

This thinksheet follows #1071 ["Evaluation: 'Gifts'-Stewardship"], on the relation of charismata [the Spirit-given gifts-to-serve-in-community] to community-under-authority. In the Christian church and its institutions, authority should emerge, and be ever modified, through the discovery and release of the gifts God has given the members of the community....As vonHilget well says, a living religion is a living tension between the mystical [its source, in "Spirit"], the institutional [its social continuity and influence], and the intellectual [its sense-making, both as education and as plausibility]. Since WWII, the churches--and especially WCC and Vatican II--have "done theology" on the Spirit/institution polarity, with its biblical roots in theocracy/monarchy and its early Christian roots in "enthusiasm"/episcopacy and its late medieval roots in Reformation/Untramontanism; and now, charismatic and pentecostal Christians vs. the "established" churches, a complex picture indeed! What is the proper relationship of spiritistic experience and institutional surviving and thriving? How is the Church-as-institution to respond to experience junkies out to "feel the Spirit" without responsibility for Church or World? How can the Church establishment increase its risk-taking in the direction of such Spirit-leading as the Acts of the Apostles is written to exposit?...Early in the history of my denomination, the UCC, as a national staff member I got involved in these questions, and with three others wrote "A Form for Constitution and/or By-Laws for a Local Church of the United Church of Christ" [UCC Exec. Council/63], published with my commentary [pp.12f] with such phrases as "the spiritual and the temporal are inseparable" [therefore, recommendation of a unicameral design]; "Church order is no goal in itself, for order in the Christian church is a servant of freedom in Christ"; "order is functional, every structure is tentative" [so "each local church should from time to time take a courageous look at its form"]; "Democracy, in the church as in the surrounding culture, is a prudential steering between tyranny and anarchy. The governance of God cannot be equated with it, nor the discovery of God's will with any human ordering principle." [Now, #1075.] For purposes of the present thinksheet, note the contrasts "order" [as essential], "structure" [as existential]; and "order" [as given by God], "ordering" [as a continuous prudential task of the Church and the churches]. In WCC parlance, this is the order [Lat., "esse"] / "organization" [Lat., "bene esse"] distinction, so used in the chart below. The evangelic-charismatic CONTENT is given in changing CONTEXTS, with therefore the attendant call to change styles and forms of witness and service, that ministry may be appropriate and adequate.

QUESTIONS	<u>ORDER</u> [esse]	<u>ORGANIZATION</u> [bene esse]
<i>Who is the authority? [This is developed in #536, my rose window in the Morton ILL UCC church.]</i>	<i>God-in-Christ-in-community</i>	<i>The management: bishop, president, executive council, etc.</i>
<i>Priority?</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Structure, with "gifts" and therefore persons secondary-ancillary</i>
<i>Focus?</i>	<i>"Gifts"-in-Spirit</i>	<i>"principalities and powers" [i.e., the duly constituted authority]</i>
<i>Aim? [goals, objectives, values]</i>	<i>vitality in mission</i>	<i>efficiency in mission</i>
<i>Process?</i>	<i>emergent authority [See #1071.]</i>	<i>imposed authority, on basic of prior structure</i>
<i>Decision-making?</i>	<i>prayer for discernment and direction</i>	<i>"the planning process" [e.g., #28, #89, #1074 --which I've been, and am, "hot" for, and German "Ordnung" in me yearns for]</i>
<i>How evaluate?</i>	<i>prayerful self-and-group examination</i>	<i>As immediately above.</i>