"Charismatic" is generally used to describe a personal attribute. You do for instance distinguish between charismatic and formal leadership (they can of course coincide), or you describe as charismatic a person who is dynamic or has a certain radiance. This is of course not the way we think of the word "charismatic" in this connexion. You do even talk of formal and charismatic leaders within the church, without having the gifts of grace in strictly theological sense in mind.

2. When you deal with the concept of "charismatic" within the framework of theology you do also need to have it clearly defined. You can every now and then hear or read that the church is "charismatic", and thereby also those who belong to it. This is of course correct to a certain degree. The new life in Christ, the new creation, is a gift from God for Christ's sake out of mere grace, because "all things are from God, who hath reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation". (2) On the other hand there is an obvious danger in this general use of the word, namely that you neglect or even deny the difference that actually is there. The tension that does in fact exist between church and "charismatic" movement cannot be solved by means of semantic devices. For that reason, let us look upon the use of the word "charismatic" in the N.T.

a) Rom. 1:11

"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift ( charisma pneumatikon), that ye may be established". It is an open question what St. Paul really means with spiritual gifts. There are different possibilities.
1) It could refer to the "general" grace which is the prerequisite of the salvation process. (3)
2) It deals with "charismatic" gifts as described in 1 Cor. 12 (4)

There is no doubt that Wesley thinks of "charismatic" gifts.

b. Rom. 5:15,16
"Yet not as the offence so also is the free gift (charisma). For if by the offence of one many died, much more the grace (charis) of God, and the gift by grace (dōrema en chariti), that of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as the loss by one that sinned, so is the gift (dōrema); for the sentence was by one offence to condemnation, but the free gift (charisma) is of many offences unto justification."

Here does the word charisma of course refer to the gracefull gift of God, the unmerited forgiveness of sin.

c. Rom. 6:23
"For death is the wages of sin; but eternal life is the gift (charisma) of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

There is no need for any closer qualifying of this text.

d. Rom. 11:29
"For the gifts (charismata) and the calling of God are without repentance."

Deals with the attitude of God towards the people of Israel.

e. 1 Cor. 7:7
"For I would that all men were as myself (namely unmarried). But everyone hath his proper gift (charisma) from God, one after this manner, another after that. This has to do with the fact that St. Paul lived in celibacy. It is looked upon by him as a charisma.

f. 2 Cor. 1:11
"You likewise helping together with us by prayer for us, that for the gift (charisma) bestowed upon us by means of many persons thanks may be given by many on your behalf."

In this text St. Paul is using the word charisma to describe his salvation from the peril of death.

g. 1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6
"Neglect not the gift (charisma) that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

"Wherefore I remind thee of stirring up the gift (charisma) of God, which was in thee by the laying on of my hands."

What does charisma say in these texts? It could mean the gracious gift of ordination (5) or a gift from God in "charismatic" sense.(6) It is obvious that Wesley has "all the spiritual gifts, which the grace of God has given thee" in mind. (7)

h. 1 Pet. 4:10
"As every one hath received a gift (charisma) so minister it one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace (charis) of God":

What does St. Peter intend to say by means of the word gift (charisma)? According to Wesley it has to do with a gift that is "spiritual or temporal, ordinary or extraordinary, although the latter seems primarily intended." (8)

When Wesley talks of extraordinary gifts, he has in mind, what we today refer to as charismatic gifts.

i. When examining the texts dealt with so far, you get the impression that the word charisma is used without the intention of expressing something particular.
In the remaining texts, however, you are facing texts, where charisma more or less must be looked upon as a "terminus technicus". If you take into consideration for instance the occurrences in 1 Cor. this is really the case: "So that ye are wanting in no good gift;" (1:7), "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." (12:4), "Ye covet earnestly the best gifts": (12:31)

A short summary:
1) The word charisma does not occur very frequently in the New Testament.
2) It is not used in a univocal way.
   a) It expresses the unmerited gift of forgiveness, of life, a gift bestowed for Christ's sake. (Rom. 5:15, 16; 6:23)
   b) It is used of the graceful election of the people of Israel (Rom. 11:29)
   c) It is used to describe the miraculous salvation of St. Paul from the peril of death.
   d) St. Paul calls his celibacy a charisma.
   e) It seems that remaining occurrences of the word charisma, more or less definitely, can be looked upon as a description of gifts of grace in the contemporary sense of "charismatic".

3. To the question of spirit-baptism.
   a. In the New Testament there is no such expression as spirit-baptism (baptisma en pneumati hagioi). And still spirit-baptism is the key-word of the Pentecostals and, following them, of the Charismatic Movement. It is naturally due to the fact that you can read in the N.T. about baptizing in spirit. The concept of baptizo en pneumati hagioi is to be found in Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luk 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, 11; 6, 1 Cor. 12:13. In Matt. and Luk. you find the expression baptizo en pneumati hagioi completed with kai puri. The passage in Mark is interpreted by Walter Grundemann thus: "They do both baptize, he (John the Baptist) and the one coming. But his baptism was in water aiming at purification and preparation. The one coming is going to baptize in Spirit. The tension between the Aorist and the Future depicts the water-baptism as the terminating form - the spirit-baptism as the one setting in. By means of this will the Spirit, that only at times was given to the prophets in the Old Testament, be common possession of the believers (cf Joel 3) ...
Mark is pointing out this difference only, while Matthew and Luke also talk about a fire-baptism of judgement and purification. In the tradition, taken over by Mark, Jesus is not presented as the Fire-baptizer and Judge but as the Savior and Spirit-baptizer." (9) In this commentary on Mark 1:8 Walter Grundmann tells us:
1) In the Old Testament the Spirit was given to certain persons for certain purposes. So was the Spirit for instance given to prophets and anointed kings for the sake of their office.
2) The promise of a pouring out of the Spirit is to be found in the Old Testament, most clear maybe in Joel 3:1-5 (in some translations Joel 2:28-32).
3) In Jesus has the One come who baptizes in holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit is poured out and the New Age has begun. The Age of Messiah is there: the Holy Spirit of God has been
poured out upon all flesh - there will be
dephthasies, there will be visions, there will be dreams!

4) According to Mark and John the baptism will be with holy
Spirit. Jesus is there as Savior and Spirit-baptizer.
This baptism brings salvation, leads to a new life, works
the new birth.

5) According to Matthew and Luke the baptism will be with
holy Spirit and fire. Jesus is both Savior and Spirit-
baptizer on one side and Fire-baptizer and Judge on the
other. The out-pouring of the Spirit meant that the King-
dom of God was at hand - or rather was come. This kingdom
leads to a decisive separation. On one side salvation,
new life, new creation on the other side the carrying
away of the impenitent to judgement unto condemnation.(10)
It is, however, evident that this baptism with fire can
be given a different interpretation. This is in particular
the case within the sanctification revival of the 18th
century, as we will be able to see a little further on.

4. When dealing with the issue of terminology, let's look upon
one more: To be filled with the Spirit. In this part we will
disregard the fact that there were those in the Old Testament who
were filled with the Spirit or that it is written about John the
Baptist that he "shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from
his mother's womb". This does all belong to the age of promise,
in which only some were filled with the Spirit for particular
purposes. We are to take a look into the Acts, to the age of ful-
filment.

a. John the Baptist says when baptizing Jesus that he, i.e.
Jesus, will baptize with holy Spirit (and fire). In the be-
ginning of Acts we hear Jesus say something similar (1:5).
It is only not expressed by whom. The passive voice gives
a hint that God is the One acting. Now is the day of Pente-
cost come. Everything happens in accordance with the promise
(ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence)
The fulfilment is described by Luke thus: "they were all
filled with the Holy Ghost". To be baptized and to be filled
with seem to be synonymous concepts in this case.

b. On the day of Pentecost the initial event of fulfilment has
taken place. In Acts 9:17 a similar occurrence is depicted.
By the laying on of the hands of Ananias, Paul was to get
his sight back and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

c. This filling with the Spirit is something that is repeated.

d. There are of course other expressions used in the New Testa-
ment to describe the same reality. For instance, the Spirit
is poured out, is given, comes upon, but the concepts of
filling and baptism are those generally used in the "charis-
matic" terminology.

5. Now let us turn from the minor challenge of semantics to the
major challenge of the thing itself; let us turn to the charis-
matic challenge.
This is not a phenomenon that is new in our time. In the history
of the Church you can read how the charismata have been in
function for a considerable period of time. Every now and then
you can hear it maintained that the charismata were given to the
first generation of the Church only. Also Wesley in his days was
faced with statements to this end. He writes about them for
instance: "The causes of their decline was not as has been
vulgarly supposed because there was no more need for them, be-
cause all the world were become Christians.... the real cause
was: the love of many almost all Christians so called, was
waxed cold.... This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were no longer to be found in the Christian Church; because the Christians were turned heathen again and had only a dead form left". (11)
The early Christian Fathers have a lot to say about manifestations of gifts of grace. Let us take a short look:
Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 100-165) says: "It is possible now to see among us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God." Irenaeus (ca. A.D. 130-200) describes how "others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions and utter prophetic expressions. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole". Tertullian (ca. A.D. 160-220) tells about extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, although their manifestation was waning with the increasing formalism of the church. (12) The once faithful member of the forthcoming Catholic Church was later won to Montanism, "a reform movement which protested against the religious establishment and combined a desire for return to apostolic purity with a revival of charismatic gifts". (13) Augustine (A.D. 354-430), Bishop of Hippo, "reported that the gifts of the Spirit could occasionally be seen". (14)
With the Montanism, which according to Eusebius had its start in the year 172, the established church faced a true charismatic challenge. The Montanism has been very differently valued in church history. It has been looked upon as a heresy and as a warning example of the peril of going astray when leaving the main development of the Church in order to return to the charismatic life of the primitive Church. The Montanism is even described as a threat against the church just as perilous as Gnosticism. (15) From the other side, it is given quite a different appreciation. Montanus is regarded as a true reformer of a church sunk down in worldliness, a voice of protest against a development towards petrification and ethical deterioration. Wesley looked upon himself and upon Methodism as a phenomenon equivalent in his days to the Montanism. (16) These are Wesley's own words: "And if the state of the Church in the very first century was so bad, we cannot suppose it was any better in the second. Undoubtedly it grew worse and worse. Tertullian, one of the most eminent Christians of that age, has given an account of it in various parts of his writings, whence we learn that real, internal religion was hardly found; nay, that not only the tempers of the Christians were exactly the same with those of their heathen neighbours, (pride, passion, love of the world, reigning alike in both,) but their lives and manners also. The bearing a faithful testimony against the general corruption of Christians, seems to have raised the outcry against Montanus; and against Tertullian himself, when he was convinced that the testimony of Montanus was true. As to the heresies fathered upon Montanus, it is not easy to find what they were. I believe his grand heresy was, the maintaining that 'without inward and outward holiness no man shall see the Lord'". (17)
On the other hand you cannot deny that the development of Montanism somehow or somewhere went wrong. It leads to fanaticism, to an over-emphasizing of the spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of Prophecy, at the expense of the authority of the Bible. This fact could, however, serve to show, how dangerous it is to the Church, when it rejects a renewal movement. It is likely to lead to two different results. equally fatal:
- The Church loses the opportunity of experiencing a necessary and healthy renewal.
- The renewal movement is in peril of getting isolated and, separated from the main current of the Church, going through a distorted development of its own.
The excesses of the Montanism, which were gradually developing, have brought forth an attitude within occidental Christendom of regarding any manifestation of feeling within the spiritual life with suspicion. That which Wesley saw as real in the first centuries and experienced in his own time can be traced also in our days. Wesley makes the following note in his Journal Wednesday August 15th 1750: "The grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost; but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture". (18)

6. From the above quotation it is natural to leap over from the 3rd century to the 18th. John Wesley and the first Methodism stand as the initiating force in relation to modern revival movements. From those days on new expressions of this fact are arising in the form of new churches, in particular in the U.S. It is also a fact that renewal movements in our days take a lot of their inspiration from Wesley, independent of their having Methodist roots or not. Wesley's heart-warming experience on May 24th 1738 is too well known as to need any close examination. No matter what the ongoing Wesley studies have to say about the implications of this event, it is not possible to deny that it had a decisive meaning to him personally. We Methodists are often called followers of the man with the burning heart.

There is a further event of importance in John Wesley's life and in the history of the emerging Methodist movement. I refer to the love feast of the New Year's Eve 1738 in Fetter Lane. Wesley writes: "Mr Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles were present at our love feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty we broke out with one voice: 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord'. (19)

A female Catholic scholar makes the following comment on this entry in Wesley's Journal: "In this account structures of experience are already emerging, which later were to be labelled 'pentecostal'". (20)

At this point I think it proper to deal a little with Wesley's doctrine of salvation and of sanctification. Wesley's view of fallen man was utterly pessimistic. A quick look to his sermons gives good evidence to that end. Just one example: "But here is the shibboleth: Is man by nature filled with all manner of evil? Is he void of all good? Is his soul totally corrupted? Or to come back to the text, is 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually'? Allow this, and you are so far a Christian. Deny it, and you are but a heathen still". (21)

If Wesley thus had a very low view of man in his fallen state, his optimism of grace, his view of God's saving power was equally high. It can be well demonstrated by his persistent adherence to the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

The prevenient grace makes it possible for man to say yes or no to God's call to conversion.
Anyone saying yes to that call will be justified. This is the first work of grace. Now the second work of grace begins: the sanctifying process that leads to entire sanctification. This is a kind of a doctrine of "two steps". This doctrine is basic to the Pentecostal Movement and to the Charismatic Movement. Out of Wesley's second step, sanctification, the doctrine of spirit-baptism as a second step has developed. In Wesley's thought, however, there was never the notion of the baptism in the Spirit as a second step. It can generally be said that, when Wesley spoke of baptism in the Spirit or of being filled with the Spirit he referred to the experience of justification and new birth. His friend and appointed successor as leader of the Methodist movement had a somewhat different approach. Certainly, John Fletcher agrees with Wesley's doctrine of two steps in the salvation process, and is the most skillful defender of it, but his terminology differs from that of Wesley. He is the one introducing the concept of baptism in holy Spirit and fire as God's saving and sanctifying act of grace. You can observe that when reading his Last Check to Antinomianism. In this pamphlet he is developing his doctrine of Christian Perfection. He says: "If you mean a believer completely baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, in whom he that once visited as a Monitor now fully resides as a Comforter, you are right; the enmity ceases, the carnal mind and body of sin are destroyed, and God is all in all to that just man 'made perfect in love'". (22) He makes the following comment on Matt. 3:13ff: "May not the Sanctifier descend upon your waiting soul, as quickly as the Spirit descended upon your Lord at his baptism?... if the dim flame of a candle can in the twinkling of an eye destroy the flying insect which comes within its sphere, how unscriptural and irrational is it to suppose that, when God fully baptizes a soul with his sanctifying Spirit and with the celestial fire of his love, he cannot in an instant destroy the man of sin, burn up the chaff of corruption, melt the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and kindle the believing soul into pure, seraphic love." (23) Now let's return to the discussion of the passage in Mark for a moment. Walter Grundmann has interpreted the concept of baptismis en puri as an event of judgment. Fletcher, however, looks upon this fire as an expression of God's love, as a sanctifying power, as a "celestial fire of his love", which is a love that works purification of the heart. Wesley sees the sanctification in a christological perspective. In Fletcher a transition into a pneumatological accent is taking place.

7. In the beginning of Methodism, baptism in holy Spirit was interpreted as the sanctifying act of God. The emerging Pentecostal Movement began to lay more stress on the way the Spirit was presented in the Acts. In the narrative of Luke the Spirit is always connected with power and ability. This is why the Pentecostals and the Charismatics see it as very essential to receive the Spirit in order to receive power and in order to be witnesses to Jesus. The gifts of the Spirit are important for the victorious living of the Christian. I think it is of interest to us to notice this shift from a sanctifying to an enabling effect of the baptism in Spirit. (24)

8. I think it proper at this point to return to some introductory remarks on the use of the word charismatic. I mean the statement that everyone, every now and then, hears or reads that the church is "charismatic", and thereby also those who belong to it. We were able at that point to assume that this of course to a certain degree is correct. Thus the question before
1) Is the church charismatic?
2) If "yes", in what way is it so?
3) What is it that gives it its charismatic quality?

a. The word charisma is derived from the word charis, grace, benevolence, kindness, and it is clear that everything that has to do with God's attitude towards man is stamped with charis. Even our very life is a gracefull gift of God.

It is, however, necessary to confine the use of the word to it's strictly biblical frame. In a scriptural and Wesleyan perspective, the charis is always linked with the work of the Holy Spirit. "Wesley frequently referred to the phrase 'the life of God in the soul of man' when talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. Wesley speaks of the Holy Spirit in terms of grace (Holy Spirit and grace are synonymous in all of Wesley's writing), more specifically, prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. (25) It is easy to observe what happened at the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The event recorded Acts 2, are given a background in the first chapter.

1) The suffering and resurrection of Jesus v.3, "He presented himself alive after his passion". The importance of his resurrection is underlined in the election of a successor of Judas, one who "must be a witness with us of his resurrection". v.22.

2) The promise of the Spirit: "Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard from me. For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence". v.4,5. "But ye shall receive power, the Holy Ghost being come upon you". v.8.

3) The task: "and shall be witnesses to me". v.8.

4) The range of the task: "in Jerusalem and in Judaea and Samaria and to the uttermost part of the earth". v.8.

Now the day of Pentecost was come - the birthday of the Church. The promise was fulfilled - the Spirit was poured out. The Old Testament prophecy of the Messianic Age had come true. (Cf. Joel 2, Ezek 36:22 ff.) The praying disciples were graciously given the Holy Spirit: It was a corporate event - the Church was born; it was also an individual experience - "there appeared to them distinct tongues of fire, and it sat upon each of them". v.3.

This is a truly charismatic event. The Spirit is given out of mere grace. There were charismatic manifestations, in particular tongues. The Church of Acts is a charismatic church, where the gifts of the Spirit are indeed in function. "For where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every kind of grace". (26) So the answer to our first question must be: Yes, the Church is charismatic.

b. Our next task is to see in what way it is charismatic. What is it that signifies a charismatic church? Howard A. Snyder gives four distinctive marks to notice:

1) The Church exists and lives by grace. It is "fundamentally a grace-endowed organism, not a legal or primarily institutional structure".

2) The Church lives and functions by the action of the Holy Spirit and the distribution of the Spirit's gifts. You may of course say that the work of the Spirit
embraces a lot more than the distribution of the gifts, but "one cannot omit or downplay the role of the spiritual gifts without doing violence to the New Testament."

3) The charismatic emphasis focuses attention on the Church as community.
   It is interesting to notice that in the Acts, koinonia comes before ekklæsia, but "decline in awareness and use of spiritual gifts and decline in koinonia go together".

4) The charismatic emphasis implies some inevitable tension with institutional expressions of the Church.
   That does not mean that everything that is labelled "charismatic" is of the Spirit, or that institutional structures are wrong, but "whenever the Spirit moves in the Church tension between 'wine' and 'wineskins' will result". (27)

c. The Church has to return to its roots, in Scripture, and in Church History, and - in our case - in the Wesleyan legacy to us as his heirs. The study of Scripture and Wesley must not only be done to "confirm" our opinions already embraced. There needs to be a new awareness of our own lack of power and convincing witness to the world. The true quality of a charismatic Church is seen in this kind of attitude.

9. The charismatic challenge is a challenge to us who are today the heirs of Wesley. What are we going to do with our inheritance? How much of it do we at all understand? I don't mean intellectually, I refer to a deeper insight into the very genius of Wesleyanism. Our inheritance is, what Wesley called "the grand Depositum to the people called Methodists". What kind of a depositum is that?
   Wesley's optimism of grace made it possible to him to take earnestly the exhortations of the Scripture: "Therefore ye shall be perfect (teleioi), as your Father who is in heaven is perfect (teleios)". He could do it without seeing them as exhortations only, but also as promises of power to fulfil. "The Grand Depositum" is simply to teach and live holiness. The following thoughts are taken from W.E. Sangster, The Path to Perfection.
   a. When looking at the Church today you are struck by the fact:
      Many Christians live on a sub-Christian level. That is not a judgement made in spiritual pride, nor yet a judgement which necessarily omits the critic himself. The Church is living far below the New Testament offer and promise. There is not enough difference between the people inside the Church and those outside to be impressive.
      In her multitude of needs, what need, if any, out-tops all the rest? The need for holiness. Holiness is potent and mighty. Like the word of God it "is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit". It rebukes sin.
   b. Many discerning observers of the modern Church are struck by the fact that very many of her members lack any sense of goal. Even to the thoughtful, membership of the body of Christ, is just ....membership. Their eyes are not held by a vision of glory and they are not dumb before the wonder of God's utmost purpose in their lives. There is little about them to suggest resolute pilgrims knowing their goal and holding on their course with unwavering zeal.
   c. There are not a few acute observers of modern Church life and thought who remark upon the wide neglect of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and would explain the lack of spiritual power chiefly by this. That the doctrine is neglected few will deny. Some scholars reject the "personality" of the Spirit and would prefer to be
called "binitarians" than "trinitarians". The mass of Church people receive the doctrines of the Spirit's "personality" and His power "as taught", but their powerless lives remind one of none so much as the men at Ephesus whom Paul challenged with the words, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" (28)

It is high time for Methodism to win back its Grand Depositum. It is time to become a power that points to the close connexion between gifts of the Spirit and holiness. This should be done in a sound theological process dealing with its heritage and with contemporary events.

Lars Svanberg
NOTES.

1. Howard A. Snyder, The Church as holy and charismatic in Wesleyan Theological Journal 1980:2 p 7
2. 2 Cor. 5:18 (Wesley)
5. William Hendriksen, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus p 229
6. Gottfried Holtz, Die Pastoralbriefe p 110, 155 cf. also Hendriksen p 159 f.
7. Wesley, Notes p 788. cf also p 779
8. Wesley, Notes p 884.
13. Ibid p 149.
15. Walther von Loewenich, Die Geschichte der Kirche 1 p 48 f.
18. Works II p 204
19. Works I p 170
20. Lucida Schmieder, Geisttaufe p 93.
21. Works VI p 63
22. Schmieder p 127.
23. Ibid p 128.
25. Robert G. Tuttle, Jr, The Partakers p 20
26. Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses III. xxiv. 1; The Early Christian Fathers p 83