An attempt to define the charismata in the main Christian traditions

An evaluation from a Pentecostal perspective

DRAGOȘ ȘTEFĂNICĂ*

The aim of the present article is to analyse the way in which the main Christian traditions define the charismata, or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As we shall see, the definitions provided by the Catholic, the Eastern Orthodox or the Reformed Theologies are very broad, while in Pentecostal theology charismata have a rather technical meaning. Finally, we will observe that a good clarification of the concepts in question could help the development of the interfaith theological dialogue, from the pneumatological point of view.

Keywords: *charismata, gifts, Holy Spirit, Orthodox, Catholic, Reformed, Pentecostal theology*

I. The doctrine of *charismata* in the Eastern Orthodox Theology

Orthodox studies refer to the charismata of the Holy Spirit, but these references are often succinct. A precise definition that would be universally valid is difficult to articulate.¹ In Orthodox theology, the term “charisma” is used with various meanings, ranging from the general idea of “grace” or “manifestations of grace” and that of a very special grace which manifests itself in a supernatural way through the life of the recipient. Thus, Paul Evdokimov believes that “spiritual life [of the believer] is entirely charismatic.”² Charismata (among which are mentioned “the vigilance of spirit, the guarding of the heart, the calling of the name of Jesus”) “restrain and stop any inner dialogue that has an evil suggestion before it becomes a tacit consent, passion and spiritual bondage.”³ One can easily see the meaning of personal spiritual help that “charismata” have in the Russian theologian’s thinking; they could easily be mistaken for divine grace which accompanies the believer, helping him in

* Dragoș Ștefănică, graduate Teaching Assistant at the Theological Pentecostal Institute of Bucharest. Address: B-dul Uverturii nr. 210-220, București, sector 6; e-mail: stefanicadragos@yahoo.com

¹ Theologian Ion Bria, who provides in his dictionary a generous definition of charismata, acknowledges that “there is no absolute definition of them.” Ion Bria, *Dicționar de teologie ortodoxă*, București, IBMBOR, 1981, “harismă”, p. 191).

² Paul Evdokimov, *Vârstele vieții spirituale*, București 1993, p. 158.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 161. The author speaks even of the “charisma of a happy death” (p. 170) or the “charisma of martyrdom” (p. 170), thus expanding the meaning that the term has at other Orthodox theologians.

his spiritual ascension. Prof. Ion Bria also calls the charismata “gifts or virtues which the Holy Spirit shares in a personal way”⁴; again, the concept is rich in meanings, as he describes the personal spiritual “acquisitions” of the believer.

Some Orthodox theologians who have dealt with the subject of charismata show, however, that the charismata refer to certain special gifts of the Holy Spirit and that they are distinct from the divine saving grace. Thus, Constantin Gheorghe shows that, although etymologically and grammatically the term “charisma” means a “free gift [...], a result of an act of giving that is absolutely free”⁵, it has, in theology, a more restricted sense, namely “supernatural gift that God freely gives to believers, not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the neighbour”⁶. Apostle Paul uses the term “charisma” seven times with the meaning of “spiritual gift accompanied by some wonderful powers in its external manifestation”. We see, therefore, that the status of charismata is a special one; the believer receives them not to strengthen their own spirituality, but for the edification of other believers. George Remete also emphasizes the special status of charismata. In his opinion, these are some “exceptional, very special gifts of the Holy Spirit” that cannot be reached by man’s own efforts (here the author recalls the practice of virtue), since they are reserved for a small number of believers who receive them “through a special, eminent action of the divine grace”⁷. At the same time, Remete seeks to stress the importance of charismata for the life of the Church; given that they are “exceptional gifts which strengthen the Church to a very special extent”, their owners become “pillars, or rocks important in constituting the Church.”⁸

Orthodox theologians, without exception, emphasize the idea that we cannot draw up a complete list of charismata. Natalia Dinu Manoilescu states that “the enumeration [of charismata] made by St. Paul is only indicative, and not exhaustive”⁹. This opinion is shared by S. Bulgakov; he shows that the phrase “as He will”, which closes the paragraph in 1 Cor. 12:7–11, makes us think of the idea that the Spirit has other charismata which he gives to the

⁴ I. Bria, *Dicționar de teologie*, p. 191.

⁵ Constantin Gheorghe, “Harismeale după epistolele Sfântului Apostol Pavel” in: *Studii Teologice*, XXV (1-2/ 1973), p. 21. The author shows that, in Paul, the term appears with several meanings; it can designate “all the gifts of God”. Among them, Gheorghe lists: virginity / monasticism, marriage, the special grace of the priesthood or even “the divine grace of salvation through Christ.”

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁷ George Remete, *Dogmatica ortodoxă*, Alba Iulia 2012, p. 265.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 265–266.

⁹ Natalia Dinu Manoilescu, *Sfântul Duh în spiritualitatea ortodoxă*, Cluj-Napoca 2005, p. 104.

believers as he sees fit – charismata which are not included in the list drawn up by the apostle in the text mentioned earlier¹⁰.

In concluding this discussion, we should mention that, most often, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are seen as aids which Christians receive from the very beginning of their spiritual life (in the Mystery of Chrismation), in order for them to develop themselves and to grow on the path of faith: “through them [i.e. the gifts], the Holy Spirit unites man with Christ effectively, giving him powers to go towards the eternal life”¹¹. Thus, the gifts would be different manifestations of the divine grace, or, in George Remete’s words, “human appropriation or humanization of grace.”¹² This understanding of the gifts of the Spirit is very broad; in the charismata category one could place countless blessings which Christians receives during their spiritual ascension. In fact, precisely this extremely generous definition has led some scholars to see the virtues¹³ and the struggles of the soul¹⁴ as spiritual gifts too. All these are indispensable aids for Christians, for their growth in grace.

II. The charismata in the Roman-Catholic Theology

Definitions offered by Catholic theologians to the concept of charisma are quite varied; they are a clear proof that this is a complex subject, as is their manifestation within the Christian communities or in the lives of the believers. French theologian Yves Congar, who wrote a very thorough study on the person and work of the Holy Spirit¹⁵, says that before Vatican II, the term “charisma” seems to have had a rather narrow sense: “charismata were construed in their rather extraordinary forms.”¹⁶ However, the Council defined them in a broader sense, as “dynamic principles given to all believers for the building up of the Church and the carrying out of the Church’s mission.”¹⁷ Most theologians

¹⁰ Sergei Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, Grand Rapids 2004, p. 294.

¹¹ Isidor Todoran, Ioan Zăgrean, *Dogmatica ortodoxă*, Cluj-Napoca 2000, p. 244.

¹² G. Remete, *Dogmatica ortodoxă*, p. 265.

¹³ See: N.D. Manolescu, *Sfântul Duh*, p. 108: “virtues also represent spiritual gifts given to man by the Holy Spirit, aiming the perfection of the person, that s/he might be saved”. See also S: Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, p. 313.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 109: “Prayer is another gift of the Holy Ghost.”

¹⁵ It is the monumental work *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint*, in three volumes, which has been published in several editions, being translated into other languages too.

¹⁶ Congar refers to a particular document in which the charismata appear with this meaning: *Mystici Corporis encyclical*, of Pope Pius XII, 29 June 1943. The author shows, however, that this document is one of great importance, since in it charismata “appeared for the first time officially”, a moment marking the “rediscovery of charismata in our *de Ecclesia theologia*.”

¹⁷ Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, San Francisco 1986, p. 80. E.T. Groppe confirms this position of the French theologian, in the theological study which he devotes to him:

are against restricting the concept of charisma to a technical understanding. They show that, beginning with the apostle Paul, continuing with the Patristic writers¹⁸, and ending with the current teaching of the Church, charismata have a rich meaning, which cannot be limited to extraordinary supernatural manifestations. For instance, von Balthasar argues that in “Paul [...], the word ‘charism’ has a much wider spectrum of meaning than that found in the special list of charismas in 1 Corinthians 12–14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4.”¹⁹

This opinion is shared by Enrique Nardoni, who devotes half his study “The concept of charisma in Paul” to demonstrate that, in Paul, the term *charisma* “has not yet reached the stage of a technical term reserved exclusively for designating an ability given directly by the Spirit for the good of the community.”²⁰ On the contrary, charismata should be regarded as effects of grace, as “concrete materializations of God’s gracious will,” which include gifts such as celibacy, justification by faith, healings, eternal life, and religious privileges which Israel once enjoyed, or even the Apostle’s release from prison. Nardoni’s position can be counted among the most comprehensive perspectives on charismata. Other theologians will also reject the purely technical understanding of charismata in the New Testament²¹, but will admit, however, that these spiritual gifts are extraordinary in their manifestation and that their mission is to contribute to the edification of the church, not to the spiritually fortifying of the charismatic believer: “charismata are extraordinary gifts which the Holy Spirit gives, not for personal benefit of the charismatic, but for the edification of the Church.”²²

“Congar was critical of the use of the term «charisma» within the charismatic movement where its meaning was limited to extraordinary gifts.” Elizabeth Teresa Groppe, *The Contribution of Yves Congar’s theology of the Holy Spirit*, AAR, Oxford 2004, p. 463, n. 58).

¹⁸ For a brief but useful perspective on the church fathers’ view on charismata see: Lucian Dincă, “Inițierea creștină și botezul în Duhul Sfânt în tradiția catolică”, in: *Pleroma*, 14 (1/2012), p. 117. The Romanian theologian states that “during the time of Greek-speaking Church Fathers, the term «charisma» knows a still wider sense than found in the New Testament. Thus, it encompasses human and divine gifts, the gift of the Holy Spirit, baptism, Eucharist, anointing conferred by the Church, the particular graces (faith, prophecy, miracles), martyrdom, tears, theology [...] the charismata of fasting, chastity or virginity, martyrdom, almsgiving, evangelical poverty, wisdom, intelligence, assistance, administration.”

¹⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, vol. III: *The Spirit of the Truth*, San Francisco 2005, p. 366 (electronic edition).

²⁰ Enrique Nardoni, “The concept of charism in Paul” in: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 55 (1/1993), p. 68.

²¹ I. Mărtincă notes in this regard: “In the New Testament, the term *does not have always* (emphasis added) a technical sense: it can mean a certain ministry (a certain service), any gift given by God, made without regret (Rom. 11:29).” Isidor Mărtincă, *Duhul Sfânt*, București 1996, p. 235.

²² Claudiu Dumea, *Cred în Duhul Sfânt*, Iași 2009, p. 291.

It seems appropriate to specify here that there are theologians who distinguish between charismata and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the believer receives through the sacraments of initiation into Christianity. Thus, C. Dumea insists on the overwhelming role which these gifts have in the personal perfection of the Christian: “the gifts of the Spirit lead everything to perfection”, they are “the summit of the spiritual life” and so they may rightly be compared with the sails of a ship into which the Spirit, *ruach*, the wind [...] blows and moves our life ship, guiding our lives.”²³ In this context, the author also says that the mystical life, which man acquires from asceticism and from using the gifts of the Spirit, should not be confused with possession of “extraordinary gifts [such as] the gift of prophecy, tongues, miracles, visions, apparitions, revelations, ecstasies.”²⁴ From this enumeration, as well as from the name of “extraordinary gifts”, which the author will use later to refer to charismata, we understand that for C. Dumea, gifts of the Spirit received through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation should be distinguished from charismata within their technical meaning.

The nature of charismata can be described starting from the names they receive in the Catholic theological writings. Thus, Mărtincă calls them “free gifts, *gratiae gratis datae*”²⁵; this status of charismata indicates that they are not God’s reward for a holy life, namely they do not show the holy identity of those who “perform” them. The Romanian theologian is bold enough to assert that, in fact, “the first and most important of these gifts is the Holy Spirit Himself, who is poured out in our hearts as the principle of a new life.”²⁶ But the Spirit cannot be, in any case, a reward for the personal sanctity, since it is precisely He who brings us the new life, the life of God. Aidan Nichols Op also calls the charismata “gifts or talents”²⁷, a term that tells us from the very beginning, about their nature and the purpose for which they are offered: the use of these talents has in view precisely “the building-up of Christ’s body.”

Among the theologians who use the most diverse terms to refer to the charismata is undoubtedly Hans Urs von Balthasar. For him, the charismata received by the believers and which are designed to build up the Church have the value of real assignments or missions: “each of us is given an utterly personal mission (charisma) for the sake of the unlimited totality of the ‘Body’”²⁸. In the

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 160–163.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 163.

²⁵ I. Mărtincă, *Duhul Sfânt*, p. 235.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

²⁷ Aidan Nichols Op, *Yves Congar*, Wilton 1989, p. 144.

²⁸ H. von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, vol. III, p. 260.

same work, von Balthasar will also use the phrase “forms and characteristics of life which He [Christ] gives to the church”, or the simple term “gifts” to designate the charismata of the Spirit. This fact shows that, in his view, the concept of “charisma” is comprehensive, not limited to the narrow, technical meaning which is used most often in theological works.

III. The doctrine of charismata of the Holy Spirit in Reformed theology

In this part of our study we will attempt to understand Calvin’s conception of the gifts of the Spirit; then we will discuss the doctrine of charismata as defined in current Reformed theology.

The scholar who seeks to define the gifts of the Spirit and who wants to begin with the writings of Calvin is faced with a difficult situation. This was also noticed by Paul Elbert, who concluded that in Calvin the fruits of the Spirit are “more sharply defined than the gifts”; the latter are not so much linked with the supernatural element, seeming to be only “the cultivation of natural abilities (hopefully with spiritual help).”²⁹ This shortcoming in defining the charismata is motivated by Calvin himself, who, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 12, says that “it is difficult to form a judgment as to gifts and offices of which the Church has been so long deprived, excepting only that there are some traces, or shadows of them still to be seen.”³⁰ For Calvin, the gifts of the Holy Spirit describe the whole Christian life, enriched by the grace of God. Having given up the technical understanding of the gifts of the Spirit, the reformer can talk about the gifts received from God outside the context of equipping of Christians for ministry. Thus, following Augustine, Calvin talks about the natural and the supernatural gifts that God has given to man at creation, but who either have been taken from him as a result of the Fall (this is the case for supernatural gifts), or have been corrupted.³¹ At least in the case of the supernatural gifts, Calvin says that they were given to man “in the hope of eternal salvation.” One can recover them by regeneration, so that s/he will obtain again “faith, love to God, charity towards our neighbours, and an attachment to holiness and righteousness.”³²

In the Reformed Confessions of faith (at least those from sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), the gifts of the Spirit are not given much attention. In fact, these documents “do not enumerate spiritual gifts or provide a complete

²⁹ Paul Elbert, “Calvin and the spiritual gifts” in: *JETS*, 22/3, 1979, p. 237.

³⁰ Jean Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 1, Grand Rapids 2009, p. 416.

³¹ Idem, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Philadelphia 1813, p. 243.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 243.

list of them, as one may find in various places in Scripture [...] nor did the framers of the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries give a full treatment of spiritual gifts and make it a confessional norm.”³³ The few references to this subject are made only in the context of discussions regarding other doctrines, such as ecclesiology, church offices, the administration of the sacraments, etc. But even in these cases much more important is the description of the roles of the gifts, not a definition, a description of them.³⁴

In modern Reformed theology, the interest for the gifts of the Spirit has seen a great growth, particularly in the last years.³⁵ In the past, according to J. M. Boice, discussions on this subject were much rarer. However, theologians such as Abraham Kuyper, writing at the beginning of the past century, have paid special attention to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as well as to the teaching about spiritual gifts. For Kuyper, “the charismata or spiritual gifts are the divinely ordained means and powers whereby the King enables His Church to perform its task on the earth.”³⁶ The achievement of this work always requires divine power, which means that between work, office and gift there is an “internal connection”.³⁷ Afterwards, Kuyper classifies spiritual gifts in three distinct groups according to their nature: the *official*, the *extraordinary*, and the *ordinary*. Gifts from the first category (prophecy, teaching, ministry, giving) concern “the care of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Church”³⁸. [The *ordinary*] could be categorized into two classes: “those that *strengthen* the gifts of saving grace, and those *distinct from* the grace of salvation”³⁹; they are only more energetic manifestations of latent capabilities possessed by every believer. Finally, “the *extraordinary* charismata [...] work partly upon the spiritual and partly upon the physical domain.”⁴⁰ This category includes

³³ Yuzo Adhintarta, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the Major Reformed Confessions and Catechisms of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Carlisle 2012, p. 158.

³⁴ For example, in *The Tetrapolitan Confession*, cap. XIII, it is shown (in relation to the charismata received by ministers) that “There is no power in the Church except for edification.” The same idea is found in *The Confession of the English Congregation at Geneva* (1536), chap. IV, or in *The Belgic Confession* (1561), cap. XXVIII.

³⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, Downers Grove 1986, p. 606-608.

³⁶ Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Grand Rapids 1900 (repr. 1975), p. 184. Or, in other words, “every means afforded by the King for the doing of His work is a charisma a gift of grace.”

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 184.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 187.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 187.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 188.

charismata such as self-restraint and healing of the sick. After making this detailed description, the author says, unfortunately without arguing, that “the charismata now existing in the Church are those pertaining to the ministry of the Word [...] the others for the present time are inactive.”⁴¹

A clearer definition is provided by James M. Boice. He states, following Ray C. Stedman, that a spiritual gift is “a capacity for service which is given to every true Christian without exception and which was something each did not possess before he became a Christian.”⁴² Boice emphasizes those spiritual gifts “are not talents for the simple reason that they are given for spiritual ends only, and only to Christians.”⁴³ From this statement one can easily understand the purpose with which Christians are endowed with these gifts: to serve the other members of the Christian community. Boice provides a brief description of the lists of gifts found in Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:8–10 and 28–30; Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Peter 4:11, claiming that nowadays we cannot speak of prophets and apostles in the New Testament sense of the terms.⁴⁴ On the contrary, nowadays prophecy refers to boldly proclaiming of the name of the Lord. Boice’s final exhortation is that believers should discover the gifts with which they are endowed, but they could do this only by reading the Scriptures, praying, and seeking the advice of other spiritually mature Christians.

One last reformed theologian that we will mention in this essay is Michael Horton. He seems to have a sacramental understanding on the reception and use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in his view, “it is through the ministry of Word and sacrament (addressed in Ephesians 4) that the Spirit gifts all of the saints for their role in the body.”⁴⁵ The close connection between receiving gifts and the ministry of the ordained ministers is seen in the fact that “the Spirit gives and orchestrates the many gifts bestowed on the whole body through the ministry of the ordained office-bearers, who differ only in the *graces* (vocation), not in the *grace* (ontic status) of the Spirit.”⁴⁶ Horton is one of the few Reformed theologians who attempted to make it clear how believers are equipped with spiritual gifts (even if his approach may be criticized). As we saw above, Boice was expecting that believers should

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.189

⁴² J. Boice, *Foundations of*, p. 607-608.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 608.

⁴⁴ The same thing could be said about the gift of healing. This either does not exist any longer, or occurs very rarely, says Boice.

⁴⁵ Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith. A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims On the Way*, Grand Rapids 2011, p. 886.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 886.

discover their gifts, which means that they have received them already, at an unspecified time.

As we have seen, in Reformed theology the doctrine of charismata is marginal. Reformed theologians, beginning with Calvin himself, consider that the Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon each member of the Church, but these gifts exclude almost always the supernatural or even spectacular side of the charismata.⁴⁷ However, the merit of Reformed theology consists in the emphasis placed on the idea of building up of the whole Christian community through the gifts received by every believer, and also on the idea that every believer has something to offer to the other members of the Body of Christ. However, we are left with the task to reassess charismata such as prophecy in the light of the newer Christian experiences, of a Pentecostal type.

IV. Defining the charismata of the Holy Spirit: an evaluation from a Pentecostal perspective

In the final part of the present study we will survey the Pentecostal theology perspective on charismata. As mentioned in the Introduction, Pentecostal theologians tend to define the gifts of the Spirit more technically, which they see as means of empowerment designed to help believers fulfilling their ministry within the Christian community and throughout the world.

A first observation which should be made is that sometimes “charismata” and “gifts of the Spirit” are used interchangeably and that they overlap to a large extent.⁴⁸ Trandafir Șandru, one of the first Romanian Pentecostal theologians, accepts the idea that the four terms used by Paul to refer to the gifts of the Spirit (*charismata*, *pneumatika*, *energēmata* and *diakoniai*) “refer to the same gifts; we don’t have four different categories, but the same gifts viewed from different angles.”⁴⁹ Based on this clarification, Șandru understands spiritual gifts as “powers or works (*energēmata*) with which the believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit in a spiritual, supernatural way (*pneumatika*), through the grace (*charismata*) of God, for him to be in the service (*diakonia*) and to work for the common good.”⁵⁰ We notice

⁴⁷ This is the case of prophecy, discerning of the spirits, healing, etc. which, when not totally rejected as gifts that have ceased to exist, are interpreted in a way which leaves no room for the supernatural.

⁴⁸ For example, in: *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, under the term “charism” no explanation is to be found; authors direct readers to another concept, that of “gifts of the Spirit”. See: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Grand Rapids 2003, p. 520).

⁴⁹ Trandafir Șandru, *Lucrarea Duhului Sfânt*, 3rd edition, Oradea 2009, p. 189.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 189.

that Șandru binds very tightly the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the spiritual work of the Church; he shows that charismata are the fruition of the promise of Christ according to which the Church was to be accompanied by “many awesome deeds” in her service. With this technical meaning in mind, he sets about to present only the nine gifts of the Spirit found in 1 Corinthians, which he divides into three main classes: the gifts of revelation⁵¹ (enlightenment), gifts of power (or action)⁵² and gifts of inspiration (or communication).⁵³ Believers endowed with these gifts must work for the benefit of the community and remember that gifts should not be understood as the property of the recipient; the recipient may be called “at best a manager who must always be aware of the Owner, having a great sense of responsibility.”⁵⁴

Another technical perspective on spiritual gifts is held by the Romanian Pentecostal theologian, John F. Tipei. He evaluates the multiple names under which the gifts of the Spirit are presented in the NT⁵⁵, but also provides an overview description of them, which can be summarized as follows: “[gifts] are not natural endowments, but abilities given by the Holy Spirit”.⁵⁶ At the same time, the Romanian theologian notices the tendency of Pentecostal theological literature to including all gifts under one category known as “gifts of the Spirit, without making a distinction between supernatural gifts and those gifts whose manifestation is less spectacular.”⁵⁷ Tipei himself makes such a distinction, showing, for example, that “all gifts designated by the term *pneumatika* are supernatural”, while some charismata, which are seen as “gifts of grace”, are an enhancing or amplification of a natural endowment⁵⁸. But not all Pentecostal theologians agree with this observation. Stanley Horton, for example, clearly states that “the Bible [does not] distinguish between gifts that are «more supernatural» and «less supernatural». They are all part of the

⁵¹ In this category are the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the gift of discerning the spirits.

⁵² This class consists of: the gift of faith, gifts of healing and the gift of miracles.

⁵³ This last category includes prophecy, the gift of various kinds of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues.

⁵⁴ T. Șandru, *Lucrarea Duhului Sfânt*, p. 190.

⁵⁵ See: John F. Tipei, *Duhul Sfânt: o teologie biblică din perspectivă pentecostală*, Oradea 2003, p. 294-299.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 294.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 304. He supposes that “the phrase «spiritual gifts», commonly used by Pentecostal believers, reflects Paul’s intention to show that the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts.” (p. 295).

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

work of the Spirit through the Church.”⁵⁹ Horton’s observation concerns especially those who “attempt to distinguish between extraordinary gifts that are charismatic, completely supernatural, and which they wrongly suppose are beyond the control of the individual (such as prophecy, miracles, healings, and tongues) and those they call ordinary, noncharismatic, involving natural, human abilities (as teachers, ministry, ruling, administration, helps, giving, and showing mercy).”⁶⁰ We must point out, however, that Tipei could hardly be accused of such a radical classification of charismata. He makes it clear that the supernatural character of certain gifts of the Spirit should not be confused with the sensational.⁶¹ Finally, Tipei presents, in a Pentecostal manner, the nine gifts from 1 Corinthians, which he also divides into three categories, the same found in the writings of Trandafir Șandru.

Speaking of the terminology used by Paul to describe the work of the Spirit within the Christian Church, J.R. Michaels stated that “NT, and Paul in particular, defines «spiritual gifts» very broadly, encompassing both the natural and the supernatural, both the visible miraculous signs that gave evidence of the Spirit’s presence at Pentecost and the deeds of love, kindness, and service.”⁶² Michaels admits that, within the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements, the gifts of tongues and prophecy have been stressed very much, but nevertheless states that the Pentecostals “have also called the attention of the Christian church to the crucial importance of gifts of the Spirit generally and in so doing have served as an agent of renewal in the last half century.”⁶³

In a similar fashion, Pentecostal theologian Stanley Horton construes spiritual gifts as “God’s primary means of building the Church both spiritually and in numbers.”⁶⁴ This brief statement shows a technical understanding of charismata, namely that of supernatural empowerment whose aim is to edify the Church of Christ. This understanding is even more evident in Ray Hughes, who says that “the Spirit of God [...] equips people with the gifts of the Spirit, the exercise of which is under His control, and the means by which the church is enabled to fulfill its mission in the world.”⁶⁵ Believers do not

⁵⁹ Stanley M. Horton, *Ce spune Biblia despre Duhul Sfânt*, Oradea 2002, p. 263.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 293.

⁶¹ J. Tipei, *Duhul Sfânt*, p. 300.

⁶² J. Ramsey Michaels, “Gifts of the Spirit” in: Stanley M. Burgess (ed.), *The New International Dictionary*, p. 666-667.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 667.

⁶⁴ S. Horton, *Ce spune Biblia*, p. 282.

⁶⁵ Ray H. Hughes, *Who is Holy Ghost? A study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit*, Cleveland 1992, p. 23.

possess these gifts; however they can become channels through which these special 'graces' or spiritual gifts flow to enhance the ministry thrust of the body of Christ."⁶⁶ Therefore, the use of charismata is so closely linked to the Holy Spirit, that "it may be said that a gift of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit doing a specific service through a believer."⁶⁷ We notice, therefore, that Hughes understands the gifts of the Spirit in a very technical sense, as powers which one needs in order to carry out the Christian ministry. He even states that gifts are "spiritual tools' to help reach and keep the harvest. This is a reason spiritual gifts are often referred to as 'ministry gifts' or 'gifts for ministry'."⁶⁸

In conclusion, we note that within the Pentecostal tradition, the gifts of the Spirit are understood in a technical sense, as endowment of believers with power from on high meant to enable them to fulfill the mission of the Church. The receiving and using of the charismata is clearly linked to Christian mission.⁶⁹ In the Pentecostal view, all believers are called to witness to Christ, and this cannot be done without divine unction. Even when talking about certain offices in the Church, Pentecostals stress the idea that the performance of these offices requires a prior equipping with the necessary charismata; in this respect, Duffield says that "when God set apart a person for an office, He bestowed upon him a spiritual enablement that corresponded with the office or ministry."⁷⁰

So charismata are not meant so much to help believers in their spiritual becoming, but to equip them for service. Therefore Tipei distinguishes between the "sanctifying Spirit" and the "charismatic Spirit", without implying by this dichotomy the existence of two divine beings called the "Holy Spirit", but rather two distinct actions which the Spirit makes in a man's life: regeneration and empowerment for ministry.

Conclusions:

In the current context, in which the Charismatic-Pentecostal type movements seem to gain more ground in the world, a serious discussion on the subject of charismata is very necessary. Many churches have accepted, at least in part, the manifestations associated until recently with the Charismatic movement, but it is necessary to develop a comprehensive theology, indicat-

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

⁶⁹ See Guy P. Duffield, Nathaniel M. Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Los Angeles 1983, p. 327.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 330.

ing the nature, role and functioning of charismata in the Church. But such a discussion must start from a proper definition of charismata. As we saw in this study, the various traditions of Christianity suggest definitions which, in many cases, are very different. The researcher who wants to study this topic must first ensure that he understands the meaning(s) which the term “charisma” has in a particular theological tradition. Only when we understand the meaning which the charismata have in other traditions can we establish a solid basis for further ecumenical discussion. At the same time, we consider it necessary that theologians belonging to different Christian traditions to sincerely open to others and broaden their understanding of the topic being discussed. The Orthodox theologians, as well as the Catholic and the Protestant, must focus again on the biblical texts in Luke-Acts, which describe a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church, while the Pentecostal theologians must take into account other charismata, less “spectacular”, that tend to be forgotten in favor of glossolalia, prophecy and the gifts of healing.

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