

Ministry, Community and Spiritual Gifts

by Ronald Y. K. Fung

During the past four years THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY has published a series of three articles by Dr. Fung of the China Graduate School of Theology, Hong Kong, in which he has explored the Pauline understanding of the church and its ministry. The present article forms a worthy conclusion to the series.

Some years ago we undertook a study with a threefold objective: (1). to present a reasonably adequate and accurate picture of Paul's doctrine of the Christian ministry, (2). to bring this doctrine into specific relation with his conception of the Church and, also with his doctrine of charisma, since the latter is a part of the former, and (3). to consider whether the outward form of the ministry as reflected in the Pauline corpus may also be similarly related. It was a study, in other words, which sought to examine the Pauline conception of the ministry, primarily in respect to its inner nature, but then also in respect to its outward form, in the light of his conception of the Church and in relation to his conception of spiritual gifts.¹ Parts of this study, in revised form, have appeared as three articles which were published in previous issues of this journal.² As they stand, however, these articles fail to reflect the fact that they were originally integral parts of one thesis; still less do they succeed in indicating what that thesis was. We propose, therefore, in the present article to supply that which was lacking in the earlier ones by an examination of the mutual relationships of ministry, community and charismata. We shall proceed in the following order:

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- A. Relation between ministry and Church.
- B. Relation between ministry and spiritual gifts.
- C. Relation between the inner nature of the ministry and its outward organization.
- D. Relation between Church and spiritual gifts.
- E. Inter-relation between ministry, Church and spiritual gifts.

A. MINISTRY AND CHURCH

In our study on 'The Nature of the Ministry according to Paul', it was

¹ R. Y. K. Fung, 'Ministry, Community, and Spiritual Gifts' (Th.M. thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971), referred to below as 'Thesis'. Cf. the author's book in Chinese, *Ministry, Community and Spiritual Gifts: An Aspect of Paul's Theology* (CGST Theological Series No. 1; Hong Kong, 1980).

² 'Charismatic versus Organized Ministry? An Examination of an Alleged Antithesis', *EQ* 52, 1980, 195-214; 'Some Pauline Pictures of the Church', *EQ* 53, 1981, 89-107; 'The Nature of the Ministry according to Paul', *EQ* 54, 1982, 129-146. These articles will be referred to below as 'Charismatic versus Organized', 'Pauline Pictures' and 'Nature of the Ministry' respectively.

noted that ministry and community are clearly related, the dominant idea binding them together being that of the Church's growth to maturity and the ministry's being given explicitly for that purpose.³

Much less clear, however, is the bearing of the conception of the Church upon the outward form of the ministry. Only the idea of the Church as the New Israel seems to have had any influence on church order: as the Church is thought of as continuous with Israel of old,⁴ it is natural that the Christian elders should have been derived from a similar institution of Judaism.⁵ The other metaphors of the Church (as Building, Bride, and Body), which have been seen to be more directly linked with the inner nature of the ministry, seem to have little to do with its specific organization. This is in harmony with the fact that Paul has no doctrine of the ministry in respect to the outward forms of its organization comparable to his rich doctrine of the ministry in respect to its inner nature. Indeed, it might be said that, with the proviso that it be consistent with the ministry's inner nature, the external aspect of the ministry appears to have been regarded as an *adiaphoron*.⁶

made immediately intelligible by the realization of two related facts: the word is so intimately related to χάρις that perhaps it is most accurately rendered 'grace-gift';¹¹ and Paul is *par excellence* the exponent of God's grace.¹² The close connexion of χάρισμα with χάρις is lucidly brought out in two passages where Paul juxtaposes the two words (1 Cor. 1:4, 7; Rom. 12:6), in both of which it is apparent that the χάρισμα of God expresses itself in one form as the various χαρίσματα in the body of believers; or, to put it differently, every χάρισμα is a manifestation of that χάρις with which God endows his people, both individually and as a congregation. A charisma, then, is a grace-gift, i.e., a free gift which has its source in and is an expression of God's grace.

The seventeen occurrences of the word in the New Testament exhibit, under the basic meaning just given, a variety of senses. In the general sense, the word is used of the privileges irrevocably bestowed on Israel as God's chosen people (Rom. 11:29; cf. 9:4f.), the free gift of salvation from condemnation to eternal life (Rom. 5:15f.; 6:23), the blessing of a

¹¹ So J. A. Robinson, 'The Christian Ministry in the Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic Periods', in H. B. Swete (ed.), *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (London, 1918), 73. The author observes that the word 'shares the new meaning which χάρις obtains in the language of St. Paul: so that the Apostle never uses "charisma" without implying some special manifestation as a result of Divine grace' (*ibid.*, 72f.). Cf. no. 20 below.

¹² To what extent the conception of God's grace dominates the thinking of Paul may be gauged by the following facts: (a) Without exception, all his letters begin and end with a reference to the grace of God or Jesus Christ, as if to suggest that the grace of God supremely displayed in Christ (2 Cor. 8:9) was his all-pervading theme. (b) He speaks of the believers' decisive deliverance from sin to God as due entirely to grace: their call (Gal. 1:6; cf. v.15), salvation (Eph. 2:5, 8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 2:11), redemption (Eph. 1:7), forgiveness (Eph. 4:32; Gk; cf. 2:13), justification (Rom. 3:24; Tit. 3:7) are all described in terms of that abundant grace that leads to life (Rom. 5:15, 17, 20f.). (c) He sees the Christian life as enveloped and motivated by grace: believers stand in grace (Rom. 5:2); they are to walk not in fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God (2 Cor. 1:12); their generosity is a result of the working of God's grace (2 Cor. 8:1). (d) He holds up the magnification of God's grace as the purpose of salvation (Eph. 2:7) as well as the end of the Christian life (Eph. 1:6). (e) He describes his own ministry in terms of grace: he was called by grace (Gal. 1:15; Eph. 3:7f.), which made him what he was (1 Cor. 15:10; 1 Tim. 1:14), to be a steward of the grace of God (Eph. 3:2); through this grace he spoke (Rom. 12:3), and his sole ambition for life was that he might testify to the gospel of God's grace (Acts 20:24).

P. W. Schmiedel, in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, IV 4756, suggests that in view of the prominence of the idea of grace with Paul, it may well be conjectured that 'he may have coined the expression, in the course of his observations of the extraordinary endowments intended by it, while engaged in his missionary labours'; cf. F. J. A. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia* (London, 1908), 156. On the other hand, E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (E.T. London, 1964), 64, believes that the word was coined before Paul's time but Paul was the first to give it a technical sense and introduce it into the vocabulary of theology; so also H. Küng, *The Church* (E.T. New York, 1967), 188.

A proper study of Paul's conception of spiritual gifts would have to include in its purview, at least, the lexical data concerning the word χάρισμα, a classification of the gifts, the individual charismata and the contexts in which the lists of spiritual gifts appear. Only the first and last of these items need be dealt with in preparation for discussion of the subject of this section.⁸

Lexical Data. The word χάρισμα, not found in the LXX or in Greek writers before the Christian era,⁹ is used in the New Testament only of divine grace, almost exclusively in the Pauline corpus¹⁰ — a phenomenon

³ Cf. *art. cit.*, 144-46.

⁴ Cf. 'Pauline Pictures', 89f.

⁵ Cf. 'Charismatic versus Organized', 198f.

⁶ See section C below.

⁷ This section will be much longer than the rest, since it is necessary to consider Paul's conception of spiritual gifts before commenting on its relation to his view of the ministry.

⁸ A working classification of the spiritual gifts was suggested in 'Charismatic versus Organized', 211 n.40 (cf. 'Thesis', 44-48; *Ministry, Community and Spiritual Gifts*, 51-54); a study of the individual gifts was attempted in *ibid.*, 54-75 (cf. 'Thesis', 48-79).

⁹ See Arndt, 887a (*s.v.*), and H. Conzelmann, *TDNT*, IX 402f.

¹⁰ The occurrences of the word are distributed as follows: (a) 6 times in Romans: (in the singular) 1:11; 5:15, 16; 6:23; (in the plural) 11:29; 12:6. (b) 7 times in 1 Corinthians: (sing.) 1:7; 7:7; (plur.) 12:4, 9, 28, 30, 31. (c) Once each, in the singular, in 2 Corinthians (1:11), 1 Timothy (4:14), 2 Timothy (1:6) and 1 Peter (4:10). Total: 17 times in six epistles, 10 times in the singular, 7 times in the plural.

special (presumably physical) deliverance (2 Cor. 1:11), some benefit to be derived from the apostle Paul's ministry (Rom. 1:11), and some unspecified spiritual endowment (1 Cor. 1:7).¹³ In the more technical sense, the word denotes a special endowment or equipment bestowed on the believer by the Holy Spirit for Christian service. It is with the consideration of charismata as taken in this more technical sense, a meaning which applies to all the other references where the word occurs,¹⁴ that the present discussion has to do.

If the translation 'grace-gift' does better justice to the close connexion between χάρισμα and χάρις, the more familiar rendering 'spiritual gift' has the merit of showing the close connexion between the gifts and the Holy Spirit: although πνευματικόν is linked with χάρισμα only once (Rom. 1:11), the charismata are explicitly said to be endowments of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:11). The spiritual gifts are referred to as πνευματικά in 14:1,¹⁵ while in Ephesians 4 the δόματα of verse 8 are seen to be the men with spiritual gifts mentioned in verse 11, so that δόματα there may be regarded as being used in a sense somewhat equivalent to that of χαρίσματα.

6 *General Facts and Principles.* Passing now to a consideration of the contexts in which the lists of charismata appear, we shall gather together the facts and principles which are true of the spiritual gifts in general. The passages in question are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12:3-8 and Ephesians 4:7-16.¹⁶

¹³ Χαρίσματι here probably combines the general and the more technical sense of the word, so that its present use may provide a convenient transition from the one to the other. Cf. A. Robertson and A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (ICC; Edinburgh, 21967), 7; J. B. Lightfoot, *Notes on Epistles of St. Paul* (London, 1895), 147f.

¹⁴ Justification for giving the word its technical sense even in 1 Corinthians 7:7 may be found in Schmiedel, *op. cit.*, 4757f.

¹⁵ And also 12:1, if τῶν πνευματικῶν there is construed as neuter (cf. AV, RV, RSV, NEB, NASB, NIV; J. D. G. Dunn, *NIDNTT*, III 707) and not masculine (as by, e.g., K. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of Paul* (London, 1911), 202; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Corinthians* (NCB; London, 1971), 116). For possible explanations for the use of πνευματικά instead of χαρίσματα in these references, see J. A. Robinson, *op. cit.*, 74; Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 66; F. D. Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, 1970), 288; Dunn, *loc. cit.* But the phrase in 12:1 might conceivably be a reference to the self-designation of the Corinthian enthusiasts (cf. 14:37); see Schmiedel, *op. cit.*, 4772f.; W. J. Bartling, 'The Congregation of Christ—A Charismatic Body', *Concordia Theological Monthly* 40, 1969, 67-80 (68). Little difference in sense is involved, however, in this particular instance, as spiritual persons are persons endowed with spiritual gifts: so C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (HNTC; New York, 1968), 278.

¹⁶ Schmiedel, *op. cit.*, 4756, regards the enumeration in Ephesians 4:11 as of 'offices only, not charisms'; so also A. J. Grieve, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*², III 369b;

It may first be observed that the charismata have their origin in the work of the triune God. Their attribution to the Holy Spirit is explicitly stated in 1 Corinthians 12:11; it is given a fourfold emphasis in verses 8f. by the repeated mention of the Spirit in connexion with the individual gifts, and is implied in verse 4.¹⁷ The last reference makes up the first line of a triplet in which the three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned 'in inverse order, the Fount of Deity being reached last, — Πνεῦμα, Κύριος, Θεός'.¹⁸ Here in verse 5 the Son is represented less as the source of the charismata than as the object toward which their exercise is to be directed;¹⁹ but in Ephesians 4:7 the grace given to each believer (which in the present context comes near to meaning charisma)²⁰ is said to be 'according to the measure of Christ's gift', which indicates that Christ is the sovereign dispenser of the gifts,²¹ while the application of Psalm 68:18 to Christ in verses 8-10 shows clearly that the gifts are directly bestowed by the ascended Lord.²² The charismata come from the hand of the glorified Son as much as they are due to the operation of the Holy Spirit: indeed, 'the Holy Spirit Himself is given by the exalted Christ to His Church (Acts 2:33), and so the gifts of the Spirit may also be thought of as gifts of the

whereas T. K. Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1968), sees here a double reference — to gifts as well as offices, as does also M. Barth, *Ephesians* (AB; Garden City, 1974), 345. The backward look to δόματα in verse 8 must mean that the enumeration in verse 11 is of gifts, whether or not offices are also involved. Cf. n.43 below.

¹⁷ Cf. J. B. Phillips: 'Men have different gifts, but it is the same Spirit who gives them.'

¹⁸ Robertson and Plummer, *op. cit.*, 262.

¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 264: 'it is He who is glorified by the diverse distribution of ministries'; Phillips: 'it is the same Lord who is served'; Barrett, *op. cit.*, 284: '... the Lord who is served ...'

²⁰ Cf. Hort, *op. cit.*, 157: 'The word χάρισμα does not occur in Ephesians: but ἔδωκεν in this connexion (sc. vv.7-11), associated with ἡ χάρις, is exactly the ἐχαρίσατο implicitly contained in χάρισμα.' The two nouns sometimes overlap in meaning: H. Conzelmann, *TDNT*, IX 403 with n.7. Cf. n.11 above.

²¹ Here the figure of the μέτρον is 'used to express the diversity and manifoldness of the gifts of grace allotted to each man'; 'it is true of all the gifts of Christians that they have a measure and limit' (K. Deissner, *TDNT*, IV 634). M. Barth, *op. cit.*, 429f., considers it probable that the Messiah is himself the gift and that the meaning of 'measure' is suggested by Romans 8:32 (cf. C. L. Mitton, *Ephesians* (NCB; London, 1976), 144), though he concedes that 'the following verses clearly designate Jesus Christ as the donor'. The latter consideration makes it preferable to treat τοῦ Χριστοῦ as subjective genitive, yielding the sense that the grace was given 'in the measure with which Christ has bestowed His gift on each' (F. F. Bruce, *An Expanded Paraphrase of the Epistle of Paul* (Exeter, 1965), 277), rather than as objective/appositive genitive (as per Barth and Mitton). Somewhat differently, R. P. Martin, *NBCR*, 1116a, takes the δωρεά here to be Christ's gift *par excellence*, viz. the Holy Spirit.

²² G. B. Caird, 'The Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:7-11', *Stud Ev* 2, 1964, 535-545, followed by Martin, *loc. cit.*, takes the reference in κατέβη to be to Christ's return in the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. This interpretation is favoured by the order of the

exalted Christ'.²³ They are, further, also ascribed to the effectual working of God the Father, 'who inspires (ὁ ἐνεργῶν) them all in every one' (1 Cor. 12:6). There is, of course, perfect harmony between these three modes of attribution: God the ultimate source of all gifts and the ultimate fount of all energy and power freely bestows the charismata by the hand of his Son just as he effectually inspires them through the instrumentality of his Spirit.

Next, as the source of the charismata is found in the work of the triune God, so their distribution is traced to the will of the same. 1 Corinthians 12:11 states that it is the Spirit, the inspirer of the gifts, 'who apportions to each one as he wills'; at verse 28, God is the one who 'ἔθετο (not merely 'set' but 'placed', set as part of a plan) the members, each one of them in the body as He willed'²⁴ (cf. v.24, συνεκέρρασεν); while in Ephesians 4:7, the apportioning of grace is said to be 'according to the measure of Christ's gift' — an expression which J. B. Phillips paraphrases as 'out of the rich diversity of Christ's giving'.

8 In connexion with the distribution of the gifts, a few facts may be noted. (a). The charismata are given in rich variety, which makes for multiplicity within the unity of the Body of Christ. This truth lies on the surface both in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12:3-8. (b). The gifts are not bestowed indiscriminately. The ninefold repetition of 'to one' or 'to another' in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 emphasizes the distribution of different gifts to different individuals, while the form of the questions (introduced by μή) in verses 29f. implies that not all are given the same gifts. Believers have gifts that do differ (Rom. 12:6). (c). This does not exclude the possibility that more than one gift may be found in the same person. The gift of tongues, for instance, may be found together with the gift of interpretation (1 Cor. 14:13). The apostles probably each possessed a variety of gifts, if Paul was to any degree representative of this group here.²⁵ (d). The basic fact is that the distribution of the gifts covers every individual believer: none is left out. The fact that ἐκάστῳ occurs in connexion with the distribution of gifts in all the three passages (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, cf.

v.18; Rom. 12:3f.; Eph. 4:7) puts the individual participation of every believer in the charismata beyond question.²⁶

A third observation regarding the charismata concerns the goal for which they are given. 1 Corinthians 12:7 states that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον — 'for some useful purpose' (NEB), perhaps meaning more exactly 'for the common good' (RSV, NASB, NIV), for the benefit of all. In his discussion of the exercise of the gift of tongues, Paul puts forward as the all-decisive consideration the edification (οἰκοδομή) of the worshipping community (1 Cor. 14:3 with vv.1, 4-6; esp. vv.12, 17, 26; cf. v.19).²⁷ Οἰκοδομή is presented in Ephesians 4:12 as the ultimate purpose of all gifts, and it is the edification of the entire Church that is in view. The notion of utility is in fact one differentia between the ordinary and technical use of the word χάρισμα; it is also, from another angle, 'the criterion of a genuine charisma', which lies 'not in the mere fact of its existence but in the use to which it is put'.²⁸

This leads to a fourth observation, which has to do with the manner of the exercise of spiritual gifts: they are to be employed in love, in the way of service, in obedience to the lordship of Christ. Love (ἀγάπη), so fully expounded in 1 Corinthians 13, is that 'still more excellent way' which Paul wishes to show the Corinthians and which he exhorts them to make their aim (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1). It was lack of this all-important virtue among the Corinthians that led to the gifts' becoming a ground for divisive competition, and Paul had reason to remind them of the futility of gifts apart from love (13:1-3) and their transience as compared with love's never-ending nature (vv.8-13), as well as love's characteristics (vv.4-7). If the exercise of the gifts is governed by love, it will take the form of service

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²⁶ Cf. M. Barth, *op. cit.*, 430. This perhaps renders the more surprising the view that 'Paul's words "to each one is given" must mean: to every one who has special gifts of the Spirit is given' (F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NLC; London, 1954), 284; cf. J. Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (E. T. London, 1962), 126. The addition of ἑμῶν to ἐκάστῳ in Ephesians 4:7 ('one each of us') clinches the argument, as the ἑμῶν can only refer back to the ἑμῶν of verse 6, which must at least include all believers. According to E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (E. T. London, 1961), 186, 'the assertion that the gift of grace is bestowed on every church member, and that therefore every member is called to service, is constant in the New Testament'.

²⁷ J. Goetzmann, *NIDNTT*, II 253, observes that the term οἰκοδομεῖν in its positive use 'always refers to the community. Paul uses sharp words (cf. 1 Cor. 14:19) to criticize the man who speaks in a tongue on his own to "edify (*oikodomei*) himself" (1 Cor. 14:4). Edification which is not aimed at serving others is self-centred and pointless'.

²⁸ Käsemann, *op. cit.* (see n.12 above), 71. The charismata do serve other purposes as well, e.g., the authentication of the Christian message and its messengers (2 Cor. 12:12), the conviction and conversion of unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:21-25); but the supreme purpose of the gifts, at least in Paul's treatment, remains that described in 1 Corinthians 12:7 and Ephesians 4:12.

verbs in verse 9, with the ascent preceding the descent, but against it are the facts (a) that the wording of verses 8-10 places 'much more stress upon the ascent than upon the descent' (Barth, *op. cit.*, 433), and (b) that 'it was not Christ's return to the earth which was celebrated in the Christian Pentecost, but the coming of the Holy Spirit' (Mitton, *op. cit.*, 148). On Paul's application of Psalm 68:18 (MT 68:19, LXX 67:19) cf. F. F. Bruce, *Ephesians* (London, 1961), 82; and especially Barth, *op. cit.*, 472-477.

²³ F. F. Bruce, *Ephesians*, 81.

²⁴ Hort, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ R. B. Hoyle, *The Holy Spirit in St. Paul* (Garden City, 1928), 58-61, shows how all the gifts are illustrated in Paul himself.

to others. The idea of charisma *as* service is implied in 1 Corinthians 12:5,²⁹ and is perhaps most emphatically expounded by E. Käsemann, who states, for instance, that 'no spiritual endowment has value, rights and privileges on its own account. It is validated only by the service it renders'; and by H. Küng, who affirms, e.g.,

Charisma and diakonia are correlative concepts. Diakonia is rooted in charisma, since every diakonia in the Church presupposes the call of God. Charisma leads to diakonia, since every charisma in the Church only finds fulfilment in service. Where there is a real charisma, there will be responsible service for the edification and benefit of the community.³⁰

As for the connexion between the charismata and the lordship of Christ, it may be noted that the positive criterion for the authenticity of charismata laid down in 1 Corinthians 12:2f. is that the Spirit confesses Jesus ('Ἰησοῦν, the human, historical Jesus) as Κύριος (v.3).³¹ Thus the honouring of Jesus as Lord is regarded as the characteristic work of the Holy Spirit (*cf.* Jn. 16:14a), and the same should characterize the exercise of the Spirit's gifts. This aspect of truth is again emphasized by Käsemann. To him, a normative principle of Paul's is that 'the Giver is not to be separated from his gift but is really present in it'; 'Christ in and with his gift calls each of his members to the *nova oboedientia*, quickens him and moves him to service and suffering ...' According to Käsemann, the doctrine of the charismata, like the doctrine of the Church and the doctrine of the Spirit, is therefore inseparable from the doctrine of Christ. It is exactly to the failure to understand this inseparable connexion that the aberrations of the Corinthian Enthusiasts were due:

The gift, isolated from the Giver, loses the character of a claim made by the Lord, leads to the self-appointed leadership of those who are fundamentally undisciplined themselves, and makes the community into an arena for competing religious 'gifts'.³²

Only as the gifts are employed in the confession of Jesus as Lord, as a

²⁹ It is commonly agreed that the χαρίσματα, διακονίαι and ἐνεργήματα of 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 do not represent three different categories, but are simply references to the same category under different names, because viewed from different angles; so, e.g., Schmiedel, *op. cit.*, 475f.; C. K. Barrett, *op. cit.*, 285; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Corinthians*, 118; J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit* (London, 1975), 209; H. Conzelmann, *TDNT*, IX 405. The last-named scholar notes that in this 'rhetorical triadic presentation' there is a crescendo on God's side but not on the side of the gifts or operations (*ibid.*)

³⁰ Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 67; Küng, *op. cit.* (see n.12 above), 394 (*cf.* 182), respectively.

³¹ The negative principle is that ἐνθουσιασμός ('enthusiasm') alone is no guarantee of the Spirit of God. See Bartling, *op. cit.* (see n.15 above), 73, and *cf.* G. Schrenk as cited in Bruner, *op. cit.*, 286.

³² Käsemann, *op. cit.*, 74f.

service, in other-directed love, will their destined goal of upbuilding the Body of Christ be attained.

By way of summary, the four observations presented above may be stated in the following words of H. Küng:

All charisms have their origin in one and the same giver: God himself through Christ in the Spirit. All charisms are subject to one and the same 'law', the law of love.³³ All charisms have one and the same goal: the edification of the community.³⁴

We may now proceed with some observations on the bearing of Paul's conception of the charismata upon his conception of the ministry.

*Relation to the Ministry in its Inner Nature.*³⁵ (1). As the charismata have their origin in the work of the triune God and are distributed according to his will, so the ministry has its origin in God and is dependent on him. The ministry, in fact, consists of men endowed with charismata who are given by the Church's Lord; and inasmuch as the ministry and the charismata have the same ultimate goal in view (*viz.*, the οἰκοδομή of the Church as the Body of Christ), it may reasonably be deduced that the charismata are the wherewithal, the tools, the means of the ministry. It is because there are men endowed with charismata that there is such a thing as the Christian ministry; it is by the endowment of charismata that its ministers are made sufficient. (2). As there is a multiplicity of charismata within the unity of the Body of Christ, so the same principle marks both the 'special ministry' and the 'common service':³⁶ unity within the structure of the one Body and multiplicity in the variety of functions in its members. Because none is without gift, all may take part in ministry; hence the common service. But because the gifts are not distributed indiscriminately, there is not only differentiation of function from function within the common service, but also the distinction between that and the special ministry as well as within the special ministry itself. (3). As the charismata are given for the upbuilding of the Church and are always to be used for its benefit, so the ministry is given to the Church for its benefit, especially for the ultimate goal of promoting its growth to maturity. The common service, too, is intended to serve the

³³ Which, it may be added, involves service to men in obedience to the one Lord.

³⁴ Küng, *op. cit.*, 190. *Cf.* a similar summary in Bruner, *op. cit.*, 301f.

³⁵ For the inner nature of the ministry, see 'Nature of the Ministry', especially the summaries on 138f., 143f.

³⁶ For these two terms, derived from our study of Ephesians 4:11f., see 'Nature of the Ministry', 141. *Cf.* M. Barth, *op. cit.*, 477: 'Even when the incarnate seems to be an absent Lord after his return to heaven, he proves to be continually present . . . by the *special ministers* he appoints to engage them (*sc.* 'all the saints') in the *common ministry* . . . (4:7-12), (italics mine).

selfsame goal. (4). As charismata are to be employed in the way of service, and in obedience to the lordship of Christ, so Christian ministers are servants of the Church and prosecute their work as those who are ultimately answerable to the Lord. In the light of such perspicuous parallelism, the relation between the doctrine of charisma and the inner nature of the ministry may well be summed up as one of perfect consistency and complete correspondence.

Relation to the Ministry in its Outward Form. In considering this aspect of the matter, a preliminary question has to be asked: do the various charismata denote functions or offices?³⁷ Of the four lists of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10; 12:28-30; Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11), the first presents no difficulty, since what is obviously in view there is the variety of functions which exists in the Church as the Body of Christ. It seems that the same point is being made in the second list, which occurs in the same context as, though it is not an exact repetition of, the first. It has indeed been maintained that the use of the ordinals with the first three items only, coupled with the change from persons to gifts after the third item,³⁸ marks the three off as referring to office-bearers in distinction to the rest which refer to functions;³⁹ but the reasons adduced in support are insufficient to warrant the conclusion. For, while the use of *πρῶτον*, *δεύτερον*, *τρίτον* definitely suggests an 'orderly sequence of a descending scale',⁴⁰ at least for the first three, its non-use thereafter may be due simply to the natural tendency 'to stay the exact enumeration at the third item of a considerable list';⁴¹ whereas the change from persons to gifts may be explained by the possibility that for some or all of the other items masculine nouns were lacking or little used.⁴² The correspondence between 1 Corinthians 12:28 and verse 18 would seem to settle the point that functions are in view, not offices. The third list is immediately preceded by an explicit reference to variety of functions (Rom. 12:4, *πρῶξις*), so that the gifts here, as in 1 Corinthians 12, clearly refer not to offices, but to functions. In the last list, the enumeration is of gifted men

who are themselves gifts of the ascended Lord to his Church. Here again, the immediately following context places the emphasis on the idea of harmonious functioning among the members of the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12f., 16) and shows that the men are viewed as exercising functions rather than holding offices.⁴³

On this understanding, it can definitely be said that the charismata refer only to functions appropriate to the gifts, and not to offices — with the possible single exception of the gift of apostleship.⁴⁴ This does not, however, warrant the deduction that the charismata exclude the possibility of offices (as Käsemann claims they do). The truth is that Paul's teaching on the charismata has not been designed to answer questions regarding the outward form of the ministry, *i.e.*, its organizational aspect.⁴⁵ The relation of charismata to this aspect of the ministry has to be dealt with in the light of the broader context of Paul's view of the ministry as a whole. This issue has already been addressed in our examination of Käsemann's theory, and the conclusion reached that there is no inconsistency between either organization as such, or the picture of the ministry's outward form in Paul, and his doctrine of charisma.⁴⁶

C. INNER NATURE AND OUTWARD ORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY

As suggested earlier, the specific form of the ministry may be regarded as

³⁷ 'Office' is here thought of as a formally recognized position with appropriate duties (*cf. Amt*), and 'function' as the carrying out of a task without a formal position being involved (*cf. Dienst*). For a more technical definition, see J. K. S. Reid, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Ministry* (SJT Occasional Papers No. 4; Edinburgh, 1955), 9.

³⁸ *Cf.* AV, RV, NASB, as against RSV, NEB, NIV which render as persons throughout.

³⁹ *Cf.* Grosheide, *op. cit.*, 298; Abbott, *op. cit.* (see n.16 above), 117.

⁴⁰ H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament* (London, 1910), 186.

⁴¹ J. A. Robinson, *op. cit.*, 68, giving Genesis 32:17-19 and Matthew 22:25 as illustrations (another example is 1 Sam. 16:6-10). Similarly L. Coenen, *NIDNTT*, I 198, considers it 'unlikely that any basic contrast is intended' between the three and the rest.

⁴² So Héring, *op. cit.*, 132f.; *cf.* J. A. Robinson, *loc. cit.* Robertson and Plummer, *op. cit.*, 280, think that the change was made 'perhaps for the sake of variety'.

⁴³ *Cf.* n.16 above. On the whole question *cf.* G. S. R. Cox, 'The Emerging Organization of the Church in the New Testament, and the Limitations Imposed Thereon', *EQ* 38, 1960, 22-39 (28): 'Indeed one point which the context seems to press with the utmost vigour is that these are gifts for the Church, and not offices.'

⁴⁴ The gift of being an apostle is regarded as being at the same time an office by not a few interpreters: e.g., Bartling, *op. cit.*, 74b; F. W. Beare, 'The Ministry in the New Testament Church: Practice and Theory', *Anglican Theological Review* 37, 1955, 3-19 (12); L. Morris, *Ministers of God* (London, 1964), 41; J. K. S. Reid, *loc. cit.* (see n.37 above); E. F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament* (London, 1923), 167f. On the other hand, H. von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (E.T. Palo Alto, 1969), 27, writes: 'The once-for-all character of the apostolic calling is completely incompatible with the idea of an organized office, the essence of which is that it remains constant even when the holders change.' In any case, the apostolic 'office' could not be passed on or handed down, as an office normally can, because of one requirement involved in apostleship: personal encounter with the risen Christ. *Cf. ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁵ *Cf.* Hort, *op. cit.*, 160: 'What is common in substance to all the terms of the series (*sc.* of charismata) is that they are so many kinds of partial service, and from this point of view it was immaterial whether they were or were not definite offices corresponding to any or all of these kinds of services; . . . Hence these passages give us practically no evidence respecting the formal arrangement of the Ecclesiae of that age . . .'; A. J. Grieve, *op. cit.* (see n.16 above), 369a; Robertson and Plummer, *op. cit.*, 263, 284.

⁴⁶ *Cf.* 'Charismatic versus Organized', especially 210-214.

of secondary importance in comparison with its inner nature.⁴⁷ Yet it does not follow that the outward form of the ministry is a matter of complete indifference. It must, on the contrary, be consistent with the inner nature of the ministry. On this basis, the insistence on God as the originator of the ministry means that any church order which 'usurp(s) the Crown Rights of the Redeemer within His Church' is to be ruled out.⁴⁸ Again, the nature of the ministry as service in the interests of the Church must exclude two kinds of office: that 'which is based on *law* and *power* and which corresponds to the office of potentates' (Mk. 9:33-35; 10:42-45), and that 'which is based on *knowledge* and *dignity*, and corresponds to the office of the scribes' (Matt. 23:2-12).⁴⁹ On neither of these points does the Pauline picture of the ministry's organization violate the criteria inherent in the nature of the ministry. The sovereignty of Christ is safeguarded, even in the appointment through human mediation of officers, by the requirement of evidence of charisma in the appointee, the charisma indicating Christ's prevenient call; the nature of the office is kept from becoming like the office of earthly potentates and that of the religious scribes by its close connexion with charisma, thus ensuring dependence on the Holy Spirit, obedience to Jesus Christ and service to his Church.⁵⁰

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It may further be said that the existence of an organized and official ministry is well consistent with the fact that what we have called the 'special ministry', as distinct from the 'common service' (Eph. 4:11f.),⁵¹ is of fundamental importance to the realization of the Church's goal of growth to maturity. It is possible to identify the special ministry with the official or organized ministry as disclosed in the Pauline corpus, especially after the disappearance of the apostles and prophets and the more miraculous gifts.⁵²

D. CHURCH AND CHARISMATA

It is not difficult to see how Paul's conception of charismata fits in directly

⁴⁷ See n.6 above. Cf. Küng, *op. cit.*, 432: 'All questions of ecclesiastical organization and the demarcation of jurisdiction are far and away secondary when compared with the fundamental truth about the ordering of the Christian Church: namely that *all* members of the Church are inspired by the Spirit, *all* members of the Church have their charism . . .'

⁴⁸ W. D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (London, 1962), 227. For conflicting points of view on the question whether Paul's doctrine of the ministry enables us to pass judgment on the various forms of the ministry in the Church today, cf. *ibid.*, 228, with A. T. Hanson, *The Pioneering Ministry* (London, 1961), 12.

⁴⁹ Küng, *op. cit.*, 392.

⁵⁰ Cf. 'Charismatic versus Organized' 206-210.

⁵¹ Cf. n.36 above.

⁵² Cf. 'Charismatic versus Organized', especially 204f., 213f.

with his conception of the Church, as the following observations will show.

(1). As the Church is presented in terms of its relation to the triune God, so the spiritual gifts are traced in their origin and distribution to the same undivided Godhead. Just as the ἐκκλησία is the eschatological new people of God by virtue of the covenant-sealing sacrifice of the Son and the outpouring of the Spirit, so the χαρίσματα are part of the blessings of the new aeon, the gracious endowments of God, in consequence of the death-conquering triumph of the Son and by operation of the outpoured Spirit, upon his people.⁵³

(2). As the Spirit by his indwelling constitutes the community the very temple of God of which Christ is the cornerstone,⁵⁴ so the Spirit's gifts by their existence manifest the reality of this indwelling.

(3). As Christ as Head of his Body is both the source of its life — filling it with all the resources of his power and grace, and its absolute ruler — requiring its subjection and obedience,⁵⁵ so Christ is the dispenser of his gifts to each member of the community, which are to be used in obedience to his lordship.

(4). As the Church is one Body with a multiplicity of members, and the growth of the Body depends upon its members being properly related to the Head and to one another,⁵⁶ so within the one Body there exists a rich variety of gifts bestowed for the purpose of upbuilding the Body, and the attainment of this goal depends upon the gifts being exercised in obedience to the Head and in loving service to one another.

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There is thus an almost point-by-point correspondence between Paul's conception of spiritual gifts and his conception of the Church. Not that the former is consequent upon the latter as if Paul's view of the gifts were derived from his view of the Church; rather, Paul's idea of the charismata is, strictly speaking, one aspect of his idea of the ecclesia, and between the one and the other there is found to be perfect harmony. It is not surprising that the passages which shed light on Paul's conception of the charismata (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:1-16) should be passages where also the ecclesia is conceived of as the Body of Christ — an idea that has been found to occupy such an important place in Paul's conception of the Church.

E. MINISTRY, CHURCH AND CHARISMATA

The above sections (A-D) thus show that there is a conspicuous degree of

⁵³ Cf. 'Pauline Pictures', 106f.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 100-105 (especially 105). In 1 Corinthians 12:7 'the manifestation of the Spirit' is just another reference to charisma; cf. Héring, *op. cit.*, 126.

⁵⁵ Cf. 'Pauline Pictures', 92-97 (especially 97).

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.* (especially 96f.)

harmony and correspondence between Paul's conception of the ministry's inner nature and his view of the Church, and again between the former and his doctrine of charisma, as well as between this doctrine and his conception of the Church. This means that his conception of the *ministry*, his view of the *Church* and his doctrine of *charisma* are deeply inter-related as not only being consistent with one another, but as corresponding to one another to a highly remarkable extent. In the case of the ministry's outward form, which is much less clear than — being of only secondary importance to — the doctrine of the ministry (*i.e.*, of its inner nature), no such degree of correspondence exists. Nevertheless, the Pauline picture of the ministry's outward form is at least not inconsistent with his view of the Church, with his conception of the charismata and with his doctrine of the ministry.⁵⁷ The general conclusion must be that Paul has a unified view of the Church, the charismata and the Christian ministry.

More specifically, there are three principles which pervade all three areas of Paul's thinking and make it possible to define their mutual relations in a stricter manner. These have already received repeated mention in the course of our study, but they must now be singled out again for specific treatment from the present perspective.

The *first* principle is the Headship of Christ. As the Head of his Body, the Church, Christ is both lord of the charismata and lord of the ministry. As Head of the Church, he fills it with all the resources of his power and grace; by him the charismata are dispensed to all; by him the ministry is instituted, equipped and sustained; and by him both charismata and ministry are given to the Church for its service and benefit. Again, as Head of the Church, Christ is its absolute ruler; the charismata are distributed according to his sovereign will and are to be exercised in obedience to his lordship; on him the ministry is dependent and to him it is subservient and responsible.

The *second* principle is that of unity and multiplicity. As the Church, as the Body of Christ, is an organic unity composed of a multiplicity of members, so the charismata are given in rich variety, making for a multiplicity of gifts within the unity of the Body of Christ. In like manner, the ministry exhibits a profuse variety of functions — and perhaps also forms — within the structure of the one Body.

The *third* principle is that of the growth of the Body as a whole. The Church as the Body of Christ is to grow up to the maturity of likeness to him; this growth, or upbuilding, of the Church is the all-consuming purpose for which the charismata must always be used; it is the ultimate goal for which the ministry is given. The growth of the Body takes place as

the members are properly related to the Head and to one another; as the charismata are employed in obedience to the lordship of Christ and in loving mutual service among the members; as both individual members and Christian ministers, under the direction of Christ, each make their due contribution to the upbuilding of the whole.

The Headship of Christ, unity and multiplicity, the growth of the whole — these are the principles, then, which pervade Paul's view of the Church, the charismata and the ministry, imparting to them the remarkable degree of harmony and correspondence exhibited among them. It is to be observed now that these principles (together with the idea of union and solidarity between Christ and the Church) are the distinctive contributions which the Body-metaphor makes to the Pauline conception of the Church.⁵⁸ It is with the conception of the Church as the Body of Christ, then, that Paul's doctrine of the ministry is found to be in such peculiar harmony.

In commenting on the relation between Paul's conception of the charismata and his view of the Church as the Body of Christ, it was said that the former is not to be thought of as derived from the latter, but as one aspect of the latter with which it is found to be in perfect harmony;⁵⁹ his conception of the charismata, in other words, was regarded as *co-ordinate* with his view of the Church. Like his conception of charisma, Paul's doctrine of the ministry may be taken, strictly speaking, as another aspect of his view of the ecclesia. Unlike the charisma concept, however, the doctrine of the ministry seems to sustain, not a co-ordinate, but a *subordinate* relation to the view of the Church, and therefore also to the concept of charisma. The reason for this appears to be that *the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ and the nature of the charismata are such as to determine in large measure the nature of the Christian ministry*. This suggestion finds support in the fact that among the main propositions laid down in our description of Paul's conception of the ministry⁶⁰ only three points — the ministry as continuous with and patterned after the ministry of Christ; the pioneering nature of the ministry; the specific relation between the special ministry and the common service in respect to the ultimate goal of the ministry — cannot be readily and immediately traced to the view of the Church as the Body of Christ and the charisma concept. If the line of reasoning pursued in this section (E) is sound, then the relation of Paul's doctrine of the ministry to his view of

⁵⁷ Cf. section A; section B, last paragraph; and section C above.

⁵⁸ Cf. 'Pauline Pictures', 105. The concept of growth is, of course, one of the main ideas of the Building-metaphor also.

⁵⁹ Cf. section D above.

⁶⁰ Cf. 'Nature of the Ministry', 138f., 143f., with some overlapping of the two lists.

the Church as the Body of Christ and his conception of spiritual gifts may be more narrowly defined as largely one of dependence and derivation.

On the basis of the foregoing observations (sections A-E) it may be said that not only does Paul have a consistent view of the Church, the charismata and the ministry, but his conception of the ministry seems largely to have been *consequent upon*, and hence may to a considerable extent be *interpreted in terms of*, his conception of the Church as the Body of Christ and his conception of spiritual gifts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The main conclusions of our study may now be listed as follows:

(1). Paul has a well-defined doctrine of the inner nature of the ministry, just as he has a definite doctrine of the church and a distinct doctrine of charismata. According to this doctrine, the salient features of the ministry can be summed up as three: *its double relationship* — it is related to God as initiated by him, dependent on him and accountable to him: it is related to the Church as given to the Church for the purpose of serving it; *its double function* — it is to set an example in Christian living for the Church to follow: it is to equip the Church for service to itself; and *its double character* — it is a unity as bound by the unity of God and the unity of the Body of Christ: it is a plurality as exhibiting a multiplicity of gifts and a diversity of functions.

(2). The relation which this doctrine of the ministry sustains to Paul's view of the Church as the Body of Christ and his conception of charisma may be described in three steps. Not only is this doctrine *perfectly consistent with* Paul's ecclesiology and his 'charismatology',⁶¹ there being no point of contradiction between the one and the other two, but it is *vitaly connected to* the other two by three correlating principles which pervade all three doctrines: the Headship of Christ, the growth of the Body, unity and multiplicity. Furthermore, in view of the fact that much of Paul's doctrine of the ministry is explicable in terms of his conception of the Church as the Body of Christ and his conception of spiritual gifts, his doctrine of the ministry⁶² may be regarded as *largely consequent upon* his ecclesiology and his 'charismatology'.

(3). Paul does not have a definite doctrine of the outward form of the ministry, but the Pauline corpus reflect a picture of church order which is characterized by three phenomena: definite organization, diversity of form and development toward increasing emphasis on the regular

ministry. This picture of the ministry's external aspect is *not inconsistent with* Paul's view of the Church, since there is nothing in Paul's ecclesiology which intrinsically rules out organization as alien to the nature of the Church. It is *quite compatible with* his doctrine of charisma since, according to Paul, spiritual gift is not opposed to office and office must be joined with spiritual gift. It is, further, *closely related* both to the charisma concept and to his doctrine of the ministry in that the regular or official ministry may naturally be associated with the more public (didactic-pastoral-administrative) gifts and identified with the 'special ministry' in his doctrine of the ministry.

In addition to these major conclusions, a few other observations may be appended as representing what might be called some by-products of this study.

(4). Of the several ways which Paul employs to refer to the Church, there can be little reasonable doubt that the conception of the Church as the Body of Christ is the most important. It is with this particular way of looking at the Church that the charisma concept is found to be in perfect correspondence, and it is in terms of this particular conception that the Pauline doctrine of the ministry is seen to be largely explicable.

(5). The mutual relations between spiritual gift, function and office have been clarified. While the Pauline lists of charismata refer to functions and not to offices, charisma may be associated with office and office should not be separated from charisma. The kind of dichotomy that is suggested by Harnack between the 'charismatic' ministry of apostles, prophets and teachers on the one hand and the local (by implication, 'non-charismatic') ministry of bishops and deacons on the other,⁶³ and the kind of antithesis that is posed by Käsemann between a 'charismatic' ministry and an organized or official ministry, must alike be discarded as untrue to the evidence of the Pauline writings.

(6). The Pastoral Epistles present a view of the inner nature of the ministry which is in perfect accord with the doctrine of the ministry as derived from the Corinthian letters and Ephesians,⁶⁴ while the picture of the ministry's outward organization therein reflected is both consistent

⁶³ See 'Charismatic versus Organized', 201 n.24.

⁶⁴ Thus, *cf.* points (1)-(4) and (6) in the summary in 'Nature of the Ministry', 138f., with the following observations from the Pastorals: (1). The apostolic ministry has its origin in the will, command and commission of God (1 Tim. 1:1, *cf.* 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:1, *cf.* v.11; Tit. 1:3). (2). The ministry is dependent on God, since it is he who bestows the gifts (2 Tim. 1:6f.). (3). The ministry is responsible to God, ministers being his bondservants (2 Tim. 2:24; Tit. 1:1), his stewards (Tit. 1:7), his 'men' (1 Tim. 6:11). (4). The ministry is given for the benefit of the Church: it is, e.g., a caring for the Church (1 Tim. 3:5). (5). The ministry is pioneering in nature: the minister is to be an example in Christian living to his people (1 Tim. 4:12, *cf.* v.16).

⁶¹ If such a term may be coined, on the analogy of 'pneumatology'.

⁶² If another word might be minted here, it would be 'diakoniology', after the pattern of 'ecclesiology'.

with the charisma concept and amenable to Paul's doctrine of the ministry. This evidence should be allowed to counter one of the charges usually brought against the genuineness of these epistles, *viz.*, that they present a system of church government too advanced for the time of Paul.

(7). The integration of Paul's theological thinking is amply attested in a number of ways. First, the inter-relatedness of the various images of the Church demonstrates the close connexion between Paul's ecclesiology, his Christology and his pneumatology: in Paul, ecclesiology is closely dependent upon Christology; it is also a reflection of pneumatology. Similarly, the perfect correspondence between his conception of the Church as the Body of Christ and his doctrine of spiritual gifts bespeaks the truth that his ecclesiology and his 'charismatology' are closely linked — not surprisingly, since his 'charismatology' is but part of his pneumatology, and pneumatology is closely linked to Christology as the Spirit is closely linked to Christ. This intimate bond between the two is again illustrated in the Pauline doctrine of the ministry, which is explicable partly in terms of the conception of the Church as the Body of Christ (and hence of Christology), and partly in terms of the doctrine of charisma (and hence of pneumatology). Thus ecclesiology, 'charismatology' and 'diakoniology' are closely integrated in the thinking of Paul, unified as they are by the twin focus of Christ and the Spirit.⁶⁵

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⁶⁵ On this twin focus as binding the various images of the Church, *cf.* 'Pauline Pictures', 106f.