

Charisma in Romans and its implications for Church Growth in Nigeria

Olagunju Olugbenga, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

In today's church the craze about Pentecostal move has dominated the contemporary Christian thought in Nigeria. The evangelicals and most especially the orthodox churches are not at home with the dispositional outburst and or the doctrinal expression of the Pentecostals. They are skeptical about having anything to do with them. The mainline churches see this group of Christians as Biblical literalists who interpret the Scriptures based on experience. The Pentecostals on the other hand see the mainline churches² as "dead" in the sense that they shut away the Holy Spirit from their interpretation of the Bible. They accused them as carnal and too academic in their interpretation of the Scriptures. They criticized the leaders of the mainline line church as compromising the Christian faith by joining the occult, flirting with the government and deny the supernatural. Over the years both have been playing a cat and mouse game. They have been calling themselves derogatory names which the writer believes was not in the mind of Paul when he wrote about charisma.

In reality, the Pentecostals and or the Charismatic movement have become a worldwide phenomenon. The Pentecostal influences can be seen in every

² The mainline churches are churches that came into being through the effort of the missionaries some centuries ago See Deji Ayegboyin and Ademola Ishola in *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspectives* (Ikeja, Lagos: Greater Height Publishers, 1992), 24ff. Recently some Anglican Bishops like bishop Akinfenwa of Ibadan Diocese and Laosebikan of Ondo Diocese refer to the Anglican as orthodox evangelical charismatic Bible believing church Interview on 105.5 FM station on Monday 20 October 2008 between 11am-12noon

denominational worship service,³ in fact their influences have become more pronounced among the Anglican and Baptist Denominations to the extent that in some places hardly can one distinguished between the evangelical and Pentecostal worship service.⁴ The seminaries and Bible Colleges are also being influenced by this Pentecostal phenomenon. According to Peter Wagner the movement has become a force to be reckoned with in the world. Their influence and impart is real on all denominational persuasions in South Korea especially. They have permeated every sector of the Korean life.⁵ Morris Cerrulo observes that their influence is quietly noticed in China and Indonesia and now these groups have the largest followership in the continent of Asia and Africa.⁶ Ayegboyin and Nihinlola support this observation when they note that the movement has become one of the most significant religious phenomena in the twentieth Century Christianity.⁷ Michael Harper describes this movement in three phases⁸ personal (1960s),

³ See Emiola Nihinlola The effect of Pentecostal Practices on the Baptist Worship

⁴ Archibishop Olubunmi Okogie Interview on NTA Network 9. AAM

⁵ P. C. Wagner Interview on CBS Network February 16, 2008

⁶ Morris Cerrullo Interview on TBN November 18, 2007; See Peter C. Wagner Warfare Prayer Dealing with Territorial Demon 1993

⁷ Deji Ayegboyin and Emiola Nihinlola “The Impact of Pentecostalism on Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches: The Way Forward” Proceeding of a seminar organized by Baptist Institution Forum, 1999

⁸ Kevin Springer traces the beginning of Pentecostalism to the event that occurred in 1901 in a bible school named Bethel Bible College situated at Topeka, Kansas. But Moriarty traces it back to the earlier religious movement in Europe such as the Puritans, the Quakers and Holiness movement which in his view have served as a precursor to what is now called today the Pentecostalism See M. G. Moriarty, *The New Charismatic Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Press, 1992, 2*. In actual sense the real outburst came into being in 1901 when the student under Charles Parham actually spoke in tongues. The student from this period came to recognize tongue-speaking as the distinguishing feature of those baptized in the Holy Spirit. A. J. Seymour attracted the nation’s attention when the Azusa Street revival began. Many people that went to Azusa were fascinated and influenced by this new doctrine. Most of these people went back to establish their own fellowship which serves as vehicles for propagating these doctrine. See Deji Ayegboyin and Emiola Nihinlola *Impact of Pentecostalism in Nigerian Baptist Convention Churches: Way Forward* “Baptist Institutional Forum Ibadan: Baptist Press, 1999, 56. The second wave known as the charismatic renewal movement began in 1960 when an Anglican Clergy was baptized with the Holy Spirit in his room and spoke in tongues and did not leave his denomination. This event in the life of this clergy marked the beginning of reformation in the mainline Protestant and Catholic Churches.

corporate (1970s) and global (1980s).⁹ The fact of the matter is that the Pentecostal movements have contributed much to a renewed interest in the relevance of spiritual gifts in the contemporary church especially among the mainline churches in Africa.¹⁰ However, these movements have created a lot of confusion within the church world; their theologies have caused division and dissension among Christians from different denominational persuasions which were not the intention of Paul when he wrote about the gift of God (*charisma tou theou*).¹¹ What causes this confusion is the fact that the Pentecostals and the Charismatic¹² are fond of categorizing and characterizing Christians into groups of first and second class Christians which was against the spirit of Paul when he wrote about *charismata*. The term *charismata* “gifts of the spirit” does not occur in Pauline corpus, however, the occasional appearance of “gift” language and spirit activity especially in other epistle like Romans 1;11 and 1 Cor 12-14 makes the terms a legitimate one.¹³

Most of the groups within this movement remained within their denomination instead of setting up an independent ministries. The third wave is the most recent. They are distinct from the classical Pentecostal or the charismatic renewal in the sense that they do not emphasize tongue-speaking as the only evidential sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They believed in spiritual growth and power for service. They emphasized the need of the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, not every one in this group speak in tongue and they did not insist on tongue-speaking as a criteria for the coming of the Holy Spirit in a believer. See Kevin Springer, *Power Encounter* San Francisco; Harper and Row 1988, p 211-216 and Edward O Conor “Pentecostalism” in A Richardson and J, Bowen (eds) *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* London SCM 1983 and

⁹ Michael Harper “Renewal in the Holy Spirit” *Christianity in Today’s World* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company), 1985, p 102-103.

¹⁰ The Mainline churches are missionary churches that were established in Nigeria over a century ago by the foreign missionaries. Examples of these mainline churches are Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, ECWA, etc. See Deji Ayegboyin and Ademola Ishola in *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspectives* (Ikeja, Lagos: Greater Height Publishers, 1992), 24ff

¹¹ *Charisma tou theou* is the gift bestowed to all men who believes in Jesus Christ and that gift is eternal life, which is a free gift to all humankind

¹² See John Koenig, Arnold Bittlinger and Max Turner

¹³ Gordon Fee “Gifts of the Spirit” DPL ed by Gerald F. Hawthorne et. Al Leicester, England: intervarsity Press, 1993+6.

According to Paul, at conversion all believers have the gift of God (*charisma tou theou*) in them, which means all Christians are charismatic. Every Christian has been endowed with supernatural gifts to function within the community of faith. The different gifts endowed upon believers are an expression of God's grace on those who believed wholeheartedly in the Lordship of Christ as the only begotten Son of God who died and resurrected on the third day (Roman 10:9-10). Paul devoted most of his time to explain the use of *charisma* in the church at Rome in order for the Christians to have an understanding of its operation for the growth of Christianity.

This paper focuses on *Charisma* in Paul's epistle to the Romans and its implication for church growth in Nigeria. The paper is exegetical in nature. The writer examines the uses of charismata in Romans and through exegetical inferences its implication on church growth is implied.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

CHARISMA

The word "*charisma*" is distinctively Pauline word and found elsewhere in New Testament only in 1 Peter 4:10.¹⁴ The word is an obscured term in the secular and religious literature of the first century.¹⁵ However, in Pauline epistles the word "*charisma*" appears sixteen times and it has a wide range of meanings. The word is unique and peculiar to Paul. Literally, in Paul, it has various meaning that ranges from divine favor, free gift, benefit, or power to divinely conferred endowment.¹⁶

The word *charisma*, comes from the root word *charis* meaning grace, a frequently used word, both in the secular Greek literature and the New Testament.¹⁷ The word *charis* is a technical word in Paul and it is central in

¹⁴ Gordon Fee, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press, 1994, 339

¹⁵ Siegfried Schatzmann, *A Pauline Theology of Charismata* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 1

¹⁶ Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 286

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Pauline concept of salvation where Paul clearly expresses his understanding of the salvation event.¹⁸ *Charis* (Grace) to Paul is an act of wholly, unmerited, undeserved and unconditional generosity of God toward human being.¹⁹ Siegfried Schatzman defines it as: “God’s gracious gift to those who are saved and it becomes relevant and effective only in the event of their being experienced. Without their being experienced, they remain passive, ineffective, abstract and a theological formula.”²⁰ However, John Koenig defines *charisma* (gift) as: “The gift of God that differentiates individuals from one another for the purpose of enhancing their mutual service.”²¹ Yusuf. A. Obaje defines it as “Ordained means and powers by God to enable the church perform its function... They are specific enabling graces given out to believers to ensure that they live the life of redeemed people.”²²

The definition of charisma are inexhaustible, however, a biblically accepted definition of charisma should include

1. The experience of gracious endowments on the believers.
2. The power of God upon an individual member of the body of Christ to perform ministry received from God in Christ Jesus.
3. The power to strengthen spiritually the body of Christ and help those in need of physical and Spiritual help.

Hence, the gifts of the Spirit apart from being a general gift of God’s grace upon individual member of the body of Christ is also linked with nurturing, up building and equipping the believer for God’s work. Hence it is a gracious endowment upon believers to function within the community of faith without pleading for it. It is God’s prerogative to endow the gift on whom He wishes.

In furthering this research at doctoral level, the writer has chosen to narrow down his research to the Corinthian Church, where Paul did not use the

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Schatzmann, 8.

²¹Koenig, 14.

²²Y. A. Obaje, *Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the Nature of Spiritual Gifts* (Ogbomoso: Adebayo Calvary Printers, 1988), 31.

word *charismata* but *pneumatika*. He only brought in *charismata* to correct some anomaly in the church which had been taken over by the spirituals.

CHURCH GROWTH

Church growth is defined as that discipline which investigates the nature, expansion, planting, multiplication, function and health of Christian churches as they relate to the effective implementation of God's commission to make disciples of all peoples in Mt 28:18-20.²³ Students of church growth strive to integrate the eternal theological principles of God's word concerning the expansion of the church with best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as the initial framework of references the foundational work done by Donald Mcgravan.²⁴ Hunter sees it as a science that requires measurement, research and evaluation. He notes that if the effectiveness of ministry is important to Christians they will measure the results.²⁵ P.C Wagner modified this definition as he notes that it is a discipline that seeks to understand through biblical, sociological, historical and behavioral study, why church grow or decline. He further notes that church growth is all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with him and into responsible membership.²⁶

4. XAPIEMA IN SELECTED PORTION OF PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

4.1 Romans 1:11

“For I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong”

²³ This definition is given by the North American Society for Church Growth. Redefined by Lyle Schaller, A.M Hunter and P.C.Wagner.

²⁴ All church growth experts derived their definition of Church growth from the North America Association of Church Growth and expanded it based on their perception of key words.

²⁵ A. M. Hunter Foundation for Church Growth

²⁶ P. C Wagner, *Foundations of Church Growth: MC520 Course Outline and Syllabus*. Fuller Seminary 1989, 14 See also *Your Spiritual Gift can Help your church Grow* Ventura: 1993

Exposition

The Greek phrase *epipotho gar idein* “for I long to see you” expresses the direction of Paul’s longing.²⁷ Paul was deeply longing to see the church at Rome. The word *ina ti* “so that” is a conjunction which serves as subordinate conjunction that introduces a clause which modifies the controlling idea “for I long to see you.”²⁸ The dependent clause *metado charisma umin pneumatikon* “I may impart to you some spiritual gifts” expresses the purpose of Paul’s visit, to impart some spiritual gifts.²⁹ The last phrase *eis to sthrichthenai umas* expresses the purpose of the impartation, that is, “to make you strong or to establish you”³⁰

From this verse there are three questions raised:

1. Can Paul impart charisma to Christians in Rome as some Pentecostal do in Nigeria today?
2. What is the nature of the charisma he wants to impart?
3. What is the purpose of charisma in the context of Romans 1:11b?

Can Paul Impart Charisma?

The word translated “I impart” can make a casual reader to think that Paul is coming to impart or bestow charisma on Christians in Rome. In Acts of the Apostles, the apostles laid hands on the new converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands by the apostles signifies impartation of the Holy Spirit on the new converts in order to establish them in faith (Acts 8:11ff; Acts 19:5-6). When one interprets this verse from the historical evidence in Acts of the Apostles one may be tempted to see Paul as imparting charisma to believers in Rome. The bestowal of charisma being God’s gracious gift is by the sovereign decision of God, so the apostle Paul

²⁷Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers, III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 316. See Dale Moody “Romans” *The Broadman Bible Commentary Acts-1 Corinthians* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1970), 116

²⁸Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basic of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publication House, 2000), 294.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Rogers, 316.

could not have usurped God's authority or claimed by himself to impart charisma. The charisma Paul was referring to may be a kind of spiritual blessing that comes through the proclamation of the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation. The writer believes that neither Paul nor any of the apostles had authority to bestow or impart charisma on the believers; therefore, it seems the apostle used the word charisma here in a general sense to mean the gift of salvation which people received when they responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ by faith.³¹ The best the apostles or any church leaders could do among the Christians in Rome was to preach the gospel and as they received it, the gift of eternal life is imparted into them. So it is erroneous for any church leader or pastor to impart spiritual gifts on any member of his church. Impartation of spiritual gift is God's prerogative and He distributes the gift several as he wishes. See I Cor. 12:6-10. What the present church leaders can do is to preach the gospel of Christ to people and leave them to God to do what he pleases to them. It is the Trinity alone that bestows these gifts on people and not any human being. So it is not possible for Paul to impart charisma.

THE NATURE OF CHARISMA IN PAUL'S MIND

Some scholars suggest some ecstatic gifts like speaking in tongues or prophecy or any of the gifts listed in Romans 12:6-8 or 1 Cor. 12:8-10.³² Stott stresses that the charisma Paul had in mind was probably his own teaching or exhortation, which he hoped to share with them when he arrived since he did not know what their spiritual need would be.³³ The nature of this Charisma may be difficult to determine. However, the charisma Paul was longing to impart to the Roman Christians was the gift of salvation. When the gospel of Christ is preached the gift of salvation and eternal life are made available to as many that would receive the Lord Jesus as Savior. Anders Nygren says:

³¹Stott, 57. See also F. F. Bruce, *The New Century Bible Commentary 1&2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 31

³²Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 60.

³³Stott, 57.

“It is the gospel that is primary, which creates faith and awakens it in us. When one hears the gospel and is conquered by it that is faith. Faith is not prior to the gospel and independent of it. It arises only through one’s meeting with the gospel.”³⁴

Through the gospel, the gift of salvation is made available and eternal life is imparted to those who receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life, which God has given to those who are saved. (Rom. 6:23). This is confirmed in Roman 15:29 when Paul says, “I know that when I come to you I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.”³⁵ The blessing of Christ is embedded in the gospel, which the bible described as the power of God that brings salvation to all who believed.

THE PURPOSE OF CHARISMA IN PAUL’S MIND

The purpose of charisma in Paul’s mind was three folds: First, is to strengthen the faith of the Roman Christians. Second, is to up build the church and third, to bring the community of faith together in unity of faith and purpose. Kasemann summarizes the purpose of charisma as:

“Spiritual gift among the Christians in Rome is to up build and prepare the community of faith for the task ahead. They are to witness to the resurrection power of Christ and bless the church at Rome”³⁶

4.2 Romans 6: 23.

For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

³⁴Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 78.

³⁵When the Gospel is preached the Spirit of God is often present to bless the people through diverse miracles, healings, signs and wonders with various deliverances. Through the preaching of the gospel the church is built up and the people become strong in faith.

³⁶ Ernest Kasemann, Commentary on Romans (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 19.

Exposition

Paul uses the word the wages of sin (*ophonia*³⁷ *ths hamartias*) in contrast to the gift of God (*charisma tou theou*) and the results of these two-contrasts are death and life. Sin has a reward and the reward is expressed in wages that is paid in form of death while the gift that God offered humanity is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Eternal life is God's gift to mankind. It is a gift that God freely gives to undeserved human being.³⁸ The only ground on which this gift is bestowed is through the atoning death of Christ on the cross and the only condition of receiving it is through faith in Him.³⁹ Siegfried Schatzman stresses that the gift of God that is, eternal life (Charisma serves as a foundational gift without which spiritual gifts cannot be received.⁴⁰ Kasemann also stresses this point when he says

“Other charisma only exists because of the existence of this one unique gift of eternal life to which all other gifts are built.⁴¹

To Paul the greatest gift that has freely given to believers at salvation is eternal life. Eternal life is the life of God in man. God chose to share his eternity with those who believed in Christ. One is made to be partakers of God's life, his glory and his power. Eternal life has both present and futuristic implications as John Koenig says:

To speak of eternal life as a gift for the future without connotation for the present is not Pauline as it is to argue that the gift of justification in Romans 5: 15-16 means present enjoyment without implication for the future⁴²

³⁷The word *ophonia* is not a New Testament language; it is translated as extra ordinary wage of grace. The wage that is used of ration money paid to soldiers. From this it came to be used of pay or wages in general. Though, its most frequent use remained that for the pay of soldiers. So Paul, transferring his imagery from sin as a slave owner to that of a general paying his soldier. But the wage sin pays is higher, it is death. F.F.Bruce “The Letter of Paul to the Romans” Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1963), 65. See also TDNT, 5: 591.

³⁸Stott, 186.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Schatzman, 16.

⁴¹Kasemann, 186.

Eternal life is a gift from God and those that believe in Jesus Christ has eternal life even now.

4.3 Romans 12:6-8

6. And having differing gifts according to the grace given to us whether prophecy according to the proportion of faith.

7. Or serving in the service or the one teaching in the teaching.

8. Or the one exhorting in the exhortation, the one giving in simplicity, the one leading in diligence, the one showing mercy in cheerfulness.

Exposition

Vs 6. The opening verse of this passage starts with a participial phrase “Having different gifts according to the grace...the participial phrase “having” is a dependent verbal participle that takes grace as its direct object.⁴³ “The other phrases “let us use them” is an adverbial participial phrase used to express either the manner or means through which the controlling verb *echontes* is carried out.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is more appropriate to let the participle *echontes* introduce the new sentence, which could begin with the participle.⁴⁵ “Having gifts that differs or having different gifts... either option necessitates the addition of hortatory imperatives for the remainder of the passage. Each imperative would then correspond to the respective gifts cited.⁴⁶ “Whether prophecy let him prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” In order words prophecy must be done in accordance with what the Lord has revealed in His word.

⁴²John Koenig, *Charismata: God’s Gift for God’s People* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), 97.

⁴³Rogers, 341.

⁴⁴Wallace, 283.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 1: 356.

The word *diaforos*⁴⁷ affirms the truth that each member of the body of Christ is unique and different from one another both in their natural abilities and in their spirit gifting⁴⁸ and should be treated accordingly.

Vs 7. Describes the broad base of charisma that up builds the church life and ministry. Charisma in this context means the various manifestations of God's gracious gift in the life of the believers in the church. All the gifts listed here are participles and they are used substantively.⁴⁹ The word service *diakonia* is used here in its general sense, it refers to someone waiting at the table, that is a waiter or when used in a broader sense it means an assistance rendered or help given to a needy person. Paul used the word freely when he referred to the financial assistance given to the church in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-31; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1,12,13). And in 1 Cor. 16:15 the household of Stephanas was reported to have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saint (*diakonia tois agios*) presumably by the way of hospitality.⁵⁰ Thus the basic meaning of *diakonia* is ministry to the needy or an act of service in love to those in need of help or assistance. The hortatory imperative "let him serve" may have been Paul's way of admonishing believers in Rome to exercise their gift of service without any fear of intimidation.⁵¹ This implies that whatever ministry gift people have been given they should concentrate on using it.

Paul also refers to teaching as charisma. To Paul, *didaskon* describes the function of expounding the word of God. The hortatory imperative "let him teach" implies that the teacher should exercised his teaching gifts to proclaim the truth in such a way that the church will grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. The tasks of the teachers are diverse:

⁴⁷□□□□□□□□ can have other meaning apart from its primary meaning "different" it can also mean "excelling excellent" See Morris, 440.

⁴⁸Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsman Publishing Company, 1994), 33.

⁴⁹Wallace, 283.

⁵⁰Cranfield, 620.

⁵¹Wallace, 202.

Firstly, they are to guard the gospel entrusted to them faithfully. They are to point the church to biblical revelation and to the original message of Christ and the apostles and to persevere in this task.

Secondly, they are to develop the growing church in faith through sound dynamic instructions.

Thirdly, they are to preserve the truth and to produce holiness by leading Christ's church into an uncompromising commitment to the godly life style set forth in God's word.

Fourthly, they are to refute a heretical teaching that is going on within the body of Christ today and stand firmly against wrong doctrine emanates from the cults claiming to be Christians.

Finally, the teacher should practice what they teach in order to avoid being hypocrite. James 3:1 enjoins the church not to produce many teachers who will not be able to practice what they teach, for teachers according to James would receive stricter judgment. The church need teachers today that will help in nurturing the young convert on to maturity. Stott says:

Teachers are needed in the church today to nurture the body of Christ to maturity and to urgently provide sound instructions to hundreds of thousands of new converts that are trooping into the churches but unfortunately there are scanty of biblically matured sound teachers to nurture them.⁵²

Verse 8. This verse opens with a participle *parakalon* which is translated as exhortation or encouragement or consoling and comfort.⁵³ In 1 Cor. 14:3 Paul speaks to the church at Corinth that those who prophesy in the church should prophesy edification, comfort and encouragement to the people. In Rom. 12:8 the word *parakalon* is mentioned as a gift on its own, in other words there are certain members of the body of Christ who are gifted as exhorters to speak comfort or encouragement to the weary soul in the church or in the community in order to bring hope to them and build them up. *Parakalon* is used in Rom. 12:1 to begin the chapter "I exhort you" if

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Rogers, 324.

parakalon means to exhort or to admonish, the same meaning may also be given to verse 8. Otto Schmitz says: “*parakalon* with the meaning to exhort denotes both missionary proclamation and a certain formula to introduce pastoral admonition.”⁵⁴ In 2 Cor. 1:3-7 Paul extolled the virtue of God as he proclaimed God as God of all comfort who comfort the afflicted in tribulations. Kasemann concludes that *parakalon* may well mean a charisma of pastoral exhortation that is one who exercises pastoral care namely of the afflicted and distressed. Therefore, in this verse the word *parakalon* may fit well to mean encouragement rather than comfort but in most cases the usual emphasis is on the word encouragement.⁵⁵

The phrase *ho metadidous en aplotheti* when translated literally means the “one giving in simplicity” but when apply hortatory imperatives to the phrase it becomes the “one giving let him give with simplicity without ostentation.” The verb *metadidomi* implies to give a part or to give a share of.⁵⁶ Sanday and Headlam interpret *metadidous* as someone who give alms of his own substance and do so with singleness of purpose and not with mixed motives or with the thought of ostentation or reward.⁵⁷ The attitude one put forward when giving or sharing will determine whether the one giving has the gift of giving or not. Paul used *aplotheti* to govern the attitude of those that give to God or fellow human being within the community of faith. In 2 Corinthians 8:2; 9:11-12, Paul clearly states that he who gives should do so with liberality and with cheerfulness for God loves a cheerful giver. Therefore, Kasemann submits that the simplicity, which is link with almsgiving as in 2 Corinthians 9:11ff concentrates on need alone with no motive for advantage or for reward.⁵⁸ Paul used *ho proistamenos* as a further example of charisma in Romans 12:8. The meaning of *ho proistamenos* is to stand before or to rule, to lead, to direct, to conduct and

⁵⁴Otto Schmitz, “Παρακαλεω, Παρακλησις,” in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (Grand Rapid, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), 5:796-802.

⁵⁵Kasemann, 342.

⁵⁶Rogers, 324.

⁵⁷William Sanday and Headlam C. Arthur, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1896), 357.

⁵⁸Kasemann, 342

to manage.⁵⁹ Thus *ho proistamenos* could denote the “one who leads” or it may refer to elders who are to give exemplary leadership within the community of faith as a qualification for the ministerial office. Dunn suggests that alternative meaning would be the one who give aids, as the one who cares for others will be more appropriate in this context.⁶⁰ Schatzman observes that the insertion of *ho proistamenos* between *ho metadidous and eleon* is not by chance but that both of them express the function of giving aid to the destitute and to those who are in need within the household of faith.⁶¹ Dunn, therefore conclude that either way he who exercises leadership or who cares for others must do so with diligence and with absolute dedication and with enthusiasm.⁶² *Ho eleon* is the Greek word for mercy. It is an act of mercy demonstrated to the needy or to those who are less privileged. Thus, this charisma is closely related to giving. This kind of spiritual gift is of personal direct ministry to the needy. When this gift is exercised it should be exercised with enthusiasm and with cheerfulness. The ministry of mercy had to do with the task of aiding the sick, visiting the prisoners, feeding the poor or hungry. When this ministry is carried out, it has to be carried out with joyfulness and without any show of ostentation.⁶³

Peter C. Wagner says:

The practical expression of mercy for Paul was not a worked up sign of social concern for human plight but rather the concrete outworking of God’s mercy freely bestowed and experienced.⁶⁴

And it is for this reason that Paul understood *oh eleon* as an enabling grace⁶⁵and when exercised it has to be exercised with joy and without any ulterior motives. Showing mercy to others should be a thing of joy and a delight in the Holy Spirit. Jesus says blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. Therefore mercy is a divine ability to feel genuine

⁵⁹Schatzman, 26.

⁶⁰Dunn, 250.

⁶¹Schatzman, 26.

⁶²Dunn, 270.

⁶³Kasemann, 342.

⁶⁴Peter C. Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gift Can Help Your Church Grow* (Ventura: California, 1984), 50.

⁶⁵Morris, 42.

compassion and sympathy for individual who suffer depression, mental or emotional problems and transform that compassion into cheerfully done deeds that reflect Christ's love and alleviate the problems.

IMPLICATION OF CHARISM TO CHURCH GROWTH IN NIGERIA.

Charism is an issue of importance in Pauline studies. In Romans alone the word appeared some six times. Unfortunately, the mainline church has developed a nonchalant attitude toward the subject to the extent that it is being neglected in the contemporary church especially by the mainline Church in Nigeria today. The mainline churches have not shown much interest in its study. The Pentecostals who are interested in it are being criticized for their excesses and the writer thinks that the time is ripe for the mainline churches to rise up to her responsibility by showing much interest in the subject so as to re-direct the excesses of the Pentecostals to the growth of the church in Africa. One of the ways to redirect the excesses is to research into the concept and educate the contemporary church in Nigeria on the proper way to use their spiritual gifts in the church. The proper way to use these gifts is to be humble with it and be careful not to make merchandize of people with it. Jesus says "freely you have received freely give" Luke 10:4-6. There is no need to sell the anointing oil or white handkerchief to people. God's gift is not to be traded but to be used to upbuild the church. Spiritual gifts are not present like the one presented to a couple during marriage but the manifestation of God's presence in the life of his children. Also, from Paul's letter all Christians are charismatic because they have received the charisma which is eternal life upon which spiritual activities are built. Having realized this, no Christian should look down upon him or herself as a second class citizen they should see themselves as God's ambassador in the world.

Charisma is to bless the community of faith and not to cause confusion as it is being done today in the contemporary church. One of the ways charisma blesses the community is to guide the church in to appointing people to position in the church. But some churches give less consideration to it before nomination is made. As a matter of fact, some of the offices in the church have been politicized to the extent that the church does not look at the spiritual quality of those being nominated but rather at the physical achievements of these persons in the church or in the community. For

example, someone who is not gifted in counseling should not be nominated as the chairman of counseling committee and those who do not have the gift of service or helps should not be ordained as deacons in the church. All officers in the church should be appointed based on the gracious gift of God on them and not on their wealth or their secular positions.

Secondly, the contemporary church in Nigeria should allow their members to use their gifts in the church and any exuberance or excesses should be controlled by the pastor. As much emphasis is being laid on the character of the believers in the same way premium should be given to spiritual gifts so that members can become balance in their Christian faith. The church should not leave one for the other they should balance the two that is gift and character (fruit of the spirit).

Thirdly, the prayer of Christ is that they might be one The writer believes that the goal of Christ is to make every Christian no matter their denominational background one and what is happening today in the contemporary world is God's making and there is nothing anybody can do about it. The influence of the Pentecostals is so real in all denominations that today hardly can you distinguish an evangelical church from the Pentecostal.

Fourthly, every member should fan into flame the charisma in them. This charisma is not ours but Gods and one should remember that an account will be given on the Day of Judgment. So make wise use of the gift that God has given you. Although where there are genuine manifestations of God's power there will also be counterfeit but one should not be bothered because by their fruit one will discern those who are genuine and those who are fake. There is the need to test every spirit so as to ascertain the one that is genuine.

Finally, for the contemporary church be relevant in their community the aspect of charisma must not be neglected. People want to go to the church where they will be assured of heaven and at the same time meet their earthly need.

5. Summary and Conclusion

This paper investigates charisma from Paul's letter to the Romans. He has studied every passage where the word charisma is used by Paul. He discovers that in Paul the word has double implications. One, when it is used in general term, it refers to the free gift that God bestowed on Christians at salvation. Second, when it is used technically, it means, the spiritual manifestation of God's presence in the life of individual members of the church through prophecy, teaching, giving or helping the poor and showing of mercy to bring about spiritual maturity.

The concept of charisma in Paul embraces all facets of life and experiences as well as the corporate redemption and service. Paul seemed to conceive of Christian experience as charismatic experience, one marvel where the contemporary ministers got their terminology "charismatic" when Paul the one that gives the term its uniqueness does not use it to classify the community of faith in to groups of non-charismatic and charismatic. Therefore, the writer sees it as unnecessary these categorization of Christians in to denominations based on their charismatic experience. All Christians no matter their denominational persuasions are charismatic since at salvation they receive eternal life

The writer observes the following as the study of the concept progresses.

One, charisma is an expression of the grace of God on the individual members of the community of faith. It is an expression of God's gracious manifestation on the believers to bless the community and the world. Therefore charisma is not what one work or labor for, it is God who is at work in the believers' life. And since the charisma is eternal life, which every Christian received at salvation, the Christian community is charismatic. The writer strongly believed that eternal life is the bedrock upon which all charismata are built. Therefore all Christian is Charismatic no matter their denominational persuasion.

Two, charismata are given for service. It is not given for self-aggrandizement or personal edification but for the utmost purpose of up building, equipping and edifying the body of Christ in love. All gifts whether general or specific must contribute towards unifying the church bringing the body of Christ together as one in the community serving one

another by faith in Christ Jesus. There is no gift that is superior or above another all gifts are equal but there are gifts that draw more attention than others such as the gifts of healings and miracles or exorcising demons. One should not be tempted to manipulate the gifts in order to draw attention to one self.

Three, every Christian should identify their area of service and function there effectively. It is unPauline to copy or imitate the gift of the Spirit or function in an area where he or she does not have the charisma.

Four, every believer should take the fruit of the spirit which is the character aspect of their life serious. The gift aspect is temporal, it is for service in the world but the fruit aspect is eternal which makes one godlike in character and disposition. One needs to always remember the word of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 7: 21ff which says:

Not everyone that calls me Lord will enter the kingdom of God but only those that do the will of my Father in heaven. For in that day many will come to me saying Lord in your name we have cast out the demons, heal the sick and speak in tongues I will tell them I never knew you workers of iniquity (Paraphrased).

The subject of charisma should be taken seriously especially among the Baptist community. Members should be allowed to exercise their gifts for the up building of the church and where excesses are noticed the leaders should guide and redirect such excesses for the benefit of the church. The writer observes that people are more at home in a church where there is the demonstration of God's spirit and power especially in Nigeria therefore, Baptist churches should be innovative in their worship experience and allow the Spirit of God to accomplish his purpose in their midst.

One should not allow denominational concern to affect or influence one exegetical study of the scriptures. The writer hopes that denominational priorities will always be submitted to the more important task of exegesis. Denominational affiliation or experience should not inform exegesis instead biblical exegesis must inform denominational concerns.