⁵⁵ 1 Cor 11.5 may indicate that an earlier state when more people prophesied may have existed. However, it is at the time of 1 Cor hardly more than a survival of an earlier state.

institutionalization": access to the spirit seems to be limited to some representatives.⁵⁶

However, this stands in contrast to Paul's own intention. He wants to deinstitutionalize the gift of prophecy. It is his clear intention that every member of the Corinthian congregation should in principle prophesy.⁵⁷ Paul wants all of them to become themselves bearers of charismatic authority through exercising the gift of prophecy. It may therefore be said that Paul attempts "primary institutionalization" when "secondary institutionalization" is already on the way. Thus Paul attempts to limit institutionalization. He objects the limiting of the spirit to a few media which is characteristic for "secondary institutionalization."⁵⁸

This state of institutionalization leaves us with the question how prophecy in Corinth and according to Paul can be described in terms of 'charisma' and 'office'.

§ 37. Prophecy in Terms of 'charisma' and 'office'

There can be no doubt that also prophecy as a regular ministry is inseparable and as far as it is not false

⁵⁶ Cf. Holmberg, *Paul*, 178.

⁵⁷ Aune, *Prophecy*, 199f.: "In the Apocalypse of John, the Didache, and Hermas *Mand. xi* the act of prophesying is inseparable from those individuals formally designated 'prophets'." This tendency can also be seen in Acts where concrete people are named as prophets. See Acts 11.27f.; 13.1; 15.32; 21.8f.; 21.10f., but also spontaneous prophesying: Acts 19.6.

⁵⁸ Of course, one cannot speak of "secondary institutionalization" in the full sense of the term because the founder and leader Paul has not yet disappeared fully at the time of 1 Cor. Cf. Holmberg, *Paul*, 177. However, the fact that he is not present in Corinth can be viewed as some kind of disappearance which may have led to an increase of institutionalization.

prophecy also almost indistinguishable from the '*charisma*' of prophecy. It is entirely dependent on the self-distributing spirit.⁵⁹

However, the more difficult question is whether such regular ministry of prophecy can already be defined as an 'office'.

As a framework to deal with the various aspects of 'office' we want to use our earlier criteria from the very beginning of this study.⁶⁰

1. Duration: Describing prophecy in Corinth as a regular ministry implies some kind of duration. It is a difference between regularity and duration in the sense that the first focuses on the more or less frequent acts while the second looks more at the aspect of time. However, we may say that a regular ministry is also marked by some duration.

2. Recognition by the congregation: We have seen that certain people were named prophets by virtue of their ministry. Naming them with this title implies also some degree of recognition.

3. Position apart (*Sonderstellung*) of individuals in relation to the congregation: The Corinthian congregation recognized only a certain group of people as prophets. Therefore all members had to be encouraged to seek for prophecy. This shows the distinction between "ordinary" Corinthian Christians and the recognized prophets. A position apart of the prophets is obvious. However, it is crucial to recognize that this position apart stands in contrast to Paul's ideal hope.⁶¹

⁵⁹ We will see clearer evidence as we deal with the question of authority below.

⁶⁰ See § 2.2 of this study.

⁶¹ 1 Cor 14.1,5.

4. Well-ordered commission (laying on of hands): From the Pauline letters we have no reason to assume that early Christian prophets were commissioned to their ministry for example by the laying on of hands.

The laying on of hands in Acts has to do with receiving the Holy Spirit,⁶² sometimes accompanied by speaking in tongues and prophesying.⁶³ However, there is no evidence that this was a well-ordered commissioning to a regular ministry.

5. Legal securing of the function in question: This would imply that a prophet's authority would go beyond that of the inspired prophecies he is uttering. As we will see below this was clearly not the case.

6. Possibility to abstract it from a certain person and to confer it to another one: There is no evidence in the New Testament that the Christian communities, the apostles or anybody else was in the position to choose or elect a certain believer to exercise the regular ministry of being a prophet. As we have seen above it is only by God's sovereign grace and His Holy Spirit that somebody may prophecy and may even be called a prophet. As '*charisma*' it is not conferrable through the ability of human beings but only distributable by God.

To sum up: We have seen that in the Pauline literature the ministry of being a prophet does not match well with most of the categories that define an 'office'. Therefore one should not designate this ministry as an 'office'. On the contrary, it seems to be more important to stress the charismatic nature of this ministry.⁶⁴

However, if the authority of a prophet is not the authority of 'office' then we have to face the question

⁶² Acts 8.14-17.

⁶³ Acts 19.6. Cf. Aune, *Prophecy*, 191.

⁶⁴ Dunn, *Jesus*, 290.

God's grace and His Spirit are the origin of a prophecy is the prophet's authority based on power. God's grace and His Spirit are the power which is interpreted as authority when a prophecy is uttered.

There is also another element of power to be identified behind prophetic authority which is not to be separated from the earlier. "If a man's gift is prophecy, let him use it in proportion to his faith."⁶⁸ The simplest and most satisfactory interpretation of this verse is that somebody who prophesies has to do so in accordance to the standard of faith.⁶⁹ This means most likely that prophecy must be compatible with the *fides quae*, with the faith.⁷⁰ Thus the faith becomes a criterion that the prophet is asked to use as a test for his prophecy. We will find this test again when we deal with the issue of evaluation below.

Is there already any evidence for legitimacy as far as prophecy in the early Pauline churches is concerned? Or to use Schütz's words: Is there already any formalization of the prophetic authority? Is there already any institutional application or embodiment of the 'charisma' of prophecy?⁷¹ We may deal with these questions very briefly for they hint

⁶⁸ Rom 12.6.

⁶⁹ Cranfield, *Romans*, 621; Müller, *Prophezie*, 27; Wilckens, *Römer 12-16*, 14. Against Dunn, *Jesus*, 211f.; 281, who interprets this verse as an admonition that the prophet "should not speak beyond the limits of his inspiration, without the (divinely given) confidence/faith that his words were God's words" (281). However, it seems to be more likely to understand *κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως* in the sense of *μέτρον πίστεως* in V.3. As we will see later on this refers to the test of kerygmatic tradition that must be applied to every prophecy.

⁷⁰ Cranfield, *Romans*, 621: "The prophets are to prophesy in agreement with the standard which they possess in their apprehension of, and response to, the grace of God in Jesus Christ - they are to be careful not to utter (under the impression that they are inspired) anything which is incompatible with their believing in Christ."

⁷¹ Cf. Schütz, *Paul*, 20.

in the same direction as the question whether to be a prophet was an 'office'.

As we have seen above the authority of a prophet lay only with his inspiration and did not go beyond it. Therefore one cannot say that the authority of a prophet was already formalized and interpreted as legitimacy at this early stage.

§ 39. Authority through Assessment?

39.1 Who Has Got the Authority to Evaluate Charismatic Phenomena like Prophecy?

A problem that seems to be inextricably bound up with prophecy is that of false prophecy. It was already a well known problem in the times of Israelite prophecy as recorded in the Old Testament.⁷² Also the Qumran roles,⁷³ the synoptic Gospels⁷⁴ and Acts⁷⁵ show an awareness of the problem.⁷⁶

Therefore it is not surprising that Paul names the gift of prophecy together with the gift of discerning the spirits⁷⁷ and insists on the evaluation of inspired utterances.⁷⁸

⁷² See Judg 9.23; 1 Sam 16.14; 18.10 f.; 19.9 f.; 2 Sam 24.1-17; 1 Kings 13; 22; Jer 15.18b; 20.7.

⁷³ 1 QH 4.16; CD 8.1 f.

⁷⁴ Mark 13.22/Matt 24.24; Matt 24.11; Luke 6.26.

⁷⁵ Acts 13.6.

⁷⁶ Dunn, 'Utterances', 186. *Didache* 11.7f.; 12.1 and *Herm. Mand.* 11.7,11,16 show even more consciousness of the danger of false prophecy. Cf. also Heb 5.14; 1 Clem 48.5; Josephus, *Be11.* 2.258-263.

⁷⁷ 1 Cor 12.10;

⁷⁸ 1 Cor 14.29; 1 Thess 5.19-22; 2 Thess 2.2. Other examples of this consciousness of the danger of false prophecy include 1 John 4.1, *Did* 11.7 f.; 12.1 and *Herm. Mand.* 11.7,11,16; Heb 5.14; 1 Clem 48.5; Josephus, *Be11.* 2.258-263; 6.285-315; Rev 2.20.

However, we are more interested in the question: who has got the authority to evaluate prophecy.

First of all, it is certainly the apostle who has sufficient authority to do so. 1 Cor 12.3 shows that he can even set up criteria to test inspired utterances.

Acts reports a concrete example how Paul distinguishes between prophecy and human warnings. In Acts 19.21 Luke reports that Paul decided to go to Jerusalem and afterwards to Rome. Later in Acts 20.22 Paul is said to describe his situation as "constrained by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem" (REB). That this way is viewed to have been the right one is confirmed while Paul is already imprisoned in Jerusalem. The Lord is said having appeared to Paul at night and confirmed Paul's way.⁷⁹ This is the relevant sequence concerning Paul's determined decision and being bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

In Acts 21.4 some disciples are said to have warned Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem: ἔλεγον διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα.⁸⁰ Paul does not obey their guidance. How is this tension between Paul's own determination to go to Jerusalem and this opposite advice through the spirit to be understood? The best way to interpret this tension is that Paul discerned between the prophetic foresight of what would happen to him in Jerusalem on one side⁸¹ and the warnings on the other side.⁸²

Paul does not follow this advice not to go to Jerusalem. This *διάκρισις* gives the impression that the advice is given on the grounds of what is at least a wrong

⁷⁹ Acts 23.11.

⁸⁰ The parallel Acts 11.28 suggests that *διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος* refers to prophecy also it is not explicitly mentioned in this context.

⁸¹ Acts 20.23; 21.11.

⁸² Acts 21.4, 12.

interpretation, if not even a false prophecy. Paul discerns between the two lines and follows his determination.⁸³ However, Luke does not seem to reflect upon this inspired convictions which run directly counter to each other. He seems to ignore the problem of false prophecy completely.⁸⁴

These two examples show some evidence that Paul did have the authority to evaluate prophecy. This seems to be part of his apostolic authority. However, we have to note that the evaluation reported in Acts 21 cannot be valued as a normal case as prophecy is bearing on Paul's own action. A case where somebody is opposing a prophecy which concerns himself does not seem to be focussed on in 1 Cor 14.⁸⁵

Secondly, Paul asks for evaluation of prophecies in 1 Cor 14.29. Paul says:

Of the prophets, two or three may speak, while the rest exercise their judgment [διακρινέτωσαν] upon what is said (REB).

Who are οἱ ἄλλοι? There are three possibilities: Either the other prophets, or the people with the gift of διακρίσεις πνευμάτων or the other people in the congregation in general.

Paul is generally dealing with the prophets in the surrounding verses. Thus it is most likely they are also addressed in V. 29 to evaluate each others prophecies.⁸⁶

However, we should also have a brief look at the main two other solutions. The apostle mentions in 1 Cor 12.10 the gift of διακρίσεις πνευμάτων. This has sometimes led to the conclusion that διακρινέτωσαν in 1 Cor 14.29 is referring to this gift of discernment. In this case Paul would

⁸³ Acts 21.13.

⁸⁴ Cf. Dunn, 'Utterances', 187.

⁸⁵ 1 Cor 14.24f,29.

⁸⁶ Moffatt, *I Corinthians*, 228; Greeven, 'Propheten', 5f.; Bittlinger, *Graces*, 108ff.; Dunn, *Jesus*, 281: "the evaluation of 'the others' (1Cor 14.29) - that is, probably, the other prophets, though it is possible that Paul means the community as a whole."

address the people who had this gift to evaluate the prophets.⁸⁷

Lastly it has been proposed that the whole congregation is called to judge the prophecies. In 1 Thess 5.19-21 the whole congregation is addressed:

Do not stifle inspiration or despise prophetic utterances, but test them all; keep hold of what is good and avoid all forms of evil (REB).⁸⁸

Thus, Paul in general seem to believe the whole congregation to be capable to judge the prophecies.⁸⁹ This view has been encouraging to see 1 Cor 14.29 as addressing the whole congregation.

Although it is most likely that οἱ ἄλλοι refers to the prophets this solution does not stand in clear contrast to the other two. As we have seen above it was Paul's intention to encourage every member of the Corinthian congregation to prophesy. This does not make it very likely that he on the other hand should have limited the evaluation of prophecies just to that circle of already recognized prophets. Therefore even if 1 Cor 14.29 asks the prophets to evaluate each others' prophecies he forbids

⁸⁷ Allo, *I Corinthians*, 370; Dautzenberg, *Prophetie*, 126-148, also links the gift of διακρίσεις πνευμάτων and prophecy together. However, he understands διακρίσεις πνευμάτων as "Deutung von Geistesoffenbarungen", not as "Unterscheidung der Geister"(142). He argues that "Worte der urchristlichen Propheten als eingegebene Orakel verstanden und gewertet wurden" (147f.) and therefore need interpretation. However, this meaning cannot be found in other areas of ancient literature. We are therefore not convinced by Dautzenberg's argumentation. Cf. also Grudem, *Prophetie*, 263-288, who gives a thorough discussion on Dautzenberg's views.

⁸⁸ Cf. 1 John 4.1-6; Acts 17.11.

⁸⁹ Grudem, *Prophecy*, 60-62; Aune, *Prophecy*, 219-222. Aune sees that 1 Cor 12.10; 14.29 can mean a restriction of the group of people being able to test the prophecy (219). However, from 1 Thess 5.19-22 he argues that the whole congregation is called to evaluate prophecies. Cf. Dunn, *Jesus*, 236: "prophetic utterances are subjected to evaluation by the community."

other members of the community neither to prophesy nor to evaluate whatever is happening in the congregation.⁹⁰

In the following we want to look for the criteria that are used in evaluation.

39.2 What are the Criteria of Assessment?

As the whole community is called to evaluate prophecy and all charismatic contributions in general Paul points at three criteria of assessment.⁹¹

Firstly, there is the criterion of kerygmatic tradition. As we have already seen in Rom 12.6⁹² prophecy should be in accordance to the *fides quae*, i.e. the kerygmatic tradition. Paul put this test into a concrete form in 1 Cor 12.3:

Therefore I tell you that no-one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no-one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit (NIV).⁹³

Thus it is not enough just to claim inspiration.

Another important element of kerygmatic tradition is especially used throughout Galatians: the test of Christian liberty.⁹⁴

Secondly, there is the criterion of love. It is certainly no coincidence that 1 Cor 13 about love (*ἀγάπη*) stands between 1 Cor 12 and 14 which deal with the gifts of the Spirit.⁹⁵ This centrality makes it clear that love is a

⁹⁰ Cf. 1 Thess 15.19-21.

⁹¹ Dunn, *Jesus*, 293-297.

⁹² Cf. Rom 12.3.

⁹³ Cf. Rom 10.9.

⁹⁴ Gal 2.3-5; 14-21; 3.1ff.; 4.1ff.; 5.1ff.

⁹⁵ There has been a long discussion whether 1 Cor 13 was written by Paul and whether it is at its original place between 1 Cor 12 and 14. See Conzelmann, H., *1 Korinther*, 257; Titus, 'Did Paul write I Cor 13?', *JBR* 27, 1959, 299-302. However, we want to follow Wischmeyer, *Weg*, 224: "Die Exegese wie die Untersuchungen zu Kontext, Sprache, Stil und Form des 13. Kapitels des 1 Korintherbriefes haben ergeben, daß der Text von Paulus verfaßt ist, in die Korrespondenz

crucial test for the exercise of the 'charismata'. According to Paul the charismatic contributions are of no value for the community if they are exercised without love.⁹⁶ This love is part of the power which must stand behind every 'charisma'.⁹⁷

Thirdly, the criterion of οἰκοδομή. Paul's sees himself essentially as the founder and builder of Christian communities.⁹⁸ By focussing on prophecy Paul makes clearer the way this gift builds up the community: He says that prophecy is for οἰκοδομή, παράκλησις and παραμυθία. What do these words each mean?

οἰκοδομή⁹⁹ can be translated as edification, upbuilding, strengthening or encouragement. οἰκοδομή originally meant the process of building in a literal sense. In the New Testament it is used to refer to the erection of the new temple which is the eschatological community.¹⁰⁰ Similarly it is used to describe the apostolic activity as building up the Christian community as the temple of God.¹⁰¹ οἰκοδομή describes also the general yardstick for everything that is happening within the community. Everything must serve and build up the community.¹⁰² This

des Apostels mit der Gemeinde zu Korinth gehört und zwischen dem 12. und 14. Kapitel des 1Kor seinen ursprünglichen Platz hat."

⁹⁶ 1 Cor 13.1-3.

⁹⁷ Dunn, *Jesus*, 294: "Love here is the power which transforms character and which motivates the transformed character. It is another aspect of the power of grace."

⁹⁸ Rom 15.20; 1 Cor 3.9-11; 2 Cor 10.8; 12.19; 13.10; 1 Thess 5.11; cf. Eph 2.21.

⁹⁹ Cf. Grudem, *Prophecy*, 182; Goetzmann, 'οἰκοδομέω', 251-253.

¹⁰⁰ Mark 14.58 par Matt 26.61.

¹⁰¹ 1 Cor 3.9. Cf. ἐποικοδομέω in 1 Cor 3.10,12,14. Cf. 1 Cor 3.16: "Surely you know that you are God's temple, where the Spirit of God dwells." See also the apostolic activity as building in 2 Cor 10.8; 12.19; 13.10.

¹⁰² 1 Cor 14.12,17,26; Rom 14.19; 15.2; 1 Thess 5.11; Eph 4.29.

rule must also be applied to the gifts of grace. They are to be evaluated according to their ability to build up the community.¹⁰³ Thus, one can say that prophecy builds up the eschatological community.

παράκλησις means comfort, consolation or encouragement on one side but can also mean exhortation, request or appeal on the other side. Firstly, it can therefore be understood as a hendiadys to οἰκοδομή. Secondly, as in other occurrences in the New Testament it marks exhortation. Paul sees it at his task to exhort his churches quite frequently.¹⁰⁴ Also in other passages exhortation seems to be a special task of the early Christian prophets.¹⁰⁵ However, in many cases one cannot be absolutely sure when the translation "exhortation" or "comfort" would be more appropriate.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, we assume an undefined use of παράκλησις in 1 Cor 14.3 which can equally mean "comfort" and "exhortation".

παραμυθία can be translated as encouragement, consolation or comfort. Like παράκλησις it has also both aspects "admonition" and "comfort".¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to find any clear distinction between the meanings of these two words.¹⁰⁸ παραμυθία may therefore be taken as a hendiadys to παράκλησις.

¹⁰³ 1 Cor 14.3-5; Eph 4.12.

¹⁰⁴ Rom 12.1; Phil 4.2; 1 Thess 4.1.

¹⁰⁵ Acts 15.32; 1 Cor 14.30f.

¹⁰⁶ In some cases the context helps to identify the connotation. For example: more likely "comfort" in Luke 2.25; 6.24; 2 Cor 1.3-7. "Exhortation" is more likely in 1 Thess 2.3; Heb 12.5; 13.22. Cf in Paul παρακαλέω as "exhort" in Rom 12.1; 15.30; 1 Cor 1.10; 4.16; 16.15. It is questionable to decide in favour of one or the other translation are verses like Acts 9.31; 13.15; Rom 12.8; Phil 2.1; 1 Tim 4.13, which may allow any or all of these translations. Cf. Grudem, *Prophecy*, 182f.; Braumann, 'παρακαλέω', 570f.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Thess 2.12; 5.15; Stählin, 'παραμυθέομαι', 820f.

¹⁰⁸ Cf Grudem, *Prophecy*, 183; Braumann, 'παραμυθέομαι', 328f.

To sum up, the criteria of assessment for charismatic phenomena in general are the tests of kerygmatic tradition, love and upbuilding. Specifically for prophecy it can be said that its upbuilding function has also elements of admonition and exhortation.

These three criteria are the guidelines for every believer in the congregation how to exercise evaluation of charismatic phenomena with authority.

§ 40. Conclusions

Summing up the results that we have found above we come to the following conclusions:

1. In Corinth prophecy was already limited to a fairly well defined circle of prophets at the time of 1 Cor.¹⁰⁹ Similar evidence can be drawn from Luke-Acts. In contrast to this Paul wants to encourage all Christians to utter inspired prophecies, not just a few recognized prophets.¹¹⁰

2. We did not find any evidence that women were excluded from prophesying in general. The texts 1 Cor 11.4-16, especially 1 Cor 11.5, give evidence that women prophesied in the early Pauline churches. However, for cultural reasons Paul restricted the exercise of prophecy and evaluation of prophecies in public worship to those women whose husband is not present or who are unmarried.

3. We claim that Paul himself attempted "primary institutionalization". He does not want to encourage the formalization of spiritual gifts. On the contrary, he wants to free gifts like prophecy from institutional and formal boundaries by encouraging all believers to utter inspired prophecies.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Cor 12.28f.

¹¹⁰ 1 Cor 14.5.

Therefore Paul tries to limit institutionalization to the extent of "primary institutionalization".

4. In reality prophecy in Corinth is already on the way to be limited to certain people exercising it as a regular ministry. However, we do not agree to define this regular ministry already as an 'office'. This would hide its charismatic nature. We rather want to name it as a charismatic ministry. However, as we have stated above it is not Paul's intention to encourage the regular contributions of a limited group of people rather the active participation of each member of the Christian community.

5. The power behind prophecy as a gift of God's grace is God himself and His self-distributing Spirit. The authority of somebody prophesying does not go beyond anything that is not rooted in the power of God's Spirit. Thus the exercise of authority has not yet reached the state of legitimacy at the time of 1 Cor.

6. Authority within the congregation is given to the apostle, the prophets but also to each member of the Christian community. We have demonstrated this using the example of evaluating prophecies. Paul points out the tests of kerygmatic tradition, of love and of upbuilding to evaluate charismatic phenomena, especially prophetic utterances.¹¹¹

Having looked at the gift of prophecy as a test-case **for** early Christian church order we come to the conclusion that these early churches are rightly to be described as charismatic communities. Every believer is called to make charismatic contributions for the upbuilding of the whole community. However, we have seen that the reality of early Pauline communities at the time of 1 Cor was already on the way to institutionalization.

¹¹¹ 1 Cor 14.29; 1 Thess 5.19-21.

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ET - English translation

GT - German translation

imp. - impression

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