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The phenomenon of networking of Catholic pentecostal communities

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Abstract

The phenomenon of networking of Catholic pentecostal communities

The publication focuses on the phenomenon of networking among Catholic pentecostal communities, which are an important part of the contemporary Church constantly undergoing the process of pentecostalization. The article is divided into three parts. The first chapter discusses terminological issues based on pentecostal spirituality. The second part, through the analysis of specific examples of communities, taking into account their different structures and modes of operation, shows the great diversity within Catholic Pentecostalism. The third part offers an ecclesiological reflection on the phenomenon of networking and the related challenges.

Keywords: Charismatic Renewal, Catholic pentecostal communities, the phenomenon of networking, pentecostal spirituality

Abstrakt

Fenomen usieciowienia katolickich wspólnot pentekostalnych

Prezentowana publikacja koncentruje się na fenomenie usieciowienia katolickich wspólnot pentekostalnych, które stanowią ważny element współczesnego Kościoła, nieustannie podlegającego procesowi pentekostalizacji. Artykuł został podzielony na trzy części. Pierwszy rozdział omawia kwestie terminologiczne, opierając się na duchowości pentekostalnej. Druga część pracy, poprzez analizę konkretnych przykładów wspólnot, uwzględniając ich odmienne struktury oraz sposoby funkcjonowania, ukazuje wielką różnorodność katolickiego pentekostalizmu. Trzecia część to refleksja eklezjologiczna nad fenomenem usieciowienia oraz problematyką z nim związaną.

Słowa kluczowe: Odnowa Charyzmatyczna, katolickie wspólnoty pentekostalne, fenomen usieciowienia, duchowość pentekostalna

Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, has noted that the process of pentecostalization¹ is the most important challenge and change observable in contemporary Christianity, and a reality that cannot be ignored.² It is estimated that one third of all Christians live their faith through pentecostal spirituality,³ with more than 195 million of them being Catholics.⁴ Latin America demonstrates the spectacular strength of the pentecostalization process within the Catholic Church. In Brazil today, as many as 61 million Catholics are Catholics Pentecostals. Following Cardinal Koch's statement, it is worthwhile to examine Catholic Pentecostalism in terms of its terminology and the diversity of its communities, bearing in mind the phenomenon of networking and the emergence of grassroots community networks.

1. Terminology: Catholic pentecostals or charismatics?

Although the terms “Catholic Charismatic Renewal” (CCR), “charismatic communities,” “charismatic movements” or “renewalists” are dominant in English, the term “Catholic pentecostal communities” is used in this article. The term “Catholic Pentecostalism” was used in the early days of the movement, as evidenced by publications such as *Catholic Pentecostals* (Kevin Ranaghan), *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church* (Edward D. O’Connor), *Catholic Pentecostalism* (René Laurentin) and publications by other authors.⁵

¹ The spelling “pentecostalisation” reflects British English; this text uses the American English form “pentecostalization”.

² Cf. Papst trifft Waldenser—Interview mit Kardinal Koch, 10.06.2015, https://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2015/06/11/papst_trifft_waldenser_%E2%80%93_interview_mit_kardinal_koch/de-1150398 (Dec. 09, 2024).

³ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, *Pentekostalizacja chrześcijaństwa. Przewodnik teologiczno-pastoralny* [The Pentecostalization of Christianity. A theological and pastoral guide], Wrocław 2020, p. 36.

⁴ Cf. A. G. Zurlo, T. M. Johnson, P. F. Crossing, *World Christianity and mission 2021: Questions about the future*, “International Bulletin of Mission Research” 45 (2021) no. 1, p. 18.

⁵ See M. Blohm, “As by a New Pentecost”: Embodied Prayer in Catholic Charismatic Renewal Following Vatican II, “Religions” 12 (2021) no. 8, p. 1; M. B. McGuire, Toward a Sociological Interpretation of the “Catholic Pentecostal” Movement, “Review of Religious Research” 16 (1975) no. 2, p. 94; more on instances of use of the name Catholic Pente-

Over time, the term Catholic Pentecostals was abandoned in favour of CCR due to concerns about misunderstandings and accusations of losing Catholic identity.⁶ A certain terminological problem was already noticed in the 1970^s. It was described in the first Malines Document and it referred to the term “Charismatic Renewal”. Attention was drawn to the fact that this term could suggest that the movement had a monopoly on “charismaticity,” whereas every ecclesial community is charismatic.⁷ The terms “The Spiritual Renewal” and “The Renewal” were proposed instead, emphasising the spiritual dimension of the renewal and the source of renewal, i.e., the Holy Spirit, and not just the charismatic aspect.⁸ Today in Poland, the terms “Odnowa” (the Renewal) and “Odnowa w Duchu Świętym” (the Renewal in the Holy Spirit)⁹ are commonly used. However, in many countries, the term CCR is still in use. In the sixth Malines Document, published twelve years after the first one, Cardinal Léon Suenens proposed the term “Pentecostal Renewal,” considering it the most accurate.¹⁰ A similar issue is also worth noting with the term “baptism in the Holy Spirit,”¹¹ which had been replaced for some time by phrases such as “release of the Spirit” or “renewal of the sacraments of initiation,” to avoid associations with the theology of classical Pentecostalism.¹² However, over time, an official document by the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS) Doctrinal Commission was published under the very title *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*,¹³ representing a Catholic reflection on this experience.

costalism, in: V. Ciciliot, *The origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States: Early developments in Indiana and Michigan and the reactions of the ecclesiastical authorities*, “Studies in World Christianity” 25 (2019) issue 3, pp. 250–273.

6 Cf. M. Moran, *The spirituality at the heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement*, “Transformation” 30 (2013) no. 4, pp. 288–289.

7 Cf. L. J. Suenens, *Malines documents (1): Theological and pastoral orientations on the Charismatic Renewal*, Malines 1974, pp. 34–35.

8 Cf. K. Guzowski, *Duch dialogujący [Dialoguing Spirit]*, Lublin 2016, p. 261.

9 In Italy similar “Rinnovamento nello Spirito Santo”.

10 Cf. L. J. Suenens, *Malines documents (6): A controversial phenomenon. Resting in the Spirit*, Dublin 1987, p. 13.

11 Cf. L. J. Suenens, *Malines documents (1)*, pp. 29–33.

12 Cf. L. J. Suenens, *Malines documents (1)*, p. 29.

13 See International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Vatican City 2012.

Until recently, the global Pentecostal Movement was explained using “the Third Wave typology.” The creator of this concept was C. Peter Wagner, a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in California.¹⁴ This division was based on chronology, which ultimately proved to be flawed. It turned out that the so-called “third wave” (assigned to the 1980s) actually preceded the “first” (early 20th century) and “second” waves (1960s) by about 150 years.¹⁵ Therefore, today the literature uses the typology of “Three Types of Pentecostals.”¹⁶ Global Pentecostalism is divided into “Type 1 Pentecostals,” “Type 2 Charismatics,” and “Type 3 Independent Charismatics.” Type 2 includes the mainline churches such as Catholics, Anglicans, Lutherans, and others. Within these churches, prayer groups and communities function as one reality among many. An example of this is the CCR within the Catholic Church. When looking at the three types of Pentecostalism, a certain pattern can be seen: Catholics are categorised as type 2 and are included in the Pentecostal division. The key unifying factor for global Pentecostalism is “pentecostal spirituality,” which combines both charismatic and pentecostal elements. This can be seen, of course, in the prayer meetings of communities practising this spirituality—common songs, preaching techniques, shared literature—despite often significant theological and dogmatic differences.¹⁷ Although the recognition of baptism remains a doctrinal difference among various Christian traditions, it has not proven to be a significant obstacle in the ecumenism that unites Pentecostal Christians, which typically prioritizes shared spiritual experience and relational unity over formal theological consensus.¹⁸ Etymologically, the word ‘Pentecostalism’ is derived from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1), where we read about the feast of

¹⁴ Cf. T. J. Csordas, *A global geography of the Spirit. The case of Catholic Charismatic communities*, in: *The anthropology of global Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism*, eds. S. Coleman, R. I. J. Hackett, New York 2015, p. 131.

¹⁵ Cf. M. Wilkinson, C. Au, J. Haustein, T. M. Johnson, *Brill's encyclopedia of global Pentecostalism*, Boston 2021, p. XVI.

¹⁶ Cf. T. M. Johnson, A. G. Zurlo, *Introducing Spirit—empowered Christianity*, Tulsa (OK) 2023, p. 33.

¹⁷ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, M. Kiwka, *Christian Charismatic Movements: Threat or promise?*, Göttingen 2021, pp. 252–253.

¹⁸ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, From the Council of Churches to the Forum of Christians: a recent development in ecumenism, “*Perspectiva. Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne*” 23 (2024) no. 2, pp. 106–107.

Pentecost, in Greek πεντηκοστή (pentekoste). Pentecostal spirituality in a nutshell is based on the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit and the actualisation and practice of the charisms described in the Scriptures. These include the charisms of speaking in tongues, healing, deliverance, prophecy, etc. Although a distinction is made in the English language between the charismatic and pentecostal elements, when referring to both realities, one speaks of “pentecostal spirituality.”¹⁹ This spirituality permeates all three types of Pentecostalism, within each type according to the doctrine of the respective church.

The most important and foundational theological studies concerning the Catholic Renewal come from the United States, where CCR was born. Today, however, anyone observing the pentecostal reality will notice that the growth of Pentecostalism is most visible on the South American continent. Currently, Brazil stands out as a country where pentecostal spirituality and Pentecostal theology flourish most. In Brazilian theology, the term “pentecostalismo católico” is used as a synonym for “Renovação Carismática Católica”²⁰ and speaking of “Pentecostal Catholicism” is not unusual there. In Poland, when referring to classical Pentecostalism, the commonly used term is derived from the informal colloquial language: “Kościół Zielonoświątkowy” (Pentecostal Church) and “Zielonoświątkowcy” (Pentecostals). This terminology originates from the Polish colloquial name for the feast of Pentecost, i.e., “Zielone Świątki” (literally: “Green Holidays”).²¹ Interestingly, in Polish there also exist the words “pentekostalny” (pentecostal), “pentekostalizm” (Pentecostalism), and “duchowość pentekostalna”²² (pentecostal spirituality). However, these equivalents—if used at all in reference to classical

¹⁹ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, M. Kiwka, *Christian Charismatic Movements*, p. 252.

²⁰ See A. L. da Rosa, *Pentecostalismo católico: Histórico e espiritualidade*, “Revista Unitas” 5 (2017) no. 1, p. 1–12; C. F. B. de Souza, *Catholicism between the tradition and the reinvention: new communities, lay consecrated and eremitic life in the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte*, “HORIZONTE—Revista de Estudos de Teologia e Ciências da Religião” 17 (2019) 53, p. 1243; F. Ferrari Palma, *Pentecostalismo católico e entrecruzamentos políticos, teológicos e sociais com a renovação carismática católica*, “Revista Nandutu” 6 (2018) no. 9, pp. 106–115.

²¹ Cf. J. Linde-Usiekiewicz, P. G. Smith, *Pocket Oxford PWN Polish dictionary*, Oxford University Press 2007, p. 281.

²² See P. Sawa, *Współczesna duchowość chrześcijańska w Polsce. Opis, próba oceny, perspektywy*, “*Studia Pastoralne*” 14 (2018), pp. 280–281.

Pentecostalism—typically appear in specialised literature. In everyday speech, the term “Zielonoświątkowcy” remains dominant. There is also the term “Zielone Świątki,” which refers to the liturgical name of the feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, though this term is rarely used by the younger generation today. Currently, in Catholic theological reflection in Poland, the term “zielonoświątkowy” often carries a pejorative connotation. In theological debates, one may even encounter accusations that Catholic charismatic communities are undergoing a process of “uzielonoświątkowienie”²³ (becoming Pentecostal), which is seen as a sign of the identity and ecclesial issues, suggesting that a given group or community is turning Protestant.

When organising the reality from a theological and pastoral perspective, based on the proposal of Cardinal Suenens,²⁴ it is worthwhile—on the basis of Catholic reflection—to promote the term “Catholic pentecostal communities”²⁵ to describe what is currently referred to in Poland as “charismatic communities” when speaking of groups that live pentecostal spirituality. The term “community” is used here to denote a group of believers functioning within the structures of the Catholic Church, not an independent ecclesial body. This terminology reflects the fact that the communities in question are rooted in pentecostal spirituality, and the term “Catholic” indicates that they function within the Catholic Church. The addition of the word “Catholic” is very important, as it shows that the spirituality of these communities is fully integrated with Catholic theology and tradition, and that it has an ecclesial character. A return to this term in the contemporary context could restore clarity that pentecostal spirituality is not reserved exclusively for denominational Pentecostalism, but that the experience of the “new Pentecost”²⁶ is universal for all Christians, including Catholics.²⁷ The term “Catholic

²³ See A. Kobyliński, Is Pentecostalisation the New Reformation? The Causes and Consequences of the Contemporary Pentecostalization of Christianity, “Przegląd Religioznawczy. The Religious Studies Review” 2017 no. 4, p. 108.

²⁴ Cf. L. J. Suenens, Malines Documents (1), pp. 34–35.

²⁵ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, M. Kiwka, Christian Charismatic Movements: Threat or Promise?, pp. 180–181.

²⁶ See R. Martin, A New Pentecost, Maynooth 2011.

²⁷ Cf. M. Moran, The Spirituality at the Heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, pp. 288–289.

pentecostal communities” may raise concerns among English-speaking readers who associate the word “Pentecostal” exclusively with Classical Pentecostal churches. In the Catholic context—especially outside the Anglophone world—this term also refers to a type of spirituality, not merely denominational affiliation. In line with Cardinal Léon Suenens’s concept of “Pentecostal Renewal,” its use in this article is intentional and theologically grounded, and should not be regarded as a methodological confusion. Terminology derived from the English language does not have to be considered normative. In fact, there is a strong case for terminological pluralism, which should follow the “liberty of choice but unity in meaning,”²⁸ aiming for the best possible representation of reality in a given language.

This article is written from the perspective of Polish theology, and therefore the term “katolickie wspólnoty pentekostalne” (Catholic pentecostal communities) has been chosen. The article follows a consistent writing convention: “Classical Pentecostalism” (capitalised)—when referring to the denomination; “pentecostal spirituality” (lowercase)—when referring to spirituality; “Catholic pentecostal community”²⁹ (lowercase).

2. The diversity of Catholic Pentecostalism

All the terminological discussion so far has been necessary in order to now recognize the importance of applying it. While the CCR is the most well-known movement within the Catholic Church that lives out pentecostal spirituality, it is important to acknowledge that today, using the term “Charismatic Renewal” to describe all communities of this nature can be misleading and overly narrow. At present, there are many communities or groups within the Catholic Church that are not affiliated with the CCR movement, yet they live pentecostal spirituality and have entirely different structures and priorities. These types of communities are often referred to as “charismatic communities.” For this reason, it is worth considering the wider use of the term “Catholic pentecostal

²⁸ L.J. Suenens, *Malines Documents* (1), p. 33.

²⁹ Hereafter, the name may appear in the abbreviated version “pentecostal community” without the term Catholics, as this is the further context.

communities,” which is more inclusive. The year 1967 and the famous “Duquesne Weekend” in Pittsburgh (PA, USA) is regarded as the symbolic beginning of the CCR within the Catholic Church.³⁰ The CCR was spreading across the globe, marking the first stage in the growth of pentecostal spirituality in the Catholic Church. The second stage was the emergence of communities operating in parishes or dioceses that were not formally connected to the CCR movement as such. After that, the first “network communities” began to form, bringing together various individual Catholic pentecostal communities.³¹ To understand the phenomenon of community networking, it is necessary to present the current landscape of Catholic pentecostal reality by highlighting specific examples of existing communities.

2.1. CHARIS

In the early stages of the CCR, the International Communications Office was established to support the growth and coordination of the movement. Over time, this office evolved into ICCRS,³² the first organization officially approved by the Holy See to coordinate the Renewal. Its most important tasks were to foster Catholic unity and identity, and to ensure the proper development of the movement.³³ Meanwhile, in 1990, another papally recognized network was established, i.e., the Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships.³⁴

³⁰ Cf. V. Ciciliot, *The origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States: The Experience at the University of Notre Dame and South Bend (Indiana), 1967–1975*, in: *Transatlantic Charismatic Renewal, c. 1950–2000*, eds. A. Atherstone, J. Maiden, M. P. Hutchinson, Leiden 2021, p. 144.

³¹ Cf. M. Calisi, *The Charismatic Covenant Communities. Historical Aspect*, Rome, 18.05.2022, https://www.academia.edu/92486997/the_charismatic_covenant_communities_historical_aspect_by_matteo_calisi?sm=b (May 23, 2024).

³² See The Pontifical Council for the Laity, Decree, in: ICCRS, *Then Peter stood up...*, Vatican City 2017, pp. 179–181.

³³ Cf. Pontificio Consiglio per i Laici, *Associazioni internazionali di fedeli. Repertorio*, Vatican City 2004, pp. 267–168, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_pc_laity_doc_20051114_associazioni_it.html (Nov. 21, 2024).

³⁴ See Pontifical Council for The Laity, *International associations of the faithful. Directory*, Vatican City 2006, p. 27, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_pc_laity_doc_20051114_associazioni_en.html (Oct. 24, 2024).

The Catholic Fraternity emerged from the initiative of various Catholic pentecostal communities.³⁵ By the end of its existence, the Catholic Fraternity had united 116 member communities across 220 countries.³⁶ A major turning point occurred in 2017 when, at the initiative of Pope Francis, both organizations were merged into CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service).³⁷ CHARIS is based on three main pillars: promoting baptism in the Holy Spirit, ecumenism, and serving the poor. Additionally, it supports the development of charisms in the Church, provides formation for leaders and clergy, organizes conferences, and collaborates with communities worldwide. CHARIS is not a covenant community but a service network supporting the pentecostal reality within the Catholic Church. Its establishment represents the Holy See's approval of the Charismatic Renewal and acknowledgment of its role in evangelization and building ecclesial unity.³⁸

2.2 Magnificat Comunità

A completely different reality is Magnificat Comunità, an association approved by the Holy See in 2024.³⁹ The community began with an experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit among several families in Perugia. In 1979, the newly born Magnificat Community received official approval from the Archbishop of Perugia. The group expanded into other Italian dioceses. Its missionary activity led to the establishment of fraternities in Turkey, Romania, Argentina, Uganda, and Pakistan. Currently,

³⁵ Cf. M. Moran, *The Spirituality at the Heart of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement*, p. 289.

³⁶ M. Calisi, *Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities and Fellowships*, https://www.academia.edu/73685614/catholic_fraternity_of_charismatic_covenant_communities_and_fellowships_catholic_charismatic_renewal?source=swp_share (July 12, 2024).

³⁷ Cf. Francis, *Ad particeps Occursus Internationalis Moderatorum Servitii Internationalis Renovationis Charismatica Catholicae*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 7 (2019), pp. 1075–1078.

³⁸ Cf. Francis, *Ad partipes Occursus provecti a Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 12 (2023), pp. 1370–1372.

³⁹ See Dicasterium pro Laicis, Famiglia et Vita, *Approvazione degli Statuti della Comunità Magnificat*, Rome, 19.01.2024, <https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/dam/laityfamilylife/Documenti/Prefetto/Doc%20Pref%20ITA/Comunit%C3%A0Magnificat%20-%2019.01.2024.pdf> (Dec. 09, 2024).

it is also beginning to take root in Africa and Asia. From a small parish-based community, the initiative has grown into an international network with Papal recognition.

2.3. Obra de Maria

The community Eis Aí Tua Mãe—Obra de Maria was founded in 1990 by Gilberto Gomes Barbosa, who was the last president of the Catholic Fraternity. It combines pentecostal and Marian spirituality. Obra de Maria is active in 62 countries, including Brazil, Portugal, Italy, Israel, and many countries in Africa and Latin America, engaging in both evangelistic and social missions.⁴⁰ The community includes more than 5,100 missionaries, and its headquarters is located in São Lourenço da Mata (Brazil). In 2025, Obra de Maria celebrated its 35th anniversary at the Arena Pernambuco stadium in Recife, with the participation of 110 bishops and 2 cardinals. It is important to note that Obra de Maria is not a papally-recognized association. It has an approved statute by the diocesan bishop as a private association of the faithful. When operating in other parts of the world, the community seeks approval from the local bishop, an example being the decree from the bishop of the Diocese of Leiria-Fátima in Portugal, issued in 2015.⁴¹

2.4. Disciples of The Lord Jesus Christa Franciscan Charismatic Religious Community — DLJC

In 1972, a small group of young women gathered around Mother John Marie Stewart to begin its formation as a religious community.⁴² All of these women were involved in the CCR and shared a common vision of the Church entering into a “New Pentecost,” fulfilling the wisdom and

⁴⁰ Cf. C. A. Cavalcanti, A. C. de Moura, *A comunidade católica Obra de Maria: Formas de sociabilidade, estilo de vida e catolicismo contemporâneo*, “Revista Encontros Teológicos” 33 (2018) no. 1, pp. 97, 99.

⁴¹ See Decreto de Reconhecimento e Erectione Canónica da Comunidade Obra de Maria – Eis Aí Tua Mãe!, 05.11.2015, Leiria, <https://www.leiria-fatima.pt/comunidade-obra-de-maria-eis-ai-tua-mae/> (Oct. 19, 2024).

⁴² Cf. J. M. Stewart, *Laying the Foundation. A history of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Texas 2005, pp. 1–9.

guidance of the Second Vatican Council. In 1979, the community became a public association of the faithful, and in 1991 it became a religious institute adopting the Franciscan Rule. Today, DLJC has 40 sisters who serve through organizing evangelization retreats, faith renewal seminars, intercessory prayer, and spiritual discernment. Each sister vows chastity, obedience, and poverty. DLJC community houses are located in the USA, and since 2024, they have also established mission houses in Mexico and Poland. This is an example of a traditional religious community of sisters—a conventional religious order living out pentecostal spirituality.

2.5. European Network of Communities — ENC

ENC (European Network of Communities) was founded in 1996 and is a network of sovereign Catholic pentecostal communities from across Europe, including some with an ecumenical character. Each community within the network remains autonomous and self-governing. The communities belonging to ENC are often referred to as “third way communities”⁴³ meaning they are neither parishes nor churches in the classical sense of congregations, but something in between. ENC brings together over 3,000 members from across Europe, creating a synergy that no single community could achieve on its own. It provides a space for sharing information, organizing joint meetings, and initiating collaborative efforts. ENC includes communities from both Western and Eastern Europe. The network is a grassroots initiative and currently functions as a civil association under national law. However, it only includes communities that have been approved by their respective bishops. A similar network to ENC is the North American Network of Charismatic Covenant Communities (NAN). Leaders of various US communities formerly affiliated with the Catholic Fraternity sought to continue their fellowship after the fraternity ceased its operations. They also aimed to incorporate an ecumenical dimension into their association, focusing specifically on North America. This network operates in a very similar way to ENC and shares similar goals. Currently, nine major communities belong to this young network. Both NAN and ENC are in contact with CHARIS.

⁴³ See J. Fichtenbauers, *Principles of Leadership in Communities of the Third Way*, film 1'36", 17.05.2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWrn6qa6J-s> (Oct. 19, 2024).

Interestingly, ENC and NAN are also connected with the International Partnership of Ecumenical Charismatic Communities (IPECC).⁴⁴ ENC, as a community network, is connected with the IPECC network, which essentially functions as a network of networks. This affiliation highlights the complex and multi-layered nature of the movement.

2.6. Hallelu Jah Community

The Hallelu Jah Community from Wrocław (Poland) is a Catholic private association of the faithful that was founded in 1983 as a parish group. Its activities quickly expanded beyond the parish, leading to formal registration and dynamic growth.⁴⁵ Hallelu Jah now has three branches located in Warsaw, Stronie Śląskie, and Wrocław-Złotniki. The pillars of the community are the Eucharist, Worship, Evangelisation, and Ecumenism. Since 2022, the community has been a member of the ENC network; previously, it was affiliated with the Catholic Fraternity. In addition to charismatic ministry and organizing prayer meetings, Hallelu Jah is also a formation community. Children and young people are prepared for the sacraments within the community. Members also meet weekly to celebrate the Sunday Mass together. Hallelu Jah consists of adults, young people, children, married couples and families.⁴⁶ The Hallelu Jah association is a flagship example of a “third way community.” It is a Catholic private association of the Archdiocese of Wrocław, although its activity extends beyond the diocese.

⁴⁴ See P. Poppleton, *The Formation of the IPECC*, “New Wine and New Wineskins” 11 (fall 2023), pp. 4–5.

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Borowska, *Katolicka Wspólnota Hallelu Jah. O jej początkach i życiu wspólnotowym oczyma świadków historii i sprzymierzonych* [Hallelu Jah Catholic Community. About its origins and the life of the community through the eyes of witnesses of history and those who are in the covenant], Wrocław 2013, pp. 103–104.

⁴⁶ Cf. W. Wołyńiec, *Podręcznik formacyjny. I rok formacji grup małżeństw i rodzin* [Formation Manual. First year formation of marriage and family groups], Wrocław 2013, pp. 9–10.

2.7. Alleluia Community, Georgia

The Alleluia Community is an ecumenical Christian community founded in 1970, based in Augusta, GA, USA.⁴⁷ Its mission is to support one another in living for the glory of God, guided by the Holy Spirit. The community is built on three core values: Christianity, Ecumenism, and Covenant. It operates, in a sense, with “two lungs”—Catholic and non-Catholic—allowing it to build bridges and facilitate the exchange of gifts between different Christian traditions, fostering mutual growth in faith. In addition to prayer and communal life, and charismatic ministry, there is also space for forming ecclesial identity according to each member’s affiliation. For example, Catholics attend Sunday Mass while non-Catholics participate in their own Sunday services. Community members live in Faith Village, a neighbourhood in South Augusta, forming a kind of a residential area, which enables them daily life-sharing and mutual assistance. They also run an ecumenical school where children can learn in a Christian environment. Among the graduates are today’s priests and religious sisters. The community cooperates with local bishops and clergy, and its activity remains in line with Catholic Church teaching.⁴⁸ The Alleluia Community is part of the NAN network.

3. The phenomenon of networking

It is not possible to include a complete description and history of all communities in this article. The examples presented illustrate “the phenomenon of networking” among Catholic pentecostal communities. The concept of “networking” is used here in a spiritual and pastoral sense. It refers to the diversity, as well as the relational and often interconnected nature of contemporary Catholic communities and groups rooted in pentecostal spirituality, which tend to function in network-like structures, taking the form of umbrella bodies. What may initially appear to an uninformed observer as merely an ecclesial movement of the CCR is in fact incredibly diverse. Within Catholic Pentecostalism, there

⁴⁷ Cf. D. Swenson, *Alleluia!: The Return of the Prototype*, Wrocław 2018, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Cf. A. Calisi, *The community of Jesus and ecumenism*, “Paralellus Revista de Estudos de Religião” 8 (2017) no. 17, p. 23.

are entities with varying statuses: papal associations, international, national, diocesan, parish-based, religious, ecumenical communities, networks of communities, and even a network of networks of communities. There are also communities that draw from pentecostal spirituality, even though it is not their central focus, for example, the Nuovi Orizzonti community.⁴⁹ With Catholic Pentecostalism in mind, the concept of a “network” can be understood in two ways. In a narrower sense, it refers to organizations that bring together communities, such as ENC or NAN. In a broader sense, it refers to autonomous communities that themselves function as a network, operating at the diocesan, national, or international level. In international literature, the term *umbrella body* is also used.⁵⁰ From this perspective, CHARIS is an example of an umbrella that encompasses the entire reality of Catholic Pentecostalism. ENC fosters relationships among autonomous communities, acting as an umbrella for them. Meanwhile, a community such as Obra de María is a network, i.e., another form of umbrella. When we speak of the phenomenon of networking communities, we refer to the entire “galaxy” of such communities and umbrella bodies, i.e., a wide panorama of Catholic Pentecostalism. A particularly noteworthy phenomenon is the networking of communities in the narrower sense—*independent entities* like ENC or NAN. Through the act of forming networks, these autonomous communities, many of which are themselves umbrella bodies, seek unity in this “networking,” which offers them support, shared ministry, safety, and opens new horizons and opportunities for service. The pursuit of unity in terms of communion and doctrine makes the communities gathered in these networks more ecclesial. The criterion of unity is one of the most important aspects of networking because it practically fulfils the message from 1 Corinthians 12:12–13.

The basic model of Catholic pastoral ministry is built on the parish structure, while within Catholic Pentecostalism, two main organizational models can be identified: prayer groups and communities.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Cf. C. Amirante, *Solo l'amore resta. Nuovi Orizzonti nell'inferno della strada*, Milano 2018, pp. 132–132.

⁵⁰ See J. O. Umeh, *Pentecostalism and mission. A missiological Study of Nigerian Pentecostalism*, Rome 2008, p. 214.

⁵¹ Cf. T. J. Csordas, *A global geography of the Spirit*, p. 132.

A prayer group usually operates within a parish, though it often brings together individuals from other parishes as well, therefore its influence goes beyond territorial boundaries. Its main form of activity consists of weekly prayer meetings, supplemented by occasional pastoral initiatives. The community has a more developed structure, deeper member involvement, and shared spaces for life and communal prayer. In this context, the concept of “Third Way Community” is also particularly interesting.⁵² These communities are the fruit of an internal maturation that did not begin with institutional directives, but with the decisions of individuals who recognized a spiritual need and initiated new movements.⁵³ A “Third Way Community” is one whose members are significantly more involved in its life than in the life of the parish in which they live. They often actively participate in the evangelizing efforts of the diocese. It happens that they live out their sacramental lives within the community—from the baptism of their children to the sacrament of marriage. It is important to note that such communities already began to emerge in the early 1980s and received the approval of local bishops. It is true that there is a certain tension between the traditional parish-based pastoral model as the first community and the model represented by “Third Way Communities.” While in the past there were questions about their proper place in the Church, today their value and the new dynamism they bring to Church life are increasingly being recognized.⁵⁴ The existence of movements that transcend parish structures is not a violation of the Church’s fundamental and typical pastoral model.⁵⁵ On the contrary—it enriches and complements it.⁵⁶

⁵² See J. Fichtenbauers, Principles of leadership in Communities of the Third Way, film 1'36", 17.05.2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWrn6qa6J-s> (Oct. 19, 2024).

⁵³ Cf. Bóg i świat. Z kardynałem Josephem Ratzingerem rozmawia Peter Seewald [God and the world. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger is interviewed by Peter Seewald], Kraków 2001, pp. 419–420.

⁵⁴ Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Novo millennio ineunte*, 6.01.2001, 46, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii-apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html (Oct. 17, 2024).

⁵⁵ Cf. A. Siemieniewski, *Pluralizm wspólnot w parafii—postulaty i realia*, “Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny” 11 (2003) no. 1, p. 146.

⁵⁶ Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter *Iuvenescit Ecclesia*, 15.05.2016, 2, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20160516_iuvenescit-ecclesia_en.html (Oct. 18, 2024).

The rise of networks like ENC, NAN, or Third Way Communities may pose some challenges in terms of possible bases in the canonical law or ecclesiastical documents. In practice, however, this can be seen as a sign of the times. Various student ministries create a similar climate. Students also form communities that often weaken their connection to their residential parishes. Today, every parish community is called to enter a “new phase of evangelisation,”⁵⁷ stepping beyond its territorial structures.⁵⁸ Third Way Communities are, in a sense, a clear confirmation of this idea. Benedict XVI, while still Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and with a deep understanding of the nature of Catholicism, emphasised that the Church must remain a living spiritual organism, open to diverse forms of living the faith. New forms, even if they do not initially fit into theoretical frameworks or lack specific norms,⁵⁹ should be ordered and welcomed as a gift. A key aspect of his statement is also the call for “a great deal of internal ecclesial tolerance,”⁶⁰ which allows this diversity to be seen as a natural element of the Church rather than a threat to its unity. This very idea supports the thesis that Third Way Communities and networks of communities have their place in the Church and should not be marginalized. There is a need for ecclesiological reflection on such communities in order to avoid excessive privatization of the faith on the one hand, and to embrace the gift and strengthen their ecclesiality, on the other.

Conclusions

When looking at the whole spectrum of Catholic Pentecostalism, one might tend to put everything in one category, i.e., label every group as the CCR. However, such thinking narrows the reflection on today’s reality of the Church. The choice of the term “Catholic pentecostal

⁵⁷ Congregation for the Clergy, Instruction *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church*, 20.07.2020, 3 <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html> (Oct. 18, 2024).

⁵⁸ Cf. Congregation for the Clergy, Instruction *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church*, 123.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Bóg i świat*, pp. 419–420.

⁶⁰ Cf. *Bóg i świat*, pp. 419–420.

“communities” arises from the need to more accurately express both the spirituality and the lived reality of these groups. In this context, terminological precision carries not only academic significance but also pastoral value, helping to avoid misunderstandings. The varying levels of formalisation within these realities highlight the power of the pentecostalization process. Diversity in unity is perhaps the best way to describe the phenomenon of networking among communities, as well as the existence of networks such as ENC or NAN. Naturally, questions arise about whether such umbrella bodies are replacing traditional parish pastoral units. It is also important to reflect on the phenomenon of “Third Way Communities.” At the same time, one should recognize a certain grassroots phenomenon that has emerged as an initiative of individuals connected to pentecostal spirituality—people who sought mechanisms of support and unity, while also fulfilling fundamental ecclesial criteria, resulting in the creation of networks such as NAN or ENC. The existence of such a reality is a fact, not a theory that may happen.

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