

# "Charism" and "Spirit-baptism"

## Presentation of an analysis

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Today there is much confusion about terms such as "charism" and "Spirit-baptism"; one must ask in each case what the author means by these words. Therefore, the history and the present importance of the problematic of the matter were presented in a two volume study done according to the semantics and the history of these terms.<sup>(1)</sup> In the course of the inquiry it became clear that the different threads only became an almost inextricable tangle in the last three centuries. Systematic theology had further developed and enriched such terms as "baptism" and "charism" over the course of time. Movements of awakening in the 17th and 18th centuries and finally the pentecostal-charismatic awakening of the 20th century looked for words in the bible in order to give a name to a surprising experience: they spoke of 'Spirit-baptism' and 'charisms'. Biblical exegesis, however, was looking for the original sense of these words; yet, have we really freed ourselves of all historical? Did the theological terminology always grasp and express clearly and adequately the working of the Holy Spirit?

Under the exigencies of contemporary theological questioning and the necessity of expressing spiritual processes with their inherent dynamic, language has a certain power to forge its own way, despite the efforts of individuals to clarify the semantics. Language narrows down words to a specific content through frequent use in a certain context (the origin of terms), changes their emphases (e.g. through translations), enriches them with new contents (e.g. because of new developments and experiences), or words receive a new connotation in a new context. These 'natural occurrences' must first be comprehended and described in order to arrive at the intended meaning and to become sure in the use of words.

### **The word *charism***

In the case of the Greek *charisma* strange contrasts come up. Today, some see "office" and "charism" as two terms opposed to each other, while others claim that the office itself is a charism - and, thus, they dissolve that difficult process of discernment. Something similar holds true for "baptism in the Holy Spirit". In order to untangle the semantic confusion step by step, we choose an approach to the subject which goes to the roots, and that is the examination of the meaning of the words in the New Testament, in history, and today. First of all, we try to describe: What was the

words in the New Testament, in history, and today. First of all, we try to describe: What was the intention of the faithful in the first centuries, of the church-fathers of the first millennium, of the Christians at the end of the second millennium, for instance following the Second Vatican Council?

The result: Charism in Paul is not a technical term for certain capacities given by the Spirit for the upbuilding of the church, but in all passages it is translated correctly and sufficiently as "gift", and this in an objective sense with a specific content (e.g. a prophecy, and not 'the gift of prophesying'). God is always cited as the giver of these gifts, even if in 1 Cor 12:4-11 they are given by him 'through the Spirit'. In Paul this word does not have a specific pneumatological connotation.

The semantic leap from gift to ability lasted for almost 1000 years, and it took another 700 years for the concept of a 'freely given ability for the service of the salvation of others' (*gratia gratis data*) to be linked with 'charism'. Thus neither in Paul nor in the church-fathers is 'charism' a technical term (*terminus technicus*) as has been wrongly claimed many times over in the Western church since the 17th century. Therefore, many conclusions that we have drawn from the texts of Scripture and tradition have to be critically evaluated. Since "charism" today has a strongly pneumatological connotation, reflections on "charism" and "Spirit" now require a definition of terms. Our "proposal as to how to use the word today" is: "Charism is an ability that proceeds from the grace of God, given by God the Holy Spirit, specifically and personally in each case that is allotted for the life and service in the church as community of salvation, and in the world." This is stated in differentiation to "sacrament, office, and virtues" (LG 12).<sup>(2)</sup> On the other hand, one should not confine the term to "for service" or "striking, extraordinary abilities."

Thus, we have to accept that there is a gap between biblical language and the theological language of today, and we have always to determine the meaning of the word charism according to its context. Even where exegetes think they have found the Pauline use of language, they do not remain uninfluenced by connotations which developed much later. Once we have realized this we can more easily address the urgent questions which face us in respect of the term 'charism', for example, whether a ministerial office is a charism: Certainly, it is a "gift" in the biblical sense, but not a "charism" according to the sense, in which 'charism' is used and understood today.

It is indicative of a major trend in the modern church, that during the last three centuries this word has been pulled in all directions. The eagerness on all sides to appropriate the term signifies a shift of emphasis from a one-sided stress on the sacrament and the rite (catholic) or on the Word and rationality (reformational), to a greater openness for each fresh and surprising work of the Holy Spirit. Of course the Word and Sacrament still authentically identify these outpourings of the Spirit and support them, whilst at the same time the latter retain their own character. What is thus, breaking out in the Christian world is a kind of spiritual enlivening in the life of individual believer, so that the Holy

in the Christian world is a kind of spiritual enlivening in the life of individual believer, so that the Holy Spirit can then join together in one "body" Christianity as a whole, i.e. also ecumenically. Each individual can contribute to this body his 'charism' "allotted to him by the Spirit".

### **The problem of the term 'Spirit-baptism'**

Likewise the language of 'baptizing in the Holy Spirit', which has undergone a similar change from the Scripture to the present day is a highly topical question. Here we are not only concerned with the "Charismatic Renewal" and the pentecostal awakening, but with the correct understanding of the working of the Holy Spirit as a whole. When at the beginning of the 20th century many people experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in a surprising way, they said that it was as if they were 'baptized in the Spirit.' And since then similar things have been happening to an increasing extent, so that today one speaks of over 500 million Christians world-wide, who were somehow touched by a pentecostal-charismatic experience across all denominations. The question therefore came up: Isn't this the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" which Scripture speaks about (Mk 1:8; Acts 1:5)? Does this mean that only those who were given such a "Spirit-baptism" have received the Holy Spirit? Is not, however, the Holy Spirit given to each one in the (water-) baptism? Can one define experiences in this way and make them a measure for all?

In order to find a way out of the dilemma some theologians say that baptism by its nature is ordered to mediate such an experience of the Spirit. They claim that "Spirit-baptism", including "charisms", is an unpacking of the grace of baptism, even if this experiential element may occur only later, and, as such, it is "normative" for every Christian. G.T. Montague SM, coming from Scripture, and K. McDonnell OSB with "evidence from the first eight centuries" are representatives of this position. Their joint work: "Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit" (see above note 1) has been translated into many languages.

With that the following problem arises: Either the Spirit-experience reported in the pentecostal-charismatic awakening is leveled down, since one neglects its specific character; or, if it is presented as an ideal, one suggests to all other Christians that they are missing something as long as they do not have it. However, is it theologically speaking a sacramental grace? Or do, at least, the respective elements (necessarily) belong to the sacrament? Is mediation of the Spirit through baptism (and confirmation) and what today is called 'Spirit-baptism' really one and the same thing? Interestingly enough, as well as representatives from all denominations there are precisely many Pentecostals, that reject this mixing up with the sacrament. The consequences are enormous because these convictions have an effect in theological teaching and preaching, such as in the open or hidden claim that everyone *must* have certain experiences. This dilemma poses a burden for the theological

that everyone *must* have certain experiences. This dilemma poses a burden for the theological dialogue as well as for the pastoral praxis in the parishes, both for the Charismatic Renewal as for the pentecostal movement.

Therefore, the basis for the term "Spirit-baptism", which its regular association with "charisms", has to be evaluated. As in our examination of charism, the foundation is an analysis of the meaning of the Greek *baptisma* (bath of submersion - baptism?) and *baptizein en pneumati* ('in' Spirit 'baptize'). This involves confronting a broad theological consensus. With the criterion thus gained we ask, furthermore, how can and should the word Spirit-baptism be used in a responsible way in biblical, patristic, and systematic theology, as well as in pastoral praxis. At first, we follow the interpretations of G.T. Montague (Chapter 6) and K. McDonnell (Chapter 7) - that are representative of many -, in order to show where their conclusions are accurate and where they are not valid and why not. Maybe after a "systematic clarification" (Chapter 8) we can succeed in finding linguistic spoken formulations that all can agree with: exegetes and systematic theologians, scholars and pastors, pentecostal and "non-denominational" Christians, as well as Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox; and this is the case not because one has looked for the lowest common denominator but because each concern finds its place in the light of its origin. We gain a new framework for understanding the sources without 'reading' something 'into' them from a later perspective. Once the different nuances in the history of terms are made more precise in this way, quite a few tensions of language, both from history and today, as well as seeming contradictions can be dissolved, because the reasons for misinterpretations become apparent. At the same time, one becomes more free to see and recognize the different concerns of the different authors and how they fit together - an eminently ecumenical result.

### **'Baptizein en pneumati' in the Scripture**

The noun 'Spirit-baptism' does not occur in Holy Scripture. The verb form of the phrase *baptizein (en) pneumati*, however, is a metaphor which is not to be understood in terms of 'to baptize,' because the verb has in itself different meanings (to submerge, moisten, make wet, shower, pour out on, wash, take a bath; to soak a piece of land, a cloth; to color, to glaze, to afflict, to destroy, to ruin). The term 'to baptize', however, (a symbolic action for conversion, forgiveness of sin, etc.) comes up only in the course of the development of the Christian message and this is visible in the texts of the New Testament. If in Mk 1:5 the people are 'washed in the Jordan' and if Jesus in Mk 1:9 is 'submerged into the Jordan' (for him it is not a sign of 'conversion'), it means that in any case the term 'to baptize' does not fit in the second phrase, because he cannot be 'baptized *into* the Jordan'. Thus, in a short sequence Mk uses the word in a different sense, pointed out by different constructions (*eis* with accusative - 'into', *en* with dative - 'in'; the translations, unfortunately, lose this difference). One can

accusative - 'into', *en* with dative - 'in'; the translations, unfortunately, lose this difference). One can see from Mk 1:8 that it should not be 'to baptize' in Mk 1:5. The obvious meaning is: 'I moisten/ shower you with water, he will moisten/ shower you with Holy Spirit'. In this way one can maintain the same meaning in the second phrase, the metaphorical usage. Otherwise one would have to assume that Mark here again varies the meaning e.g. 'I wash you with water, he will shower you with Spirit'; however, this is not necessary.

In no way does Mk here think of the (theologically developed) term 'to baptize' because - differently from Mk 1:9 - this would now introduce a new, highly differentiated term, suggesting at the same time in 1:9 that Jesus would not have been 'baptized' in this sense. Moreover, Mk then must have wanted to say that Jesus later (when?), like John, would perform a 'rite of initiation'. This later Christian 'baptism', however, is also performed precisely with water; thus, this cannot be the contrast the evangelist has in mind. And would he really want to say that the Baptist wanted to point to a rite of initiation, which would be performed on each person only once? Would it then be a foretelling of a giving of the Spirit which would be different from the Christian bath of submersion? (We will treat Acts 1:5 later). The term must be more open, comprising the total action of the (exalted) Messiah as a 'moistening/making wet or showering with Spirit', which indeed does not imply that it is something that occurs only once.

There is a similar result in Lk 3:16. With a better knowledge of Greek Luke does not put an *en/ in* with the instrumental and local *hydati/ water*, but he does so in the following, figurative *en pneumati hagio kai pyri/ in holy Spirit and fire*. Adding the "fire" is not to be understood as an alternative (as condemning judgment; it does not say 'or'), but means rather 'with the fire of the Spirit' (cf. Acts 2:3). This is then taken up (V 17) in the different image of the wheat and the chaff in *diakatharai/ to purge*, that - analogously to John's bath of submersion - *also* (but not only) has a cleansing function (forgiving of sin, purification), whereas the 'unquenchable fire' here designates the condemnation, not the reception of the Spirit. Spirit and fire are presented, therefore, in V 16 as something that can be 'poured out' (analogously to water; cf. Acts 2:17f.33; 10:45). Thus, what does *baptizein* mean? The easiest translation here, too, is 'to moisten, shower with', which fits well with 'water' and 'Spirit and fire'. The word designates, in any case, a localised event (even if in the second case in a figurative sense); 'to baptize' is not a technical term/ *terminus technicus*, in which the non-recurring element and the spiritual reality are included together. Rather, if there is a non-recurring element in the term 'to moisten with water', it results from the intended reference (that is to John's bath of submersion). In the term 'with Spirit and fire', however, the spiritual dimension results from the extra element, which is not immediately contained in the word. Therefore, in no case is there a 'technical' meaning contained in the term *baptizein*. As little as one 'baptizes' someone 'with oil' but rather 'anoints' him, one baptizes him 'with water' or 'Spirit and fire', because our technical term 'to baptize' in modern sense already contains the element of water and the spiritual reality respectively (it would not be an inner

already contains the element of water and the spiritual reality respectively (it would not be an inner accusative), whereas 'to moisten' is more open. The meaning of *baptizein*, therefore, here must follow the conventional, spatial (and also figurative) sense.

Even if John the Baptist's formulation arises from a one-time symbolic action (the bath of submersion in the Jordan) the application of this image is not restricted to a one-time action of the Messiah (such as in Christian baptism or with the event of Pentecost), rather it is open to repeated and manifold sendings of the Spirit. The real contrast is indeed: 'I perform on you a bodily symbolic action, but he will shower you in an immediate way with his (invisible) Spirit.' There would be no consistency if the Baptist was thinking at the same time of a symbolic action. Thus, the biblical phrase 'to moisten with Spirit' always remains open for all the workings of Jesus, especially of the exalted Lord, insofar as he supplies us with Spirit. When Luke refers this to concrete events (Pentecost, Cornelius: Acts 1:5 and 11:16) it only means that these are more outstanding moments, in which that general promise is realized. However, this must not lead to the assumption that the particular details of these events can be extended to all sendings of the Spirit, or, the other way around, that the concept of 'moistening / baptizing with Spirit' can be restricted in such a way that it is used only for specific occurrences, one-time events, or even only for 'striking experiences.'

All three Synoptics, moreover, use the passive also in the sense of 'to be destroyed, to be ruined' (Mt 20:22ff; Mk 10:38ff; Lk 12:50; the same 1 Cor 15:29), in Mk 7:4 and Lk 11:38 also in the simple sense of washing. They are aware of and use a broader spectrum of the meaning of the word.

On the other hand, *baptisma* soon developed into a Christian term. Based on the meaning of 'bath of submersion,' it soon stands for God's entire saving action contained in this sign (forgiveness of sin, initiation into Christ, giving of new life). Yet, in Rom 6:3f; Gal 3:27, and 1 Cor 12:13 *baptizein eis* retains the spatial sense (used figuratively): "(through the bath of submersion) become immersed into Christ/ become incorporated into him". With this a difficulty with Rom 6:3f disappears: "(through the 'bath of submersion') immersed in him" is, first of all, only an image for becoming incorporated in/ taken into *the death* of Christ (more precisely: through the submersion), whereas the "baptism" (as technical term / terminus technicus) naturally is man's participation in the death *and resurrection* of Jesus.

In this the Holy Spirit is agent as well as content, since with the new life in God, which he effects in the bath of submersion, is given the indwelling of the Triune God, and thus also of the Holy Spirit (Trinitarian baptismal formula). However, this has to be distinguished from the specific "gift of the Spirit", which is communicated by way of the laying on of hands and also later by way of anointing.

Both actions, the bath of submersion and the laying on of hands, belong together (= initiation), but they are not exchangeable and the gifts of God which they signify are by no means the same. The biblical 'to moisten/baptize with Spirit' interestingly enough is never applied to these two symbolic actions in Scripture, and also in the tradition up to modern times it is never restricted to these (two) sacramental occurrences. It signifies precisely every form of the sovereign giving of the Spirit of God.

If these two sacramental/symbolic actions are later in the West separated in time, the postponement of the second part of the initiation (confirmation) to a later age corresponds to the fact that in the beginning (above all or only) those people were initiated who could profess the faith consciously (baptism of adults or believers). However, the practice of the Eastern Church, which immediately "gives the anointing" (*chrisma*) newly baptized children emphasizes that both steps belong together.

Besides the objective term 'to receive the Spirit' the Bible often speaks of 'being filled,' which also emphasises the subjective side; this is in the context often reinforced by further explanations (e.g. clothed, strengthened, being deeply stirred). Today we call this 'experience of the Spirit'. The reception of the Spirit can have very different effects in different persons. Even though the persons concerned receive the Spirit, they do not all have the same experience. "Experiences" are never normative.

Likewise, the so-called "charisms" - in today's terminology - that now and then were manifested when the Spirit was received through the laying on of hands (not in the bath of submersion, Acts 10:46; 19:6), are individual gifts; they are regarded not as 'exclusive' or 'normative' but as merely 'positive'. By no means did all receive the prayer in tongues. Why, otherwise, does one hear almost nothing about it - not even of the "three thousand" at Pentecost? Even in Corinth, where this occurred more frequently, Paul stressed explicitly that "not all prayed in tongues" (1 Cor 12:28). Does not the image that quite a few have of the early church, need to be critically re-examined?

Thus, we have to distinguish:

- What pertains to their disposition in the initiation of adults?
- What pertains to the essence of the symbolic action?
- Which experiential dimensions are associated to it?
- Which abilities (gifts given in addition) are (necessarily or sometimes) connected with it?

## Baptism and Spirit-experience in history

In the early church certainly all those who became Christians received the Holy Spirit, but this does not mean that they all had the same experience (such as a common "basic experience" or "break-through experience") or that all received "obvious charisms". At times in connection with being filled with the Spirit praying in tongues and prophecy are mentioned. This is not the case for other gifts from the 'list' of 1 Cor 12,8-10. Praying in tongues and prophecy however then are mentioned as something striking and special. On the other hand, mighty deeds and healings, for instance, never occur in the context of initiation and are only attributed to the apostles and to some mature and prominent persons.

This does not change in the following centuries, and the manifestations of the Spirit do not at any point become associated with the bath of submersion, as McDonnell claims. Tertullian, for example, does not teach that each candidate for baptism should ask for "prophetic charisms" (in the modern sense of the word) at the initiation or after the bath of submersion. Rather, the decisive sentence, De Bapt 20,5, is an exhortation for the catechumens to *pray* already *before* baptism, so that *at the moment* "when they come up from the baptismal bath and for the first time open their hands together with the brothers in the presence of the mother - *peculia gratiae distributiones charismatum subiaccere* - imparted gifts of grace lie as earnest-money therein." These are (extra) gifts imparted to each individually, going beyond the gift of the indwelling of the Triune God in the bath of submersion, the gift which is promised in the sacramental sign. But as the context shows: they are *graces*, as *help against temptations*, not "manifestations". Thus, in no way is a "prophetic charism" (in today's sense) regarded as "normative" here, and the text doesn't say that one should ask for these gifts right away after the baptismal bath. It only says that after their admission as "brothers" in the family (Tertullian unfortunately does not mention 'sisters' but they are implied) the baptized may count on them and already now may ask for them, so that they will then receive special help for their new way of leading their lives (there is no trace of 'for the service of others').

Another example: When Origen, InJoan VI 33, says, *to dia tou hy'datos loutron estin he charismátwon theiwn archè kai pegé*, it does not mean that he understands "baptism (in itself) as the principle and the source of divine charisms" (McDonnell), as if this sacrament was the source of all gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, especially those for "serving the salvation of others", thus of all prophecies, prayer in tongues, and power to work miracles. The theme here is the relationship between an outward sign and inner grace, as we say today. Thus: the simple bath of submersion as an outward sign - *loutrón!* - not the sacrament of baptism as a whole is "source and font of divine gifts," that is of gifts which in their value lie far above these earthly signs, because they have a divine character. This means, first



their value lie far above these earthly signs, because they have a divine character. This means, first of all, sanctifying grace, the godly virtues, and whatever the bath of submersion mediates; in our terminology the 'graces of baptism'. The word *charisma* here is used in the then customary broad sense of 'gift' (= something given) and has no reference to "manifestations of the Spirit". Rather, the sentence is an expression of astonishment that such insignificant outward signs mediate such great things. And *charismatwn* stands without article! Thus, it does not mean: 'baptism is the source of *the* divine charisms', but 'the bath is the font of divine *graces*' - namely of those that are given through the bath. Only both things together make up 'baptism'. The point is not what may eventually happen after baptism or what could later grow out of the sacrament of baptism. One can neither conclude from the text that all manifestations of the Spirit are mediated through baptism, nor that all later manifestations of the Spirit can be traced back to baptism, as its unfolding so to speak, even if they normally presuppose the baptismal bath (but cf. Acts 10:47).

Thirdly, when Cyril of Jerusalem in his catechesis 17:37 expresses his desire that God may "grant (the baptismal candidate) to be worthy of a prophetic gift" (*charísmatos*, without article), he does not thereby make "prophetic charisms" a norm in the reception of the sacrament of baptism, but he only says that sometime in the future one or the other candidate or catechumen could receive such a gift and that one should be open for it. However, that prophecy will not then be mediated through baptism and much less does it belong to its nature. Rather, it would be a free gift for which baptism is merely a presupposition.

### **The noun 'Spirit-baptism' in modern times**

Even though since Origen the noun-form "baptism of the Spirit" comes up now and then, it serves only as a description of the sending of the Spirit given with the laying on of hands/ anointing (which is thus sacramental). It does not serve to emphasize any experiential dimension. The noun-form 'Spirit-baptism' has only come to be used as an experiential term in modern times. Now (through 'baptism') it is also always associated with the concept of the sacrament, by now developed, and consequently it is an event that happens at one specific moment and only once in a life-time. This produces various misleading interpretations. Almost always three elements are implied: a *one-time* (often: out-standing) event, an *initial* event, and a strongly existential *experience*. It is applied where people *experience* a sort of initial ignition of the Spirit.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the question comes up, whether this concept refers to re-birth, to a special deepening in the life of the Spirit ("second blessing," "second conversion"), to an "infilling" with the Spirit (first-time or in a new way), or to a major mission for a certain ministry. It does not have any reference to "baptism".

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In the pentecostal-charismatic movement of the 20th century the term 'Spirit-baptism' has been used for an infilling with the Spirit, which was *generally linked with praying in tongues* and was at the same time a kind of initial ignition for a new way of living in the Spirit that includes other striking charisms. 'Spirit-baptism' here becomes a term for a break-through experience, ("being submerged in") that leads to a "charismatic" spirituality.

In this way the noun-form is pinned down to one kind of infilling with the Spirit. In the course of the neo-pentecostal, "Charismatic" awakening in the "historic" churches in the second half of the 20th century the question comes up of how this "personal experience of Pentecost" is related to baptism (and confirmation): Is it primarily a new bringing to life, a setting free of the baptismal (confirmation) grace or - without denying a certain relation to baptism and confirmation - is it a new sending of the Spirit? In short: is this invasion of the Spirit an experience of sacramental or of charismatic grace? Is it a renewal of baptism (confirmation) (an unfolding of faith, hope, love, etc., i.e. of gifts apportioned to all), or is it a charismatic experience of the Spirit, i.e. something that the Spirit imparts to some or to many *as he wills*, and that is both in the kind of infilling with the Spirit and in the respective charisms? The only thing that is important is that each individual opens himself and accepts what is offered to him by God.

### **Universal offer of salvation and election**

Today it is clear that one has to distinguish between sacrament and charism (LG 12). The fundamental sacraments are a general offer of salvation and to that extent are 'normative'. "Charism", on the other hand, today signifies an individually given ability, and "charismatic" means the 'free' working of the Spirit that is not bound to the institution, insofar as the Spirit imparts both the experience of the Spirit and the abilities (given by the Spirit) as he wills. Thus, these are not normative. However, it is true that each baptized person is meant to have individually imparted gifts given in addition, which are added to the sacramental grace (charisms in the broader sense of the word).

'Extraordinary' or 'prophetic' charisms, however, do not belong to the *universal* basic component of Christian life and are by no means *normatively* linked to the sacraments of initiation. Apart from the personal vocation to holiness and the individual (more simple and widely diffused) abilities (as additional gifts) intended for all, baptism and confirmation do not require that there be concrete manifestations. If these happen, they are not a "setting free" of the grace of baptism or confirmation. They were always seen as exceptions. If they are very widely diffused today and to that extent have

They were always seen as exceptions. If they are very widely diffused today and to that extent have become 'normal' in the church, they nevertheless do not have a normative character, as if every Christian must have them in order to be a Christian in the full sense.

For centuries the sending of the Spirit in confirmation was experienced existentially only rarely. Thus, it would, indeed, be strange if all of a sudden a break-through experience was now rediscovered as something that takes place as a norm (and that only in a "renewal" and not usually in receiving the sacrament of baptism or confirmation). "Spirit-baptism" is rather a *concrete grace of today*, of which nobody can say how long it will last in this way. Thus, one must respect the inner dynamic of growth of the Charismatic Renewal. An after a certain time changed experience of the Spirit or a reduction in certain manifestations are not always a sign of decline. It is, therefore, quite questionable if the authenticity is only measured in whether it is (still or again) "as at the beginning" (cf. Eph 4:13-16).

Spiritual *experience* as such is a basic category of Christian life; as a personally and consciously lived relationship with God, this life always entails an element of the perception of the reality of God in the Holy Spirit as well (faith experience); for faith is an answer to this perception. On the broad scale of spiritual experience at least the two poles can be distinguished: simple versus conspicuous, more plain versus more striking experiences - of which none is "normative."

Depending on the content or the main emphasis one can somewhat distinguish experience of *God*, encounter with *Christ* and experience of the *Spirit* in the more narrow sense. Even if the borders may be fluid, still each of the divine Persons has his way which is proper to him alone (e.g. greatness, extent, and sublimity for the Father, word, encounter for the Son, touch, filling and such for the Holy Spirit).

What in the 20th century was at first called "Spirit-baptism", is a clear-cut experience of the Spirit, which, on the one hand, is distinguished from clear-cut experience of the Spirit of another kind such as occurs in mysticism or in the lives of many saints, on the other hand, it is distinguished from plain, every-day spiritual experiences. Their characteristics are: profound impact by the Holy Spirit; deepened living relationship with the three divine persons; intense, life-changing effects; love for prayer and Holy Scripture; an important bodily component with corresponding forms of expression; readiness for vocal and free prayer, also in community; special manifestations of the Spirit, usually prayer in tongues. The specificity lies in the combination of all the above.

People with an experience of such a "Spirit-baptism" usually make up the core of pentecostal and "charismatic" groups; but one finds also many people there, that have not had such a break-through experience, yet with their spiritual experiences they identify with this spirituality with its charismatic character and are able to take part in it.

character and are able to take part in it.

Since in the 20th century the term 'Spirit-baptism' signified, first of all, this pentecostal-charismatic break-through experience and up to today is largely understood as such, one should leave the term in this realm and should not extend it to other kinds of spiritual experience, and by no means to baptism and confirmation. Renewal of the baptismal promise and prayer for a revival of the baptismal grace can be a good presupposition for opening oneself to the free working of the Spirit, but it is not a 'Spirit-baptism'.

Thus, 'Spirit-baptism' is a specific term, that marks a certain spirituality in Christianity, which is especially wide-spread today. Spirit-baptism understood in this way cannot be made normative for all.

Spirit-baptism is, therefore, not restricted to being the peak or the fullest form of experience of the Spirit, but is only one among other clear-cut ways to experience the Spirit, which is imparted by the Spirit as he wills.

Conceptually one can distinguish:

- 1) *Reception* of the Spirit (it is universal, in the sacrament or outside of the sacrament)
- 2) *Spiritual experience* (it is universal, intended for every human being)
- 3) *Experience of the Spirit* (distinguished from experience of God and Christ)
- 4) *Infilling* with the Spirit (every one should be open for it)
- 5) *Different forms of being filled* with the Spirit, e.g. Mystical experience Spirit-baptism other forms: e.g. (unio mystica) (together with Seraphim of Sarov praying in tongues) Ignatius of L. at Cardoner

The first term (1) is the broadest; it includes all the following terms. The sequence cannot be reversed, so that conclusions cannot be drawn in the reverse direction. Thus: every Spirit-baptism is a filling with the Spirit and a reception of the Spirit, but not every reception of the Spirit is an infilling with the Spirit and not every infilling with the Spirit is a Spirit-baptism.

The parallel to mysticism and Seraphim of Sarov merely means that Spirit-baptism is a different kind of being filled with the Spirit; one should not judge it to be equal with others. Spirit-baptism rather has the character of being an *initial experience*, insofar as it leads to a definite, new status of life in the

the character of being an *initial experience*, insofar as it leads to a definite, new status of life in the Spirit in the one who receives it, but it does not say anything about the *maturity* of the recipient.

Spirit-baptism understood in this way can be given as a gift at all points of the Christian life, at the beginning of a conversion or after conversion took place, as a step of growth, as a further deepening of a spiritual journey or at its mature peak, or even as a vocation to a specific ministry. Thus, it is not always a "fully developed form", even if it may be a peak-point in the life-story of the individual.

As an experience of grace, which goes across all denominations, it has an eminently ecumenical dimension and should help Christians to come together in the Spirit - an opportunity to impact the churches.

Individuals who experienced 'Spirit-baptism' in this sense are, therefore, no 'better' than others. Rather, they have a specific vocation which exists alongside other specific vocations in the church (principle of election); and everyone is assessed according to *his own* measurement and the corresponding fruits. Thus, it does not make sense to try to compare different vocations or spiritual paths with each other (cf. 1 Cor 12:14-26). However, everyone must ask himself whether he has accepted or ignored a call of the Spirit intended to lead him onward.

The message of the pentecostal-charismatic awakening that is impacting Christianity and humanity, because of a new kind of working of the Spirit, which the persons concerned have received, is to encourage all Christians and all people to open themselves to the Spirit of God, so that he can be fully at work in everyone's life in *his way* and according to *his choice*.

This means, first of all and especially, to proclaim and to testify to the gospel message of salvation directed to all men to lead them to Christ as Lord and Savior. This also entails initiation into the body of Christ and, thus, an ecclesial dimension.

Individuals who have experienced this 'Spirit-baptism', have thus, like all Christians been given a special responsibility to evangelize through the proclamation of the kerygma, through teaching and testimony; the latter includes also (under the leading of the Spirit) the testimony of their Spirit-baptism, through which they may invite others to open themselves more fully to the Spirit.

However, should the occasion arise that they pray with others for the Holy Spirit, they should not give the impression that the 'Spirit-baptism' is the *only* and *universal* form of the 'full' working of the Spirit. Thankfulness for what God has done in themselves and reverence for what he does and wants to do in others will preserve them from being obtrusive and will lead them to a freedom of the children of God, in which without grumbling and in spiritual joy they "serve" (1 Pt 4:10) to others the gift of the Spirit and the charisms which God has entrusted to them.

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Spirit and the charisms which God has entrusted to them.

One should pray specifically for Spirit-baptism (including the gift of praying in tongues) only when listening to the concrete leading by God and, as a rule, never without the assent of the one concerned. Often one will pray 'for the Holy Spirit' or for an 'infilling with the Spirit' in a general way leaving open any further specifications. In practice this may not always be very clearly differentiated; then one will look to the intention, whether one wants to pin down God, so-to-speak, or one really will leave the fulfillment of the request up to him. When one has sincerely prayed for 'Spirit-baptism' and it is apparently not granted, one will freely put everything back into God's hands, without putting oneself or the person concerned under any pressure. However, one should not immediately call 'Spirit-baptism' every working of the Spirit that someone experiences after such a prayer. Rather, one should speak of 'Spirit-baptism' only if it is an experience of a break-through, that is at least open for the prayer of tongues. One should not force rigid categories on living reality. Yet, one needs to use an appropriate language, amongst other reasons also in order to be able to communicate clearly. Often we notice a separation of sacrament and spiritual life in the churches. In Spirit-baptism, however, we are presented with a new wholeness, which does not mean that the sacraments and charismatic life become identical. Access to this charismatic dimension is often triggered by charismatic personalities and a corresponding disposition. Here we should be aware that in non-denominational churches, where the sacramental signs are missing or scarcely developed, the charismatic realm often takes over to a certain degree the sacramental function. On the other hand, in the traditionally oriented churches we must be on guard not to become rigid through a ritualism and sacramentalism. Yet, the liturgy and the sacraments give a solid framework which protects us from a false hunger for the experiential or even from spiritual activism.

### **The basic tension in three pairs of terms**

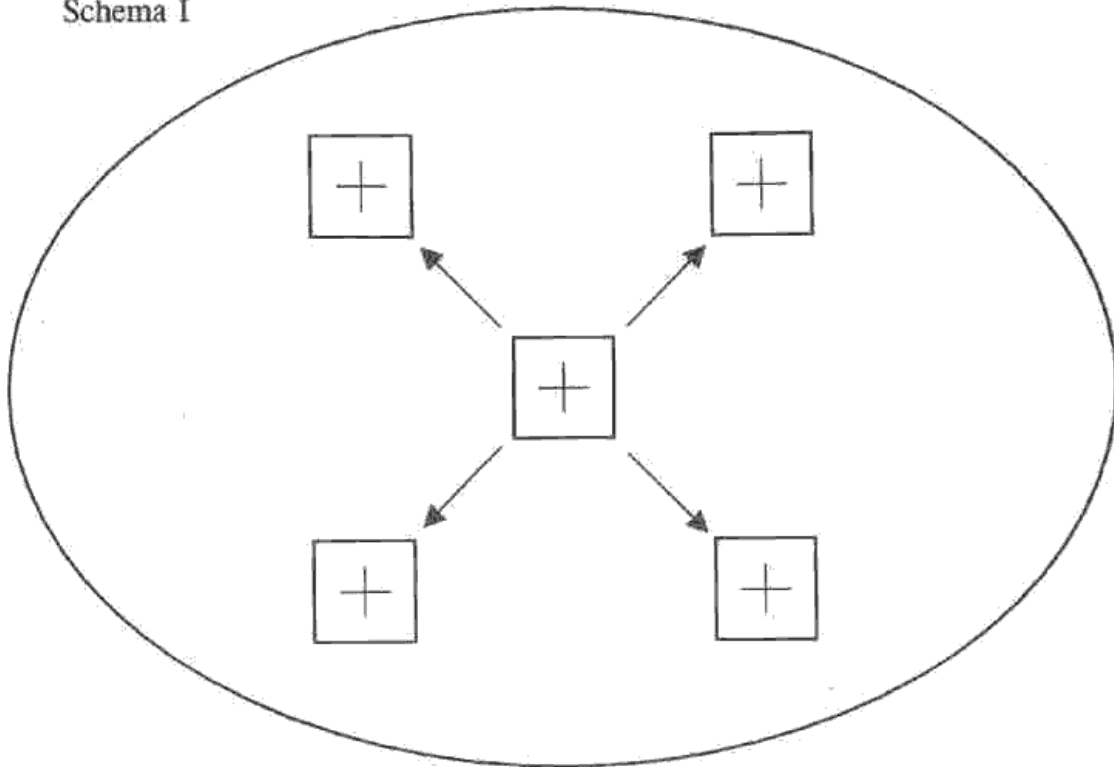
Finally, we can characterize the extent of the tensions brought up here in three pairs of opposites:

- office and prophecy as the basic structure of the church;
- two converging lines in the 20th century;
- faith and experience

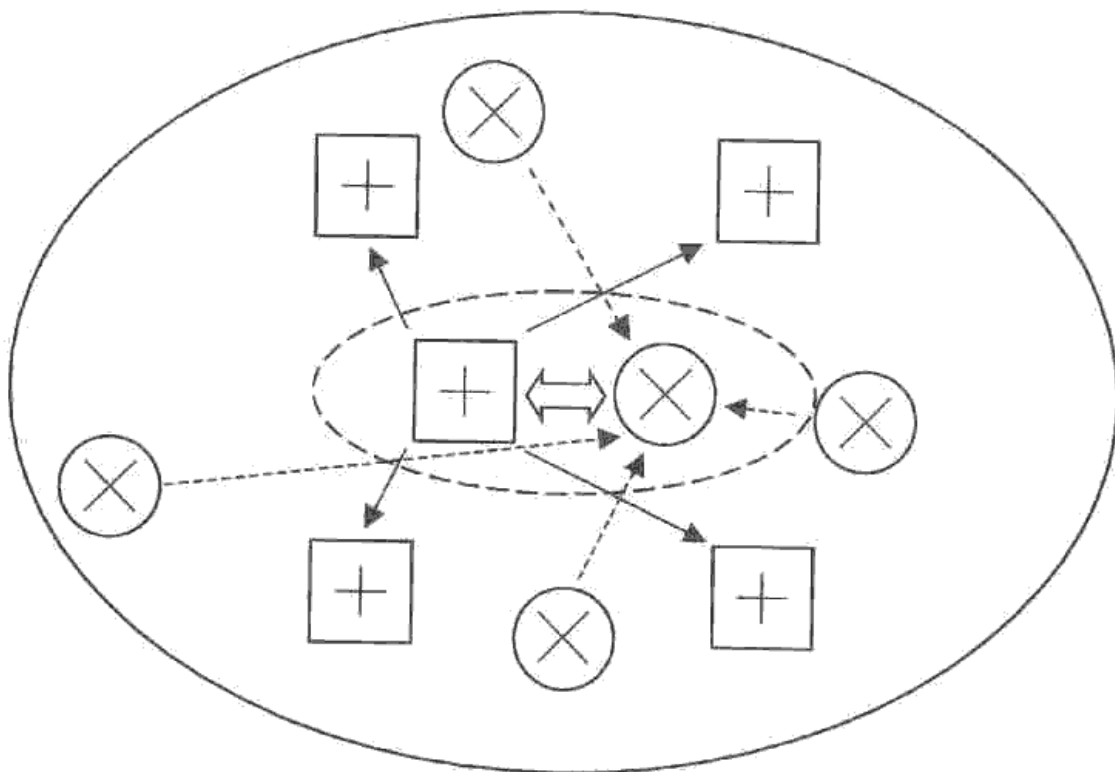
The *basic structure* of the church usually is seen from the viewpoint of the apostolic office. Speaking in Catholic terms: the local bishops, who stand in the apostolic succession, together with their priests and the work that is carried out by them make up the back-bone of the church, so to speak; they are *the* basic structural element (see below scheme I). In this one could point to Mt 16:18 and 18:18.

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Schema I



Schema II



According to Eph 2:20-22, however, the faithful are "built upon the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*" into the "dwelling place of God in the Spirit", in which the "capstone" is "Christ". Here the prophets are not those of the Old but of the New Testament. And as this foundation has a permanent function, in other words, the "apostles" continue to exist (in the "office" of the bishops as a living



According to Eph 2:20-22, however, the faithful are "built upon the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*" into the "dwelling place of God in the Spirit", in which the "capstone" is "Christ". Here the prophets are not those of the Old but of the New Testament. And as this foundation has a permanent function, in other words, the "apostles" continue to exist (in the "office" of the bishops as a living foundation), so also the "prophets" belong to the permanent "foundation" and are "structural elements" of the community of the faithful in the same way as the apostles. Yet, where is this grounded in the constitution of the church? Since one cannot pass on the prophetic function one to the other as is the case with ordination, but rather the Spirit awakens it newly in each case, the church must continually be on the look out for where God is sending it its respective prophets. It is not left up to the will of the bearers of office whether or not they pay attention to the prophets, but they can only exercise their office correctly if they stand in dialogue with these and both together listen to God. Prophets, however, belong to the "foundation" in the same way as the bearers of office. The same Holy Spirit is working in both, and both exercise the ministry correctly only when they "hear what the Spirit says to the churches". So "scheme II" is correspondingly more differentiated.

One could be tempted to say that the office represents the Christological and the prophets the pneumatological line. But it is not that easy. In the same way as Jesus is "conceived by the Holy Spirit", the (Christological) office is instituted in the Holy Spirit and is carried by the Spirit since Pentecost. On the other hand, the prophets (the pneumatological ministry) are raised up by the Spirit, who since Pentecost is sent from the Father *by Jesus* to his church (Acts 2:33.38). Thus, the sequence of action is now reversed; yet, always both divine persons are involved - and both are sent by the Father. The church-fathers, therefore say that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are "the two hands" of the Father. The question, though, is whether Christians always grasp *both* hands!

Charismatic-prophetic personalities can be called by God everywhere, even outside of the church. They can be called as individuals or in communities, such as in charismatic-prophetic movements. It could happen that they influence wider circles so that people are struck by these "senders" inside and outside the church. The people thus affected stand under a manifold call to listen to prophetic impulses and must recognize for themselves what God wants to show them. The bearers of office are referred to the prophetic impulses in a special way, as, on the other hand, the prophets are referred to the bearers of office. Only in communion can they exercise their foundational function correctly.

Prophetic impulses can be restricted more to a single theme or field and to that extent they are more at the fringes or they can stand more at the center and, thus, according to the circumstances be of a quite extensive importance. Thus, one may well say that the pentecostal charismatic awakening in

quite extensive importance. Thus, one may well say that the pentecostal-charismatic awakening in Christianity today has a very deep and far-reaching importance and to that extent is rather central, not only as to what concerns its diffusion, but above all in its call: to live a complete/ fully christian life by a fresh experience of the Spirit. This awakening is formed by people who have experienced Spirit-baptism in the narrow sense described above.

Is there the Charismatic Renewal a movement? There is much discussion on this point. If one wants to say that it should flow into the church and disappear, similarly to the liturgical movement, then there is a correct thought in it, and that is that it does not and should not want to be a church within the church but wants to contribute to the revival of the whole. However, in order to be able to make its own contribution it does need a proper character, especially since disappearing through absorption into the church cannot mean that the specific character of Spirit-baptism becomes shallow and watered down. But it does not mean that it is made a norm for everyone. To that extent it does have a proper spirituality and is not simply 'the' spirituality of 'the' church. The working of the Holy Spirit naturally is much broader.

This can be illustrated in two historical lines. Is it by accident that at the beginning of the 20th century, on the same January 1st, 1901, not only Spirit-baptism together with praying in tongues broke through in Topeka, which spread in increasing measure until the end of the century, but also - what many do not know - on the same day Pope Leo XIII prayed the hymn to the Holy Spirit in the name of the whole church? He did this picking up a prophetic impulse, which was proposed to him more than once by the now beatified Elena Guerra, founder of the "Sisters of the Holy Spirit" in Lucca. Taking up her suggestion he wrote an apostolic exhortation already in 1895 and an encyclical in 1897, in which he called for devotion to the Holy Spirit and recommended the nine days before Pentecost as a novena of prayer for the Holy Spirit: for the renewal of the church, reunification of Christianity, renewal of society and for a "renewal of the face of the earth". This impulse was picked up in increasing measure, in the course of the liturgical and ecumenical movements the Pentecost-novena was held ecumenically and the theology of the Holy Spirit was slowly given more attention, until, finally, John XXIII. full of trust prayed for a "new Pentecost" at the beginning of the Council and invited all to join him.

To put it in an image: With Leo XIII.'s call there began, slowly but steadily, a new awareness of the person of the Holy Spirit as when the ground-water slowly rises, whereas Spirit-baptism and the Pentecostal movement which grew out of it gushed forth like a fresh fountain and watered the dry surface. Today, after 100 years we see how these two streams come together and complement and reinforce each other. This becomes clear symbolically in the words of John Paul II. at the meeting of 400 000 members of spiritual movements for the Pentecost vigil in Rome in 1998: "We could say

400 000 members of spiritual movements for the Pentecost vigil in Rome in 1998: "We could say, what happened in Jerusalem 2000 years ago is renewed in this square tonight. As the apostles then so we find ourselves together in this Upper Room, full of longing and praying for the out-pouring of the Spirit." Here they prayed for the "infilling" of the Spirit promised to all, without the term 'Spirit-baptism' being mentioned. The members of the Charismatic Renewal could understand this prayer for themselves quite naturally in the sense of asking for Spirit-baptism, while others prayed it in a more general, more open sense - each individual prayed for what God had intended for him. The general matter also forms the basis for the specific, but does not make the latter a norm for all; rather, the specific is imbedded in that which is common to all. In this case there were together representatives of spiritual movements of which some can be called prophetic impulses, who on their part, of course, understand themselves - all in a different way - as belonging to their local churches with their bishops. Thus, time and again many impulses join, which break forth from the rising ground-water, on the one-hand, and as from a fountain on the other hand. The same Holy Spirit, who renews his church, works in both, or as John Paul II. said during that evening: "the institutional and charismatic aspects are, as they were then, ,co-essential' for the constitution of the church".

Thirdly, concerning the history of Christian spirituality, the present gift of Spirit-baptism lies in a straight line of development in the history of Christian spirituality, which can also be noticed elsewhere: If the last centuries were strongly imprinted by the concept of '*faith*', and this in the sense of 'not-knowing', with a great skepticism towards any spiritual experience, one once again speaks of 'faith-experience' in theology, bringing both terms together. In the biblical sense "to believe", indeed, means 'to perceive something not with the mere human, un-redeemed senses' but it means what is 'recognizable only in the Holy Spirit, to perceive, to accept, and to rely upon'. In the Spirit one can, thus, recognize it, see it, taste it, etc. Thus, Spirit-baptism, like charism, is in accord with a present dynamic involving the whole church.

Spiritual perception, however, is not primarily a pre-tasting of a future state (an already realized 'eschatology'). It is first of all to be interpreted through the resurrection of Christ and the sending of the Spirit which already took place: We do not live by the anticipation of our future resurrection, but by the participation in the resurrection of the one who as the exalted one is always with us (Mt 28:20) - without having to make a detour via the (future) "eschatology". Thus, according to Paul the resurrection has already begun in us with faith and baptism; it grows further and will finally be perfected on the Last Day. The pneumatological line of argument is similar to the Christological: the Spirit is poured out since Pentecost; all men should engage in him completely and personally, pray for him and open themselves for the ever new ways of his sendings and his workings in this world (bound to the institution and unbound, sacramental and charismatic) in order to be led by this dynamic of the Spirit to a mature stature in Christ and thus to final perfection.

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1. Baumert, N., Charisma, Taufe, Geisttaufe. Volume I: Entflechtung einer semantischen Verwirrung; volume II: Normativität und persönliche Berufung. Würzburg/ Germany: Echter-Verlag 2001. - One part of the second volume gives an answer and represents an opposite Position to that contained in the book of K. McDonnell and G.T. Montague, Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Liturgical Press: Collegeville/ Min. USA <sup>2</sup>1994. - German translation by Veronica Ruf and Norbert Baumert: Eingliederung in die Kirche und Taufe im Heiligen Geist. Münsterschwarzach/ Germany: Vier-Türme-Verlag 1998.

2. LG = II. Vatican Council: "Lumen Gentium" = Constitution of the Church.

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