

ABSTRACT

Topic: Charisms in the Church-Pauline Orientation and Current Need

In the current religious context, marked by the spectacular/statistical growth of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements, the growth of the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church, the challenging relationship between charisms and institution/office and ecumenical dialogue on the theme of charism, we surmise that the study of Pauline orientation and actual need of charism in the Church is welcomed. The need for biblical clarity and sound biblical exegesis on the topic of charism is necessary if one is to say only what Scripture says about charisms.

This study seeks to address four main questions: 1). firstly, the need to get a clear understanding of charisms because of the continuing confusion in the terminology; 2). secondly, the need to establish the purpose of the charisms; 3). thirdly, the need to examine relevance of charisms for the life of the church today; and 4). fourthly, seeking the relationship that exists between charisms and institution/office. There is the need for a direct orientation in the New Testament to counteract the many arguments against searching for a New Testament orientation.

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the concept of charism which is based on the original meaning of the word, a deep exegetical analysis of the charisma passages and lists. In addition, the thesis exposes the development and characteristics of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal with a comparative study between the European and African situations. The Pentecostal Movement is also examined together with its appeal and distinctives. The differences between the Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements, the differences in the ecclesiological concept of charisms and the challenge in the relationship between charisms and institution/office are further clarified.

The greater part of this study is dedicated to a thorough and detailed exegesis of the three main texts that deal with charisms as reflected in the Pauline literature and tradition. The three texts are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4. In each text, the literary context, occasion, and purpose have been analyzed to enable the easy understanding of the text. Each of the charisms is analyzed exegetically with the different lists in its context and in relation to the larger New Testament framework. The work has analyzed the way in which Paul understands the meaning, nature and purpose of charisms.

There is the synthesis of the findings with regard to the exegesis. The findings from the exegesis serve as background for the discussion on the theological reflection on charism. The theological reflection exposes the source of charisms which is shown to be from the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It also reveals that charisms are acts of faith, meaning they are an answer to God, they are received freely from God and are at the service of others/common good. Moreover, the reflection reveals charisms as the energy/power of the Body of Christ which is manifested in promoting unity in diversity, and its use in the liturgy and in the society as a whole.

The thesis affirms therefore that charisms continue today in the Church and remain very relevant. It rejects a narrow understanding of the concept of charism which is limited only to the spectacular manifestations. Pauline understanding of charisms is shown to be very broad including ordinary gifts of daily life. The close relationship between charisms and institution is explained and there is the rejection of any form of dichotomy between the two as foreign in Pauline literature and tradition. It remedies the misconceptions on the meaning, origin, nature,

possession, and purpose of charisms in the contemporary Church and highlight the relevance of charisms in the Church today.