



Rethinking the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement: an African ecclesiological approach

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Abstract

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement accepts and practices the beliefs in the gifts of the Holy Spirit without leaving the fundamental teachings of a mainline tradition. Similarly, in the Catholic Church, this is a movement that has embraced the gifts of the Holy Spirit without leaving Catholicism. The movement has been influenced largely by the protestant tradition, particularly the Pentecostal movement, hence some resemblances with Pentecostal ecclesiological practices such as charismatic worship, prophecy, divine healing, and speaking in tongues. Previous studies on this movement have only looked at the various challenges or attacks on the movement such as shifting their focus away from the church ordinances and sacraments. What is new in this article, is a reflection on the practices of the charismatic renewal in offering a relevant African ecclesiology. This will be done by locating this article within an African ecclesiological approach which when applied to the charismatic renewal makes the movement relevant to an African context.

Keywords: Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, Catholic Church, Pentecostalism, African ecclesiological approach, church sacraments

Introduction

The various challenges that exist among Catholics in Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the 21st century are well-researched. Among these recent challenges are the objections concerning charismatic worship, protestantisation and pentecostalisation of the liturgy in the Catholic Church. In addition, there are opposing views on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, new evangelisation, new forms of spirituality, piety, and pastoral work as practised by charismatic renewals. However, what remains under research is the discussion on the relevance of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement as a relevant way of conducting church in an African context. This article seeks to bridge this gap through an African ecclesiological approach. This will be achieved by outlining and framing an African ecclesiological approach to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. The influence of the Pentecostal movement in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement will be highlighted to identify the core beliefs of charismatic renewals. The opposing views on the charismatic renewal in the catholic church will be discussed to show that these have contributed to cessations of membership in the church. The last section of the article proposes the African



ecclesiological approach as a framework that makes charismatic renewal relevant in an African context.

Framing an African ecclesiological approach

Within Christian theology, ecclesiology refers to the components of the church including the leadership, church polity, salvation, and other practices in the church. According to Kgatele (2020:1) “Ecclesiology is the study of church behaviour about the way a specific church views issues of importance like salvation, the work of Christ, doctrine, and others”. An African ecclesiological approach in this article refers to the way the church and its practices are contextualised to be relevant in the African context. According to Mwambazambi (2011), an African ecclesiology helps the African church to address the needs of the African people by offering an ecclesiology that is liberating. Orobator (1996:268) adds that the goal of an African ecclesiology is “the emergence of an African church that is a full-fledged community of faith adapted to the circumstances of its time and place”. In other words, any ecclesiology that is not relevant to the context and the challenges of the people in Africa is not African. Chukwu (2011) explains that relevant African ecclesiology will not condemn African cultures and traditions as being barbaric in the same way western missionaries did when ministering in the African context. In this article, an African ecclesiological approach is used to illustrate that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in an African context can offer an ecclesiology that is relevant to African people today, especially the youth. The proposal is not instead of being dismissive of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, the Catholic church should be embracing it to minister in a more relevant manner to Africans. In the next section, there is a proper discussion on the background of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement from a South African context.

Background to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

Research undertaken by Zerr (1986) indicates that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement originated at the beginning of the 20th century. Zerr (1986) further argues that small Bible-sharing groups began to pray that what happened on Pentecost (the experience of the power of the Holy Spirit and the exercise of his gifts in one’s Christian life) should happen to them (Zerr,1986: 293). They wanted to have similar experiences to the Apostles in the early church who were empowered with the Holy Spirit and received the gift of speaking in tongues, prophesying, healing, and performance of other miracles. Omenyo (2002: 91), states that the charismatic movement has more attraction for younger people and formally educated people. Kasomo (2010) attributes the beginning of the movement within all kinds of mainline churches, from the Baptist Church to the Catholic Church, where the ecstatic experience of the Holy Spirit is celebrated and the Charismata are used during the meetings. Kasomo (2010) records that some Charismatic leaders emerged and they became famous and influential all over the world as so-called “televangelists” in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, these Charismatic leaders became famous through their instrumental use of the media, especially television, to communicate their religious message to a broader public. Gundani (2001: 136) attests to this when he says “since the early 1990s there has been a marked increase in the use of the media by churches as a means of disseminating information to targeted audiences”. Today the capacity of using media has now been increased by the use of multi-media technologies that are rapidly being taken over by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

Although some scholars such as Wambugu and Kimaru (2018) do not agree on the date of the beginning of the movement, Zerr (1986) shows that since its emergence in the United States of America in 1967, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement has made massive inroads into the Catholic Church affecting its conventional way of doing things. Among other impacts, is that the movement has been joined by millions of Catholics, including many religious, clergy, and bishops (Matsikidze, 2015, Matambo, 2015 & Ciciliot,2019). Mudyiwa



and Mokgoatšana (2021) affirm that the Catholic Charismatic Movement was officially founded in 1967 in the United States of America when a group of Catholic and Methodist university students and staff prayed separately and instantly received gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as prophecy, faith healing and speaking in tongues. This “chemistry” was upheld as amazing and unprecedented experiences that were epoch-making and life-changing, not just for these pioneer charismatics but for Christianity as a whole. Thus, “as the electrifying account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a manner that resembled the biblical Pentecostal episode in all its essentials gossiped around, many colleges, universities, parishes, and other Roman Catholic institutions were also eager to make similar experiments” (Mudyiwa & Mokgoatšana, 2021:6).

According to Wambugu and Kimaru (2018), given its influence, Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement can no longer be dismissed as merely the isolated works of the few “over-enthusiastic” Christians. Hence, some scholars such as Magesa (2004), feel that it is imperative that over time the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement could provide a new paradigm in the Church’s pastoral mission and evangelization because the reality is that the movement is gradually taking off and developing massively, especially in the continent of Africa. In this regard, it is a huge demand that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement needs scholarly attention because of its peculiar appeal among the Catholic laity compared to the reluctance of approval by some episcopacies.

The influence of Pentecostalism in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

It was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who dealt with the issue of the influence of Pentecostalism in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. Although he wrote his book in his language, it was however translated into English by Marek Przewczewski to accommodate everyone who would wish to read it. Cardinal Ratzinger alludes that:

...the phenomenon of Pentecostalism, born in the Protestant world, now became, in a different way, indigenous to the Catholic Church in the form of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. While on the one hand a wave of rationalism and new enlightenment shook the Catholic Church and in various ways settled like hoarfrost on the life of faith, there was in the communities of the charismatic renewal, as in other movements which formed and perceived themselves as gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church, a new experience of Pentecost, a joyful awareness of the Spirit’s presence (Ratzinger, 2002: 6).

In their combined reflection, Messori and Ratzinger (2005: 136) indicate that the significance of the Holy Spirit is rediscovered today, not only in theory but, it is also in practical life.

The Pentecostal movement first emerged within the Holiness churches and was institutionalised around an ecstatic experience called the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ (Piepkorn, 1977). Sawa (2021) adds that broadly understood Pentecostal spirituality is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit’s actual actions and a way of the Church’s renewal. The latter is the main influence in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. During his Pontifical Office, the late Blessed Pope John Paul addressed the Council of the International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Office, by confirming that the realm was a particular gift of the Holy Spirit and did a lot of good, respecting the entire heritage of the tradition. The late Pope further articulated that most importantly, it is in line with the Church’s nature: “In the history of the Church, the *old* and the *new* are always closely interwoven. The *new* grows out of the *old*, and the *old* finds a fuller expression in the *new*” (John Paul II, 1994).

According to John Paul II, (1988: 167), Pentecostal spirituality brings sanctification and renewal of the Church, primarily through praise, thanksgiving, and intercession, leading to



renewed evangelization. In addition, the Pope teaches that the new quality in spirituality manifests itself in biblical mentality; more conscious attitudes to the covenant of baptism; greater involvement of believers in the prayer, liturgy, and life of the Church; obedience to the bishops; and building a “culture of Pentecost” (John Paul II, 2002). At the same time, Pentecostal spirituality offers the enthusiasm of the faith, which is desired and authenticates evangelization, serving as a testimony of hope arising from the experience of God’s love (Sawa, 2021). Sawa (2021: 5) believes however, that it is the charismatic communities that give the Church a lot of joy in the faith, seen not only as a way of life but also as a way to build an intense relationship with God and this indeed helps to strengthen inner life. Therefore, Christian communities must become genuine *schools of prayer*, where the meeting with Christ is expressed not just in imploring help but also in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening, and ardent devotion, until the heart truly falls in love” (John Paul, 2002).

A great number of priests and lay people in Africa have embraced these new ways, mostly in connection with divine healing or faith healing (Akoko, 2007: 49-51). It has been noted further that many members of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (PCCs) are involved in the healing ministry and openly offer their services to those in need, in addition to ministering to those who come of their own accord (Bayiha, 2012). In the realisation of how many people need a holistic healing approach, there has been a clarion call within the global South for an integral and liberating healing ministry to be introduced in the Roman Catholic Church as the faithful are struggling to cope with life in many different ways. Much of the healing that is performed is in the areas where people are faced with poor living conditions and challenges such as unemployment, poor housing, service delivery, and infrastructure. This occurs in urban areas and cities whereby dwellers are more inclined to search for liberating healing than village dwellers. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church, globally, oversees this ministry under the watchful eye of the church’s hierarchical structure. In addition, disciplinary measures have to be observed which indicate who can become involved and how liberating healing has to be carried out (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 2000). However, when these measures are carried out, some priests particularly younger ones, feel that they are undermined by the bishops and senior suffragans, including some of the old members of the Church. The challenge in this regard is how to provide a framework in terms of which the Roman Catholic Church can understand and perform this integral, holistic, and liberating ministry meaningfully, particularly in the global South.

The core practices of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

Charismatic renewal takes its name from the Greek word *charisma*, a gift. In the New Testament, this gift involves all that God gives us in his grace through Jesus. But most often this word is used for a specific way the Holy Spirit shows himself within the Christian community. The apostle Paul uses the picture of the body when he writes about spiritual gifts. Christians are members of the body; Jesus is the head. Just as parts of the human body have different functions, so Christians experience a variety of spiritual gifts. These are given by the Holy Spirit to strengthen the body of Christ in its worship, witness, and service. The church or *ecclesia* is in essence the nation of God and should include all believers who have diverse gifts available to them through the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit (*Paraclete*) (Nicolaidis, 2010; 2012). At the heart of the charismatic renewal stands the conviction that the full range of spiritual gifts in the New Testament is meant for the church today as it was 2000 years ago. This belief challenges a century of traditional teaching that certain ‘supernatural’ gifts (such as prophecy, healing, and speaking in tongues) were only for the first generation of Christianity.

Anderson (1991: 70) underpins that charismatic movements are “burdened to bring renewal to all the churches whether within WCC, and whether Catholic or Protestant” (Anderson, 1991:70). Thus, the fundamental role of this renewal is to revive the elements of the gifts of



charismata that are enabled through the workings of the Spirit of God in the Church (Mathole, 2005). In other words, the mandate of charismatic movements is meant to equip the Church for its witness, hence, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movements seeks to revive them for the benefit of the entire Church of God. This approach is similar to the Catholic Church which in its Traditional teaching emphasises that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement may be properly assessed if the Church keeps in mind what is needed for a renewal of the Church. Despite the different denominational differences, there are still theological insights they all share and teachings that are central to their common theology. Without mentioning all of them, we shall select a few of them. Thus, the core practice comes into the picture:

Belief in Jesus Christ

Here all Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movements of all denominations place Christ at the core of the teaching and activities. They also portray Jesus as Lord and Saviour who was sacrificed for the redemption of the world and who liberates us from death through His glorious resurrection. For these movements, Christ is the one who mandates Christians to mediate the salvation of humanity in the world. As a rationally-driven theology:

A strong emphasis (is laid) on the lordship of Christ. Those who have experienced baptism in the Spirit of Christ generally speak in terms of surrender to Christ as the Lord of their life. They freely acknowledge that He is the One who immerses them in the Spirit; their experience makes them sensitive to His presence within them. 'Jesus is Lord,' the motto of believers in the early church, equally the motto of Charismatic believers. (Smith, 1992:127).

This Christ is the crucified one, who took the world's sin, corruption, condemnation, and death upon himself to become God's appointed sacrificial substitute, for our redemption (Mathole, 2005). The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement maintains that Jesus went to the cross so that all humanity should have the prospect of a better life by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.

Belief in Baptism

Mathole (2005) envisages that believers are engaged in a spiritual battle with the powers of evil. Consequently, many Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movements are involved in ministries of spiritual healing, exorcism, and deliverance" (Smith, 1992:129). In addition, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement perceive baptism as the Spirit which deepens people's conviction of the nearness of God to them. The members testify about having experienced a sense of having been in the presence of God (Mathole, 2005). O'Connor (1975: 141) asserts that "the most radical effect can only be called simply the knowledge of God. For those who have been touched by the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal experience, God is no longer a vague, distant figure, but a reality encountered. He has demonstrated his reality to them." Mathole (2005) explains that God's reality is a phenomenon that assures them of God's care and love for them as they continue with their challenging earthly existence. As a result, members of Charismatic Renewal express their devotion to prayer arising from this experience of Spirit baptism. They have a growing new spontaneity and intensity in prayer (Mathole, 2005). The fundamental belief that cuts across Catholic Charismatic Movements, is that the same Biblical Holy Spirit still bestows the assumption that gifts of the Holy Spirit underlined in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 12:1–11) (2000 years after Christ) as they were on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–31) and among the early Christian community (Mudyiwa & Mokgoatšana, 2021). According to Matsikidze (2015), the main aim of the Catholic Charismatic Movement has always been to refresh, re-energize and re-vitalise the entire



Roman Catholic Church through the infinite power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit who is our Comforter.

Belief in the Holy Scriptures

The Charismatics Renewal movement has a passion for the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is a focal point in their spirituality and a major source of their teachings. It is also a common practice that the “Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement find that their experience has given them a deeper love and reverence for the Bible as God’s Word” (Smith, 1992: 127). One cannot separate them from the Word that has become such a part of their traditions that members enthusiastically carry the Bible along with them wherever possible, even when commuting daily (Mudyiwa & Mokgoatšana, 2021). Powerfully charged language is read, spoken, written, memorized, prophesied, translated, pinned up on signs in houses and cars, stripped of semantic meaning in glossolalia and, so it is believed, embodied not only in the flesh of Christ but also in that its followers which they believe it is the inerrant, accurate and inspired Word of God (Myers, 2011).

Belief in Conversion

According to Fiedler (1994: 321) “Conversion... is the impact of the *kerygma* upon the whole man, convincing his intellect, warming his emotions, and causing his will to act with the decision”. Matambo (2015) states that conversion refers to a person confessing his or her private sins and acknowledging Jesus as Lord and Saviour (Romans 10: 9 –10) upon his or her conviction by the Holy Spirit when exposed to the gospel. Matambo (2015) also adds that this conversion is popularly called the ‘born-again’ experience which occurred in (John: 3). Moreover, the believer receives the power of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying gifts to equip him or her for Christian life and service (Mudyiwa, 2016).

Belief in the healing

In current times there are many people whose helplessness compels them to seek divine healing intervention. The need to be healthy is one of the most urgent needs of ordinary people because divine healing is an alternative therapy. For this reason, the Charismatic Renewal members embrace these needs wholeheartedly. Upon discovering Jesus’ key teachings on love and forgiveness, spiritual healing imparts hope to the faithful.

Opposing views on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

Old members perceive this movement negatively and are more conservative. Others think that they are more like cults (Ciciliot, 2019). The suspicion of charismatic renewals as cults according to Daniel (2010:173) is based on the following “Some groups meet exclusively in certain places and times and worship in ways that are sometimes suspicious to the established Catholic Church. The practice of healing, deliverance, agape, trans-night prayers, and many other practices are also suspicious”. In addition, this view comes mainly from the senior priests in critiquing young priests. Furthermore, this view is based on witnessing some experiences of evil spirits being cast out of the people through prayer and fasting particularly during night prayers (Dowd & Sarkissian, 2017:30). This reference is also made by those who can witness some miracles and others pneumatic experiences among the charismatic renewals. However, charismatic renewals are not cults but are following Pentecostal experiences of fervent prayer of healing and deliverance. Wambuku and Kimaru (2018:158) explain that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

.... is not a sect/ cult nor a new denomination but an experience of Catholics who are already committed to the faith. This is evidenced by their regular participation in the sacramental life. In other words, the Catholic



Charismatic Renewal Movement is an activation of faith to those who are already Catholics but willing to express it more profoundly.

But, some Catholics do not understand these experiences as emanating from the baptism of the Holy Spirit as Pentecostals understand them. Nkwocha (2019) explains that it is not the evil spirits working among the charismatics but the works of the Holy Spirit as they believe in a direct relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Calisi (2011) adds that through the Holy Spirit and prayer life the Holy Spirit activates the gifts among believers, hence there are manifestations of miracles and other pneumatic experiences. Thus, what others may consider cultic acts, to Pentecostals, is the work and the move of the Holy Spirit among believers. Enegho (2020:3) explains that the Holy Spirit is considered to be the foundation of Pentecostal theology, hence Pentecostals cannot do without the Holy Spirit.

They also think that charismatic renewal leans towards prosperity gospel in neo-Pentecostalism. The reason for this assertion is that charismatics do preach the message of prosperity to their followers. The prosperity gospel can change the attitude of the Catholics who are more inclined to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement to think differently when it comes to the issue of giving and receiving (Dowd & Sarkissian, 2017:10). This is because instead of focusing on the prosperity gospel, a Catholic teaching emphasises human suffering more than the accumulation of material things as propagated by the prosperity message. Dowd and Sarkissian (2017:10) explain that “Catholic teaching emphasizes how human suffering can be sanctifying to a greater degree than Pentecostalism”. Some think that the prosperity gospel is more focused on an individual's needs than on the people's needs.

Some conservative Catholics view the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement as moving away from the original church ordinances and sacraments within the Catholic church. According to Pace (2020:7), they have a “distrust on the part of parish priests and bishops of the Dioceses aligned to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. They saw in this movement an alarming sectarian tendency and worrying approach to Protestantism”. Some think that there is too much presence of pneumatic experiences and an absence of formal and credal ceremonies among charismatic renewals (Nkwocha, 2019). However, among charismatics what is important is not the credal ceremonies but rather the presence of the Holy Spirit. Hence, according to Nkwocha (2019:253):

where credal confession and formal ceremony have sometimes appeared to be absent in Charismatic and Pentecostal spirituality, there is often the presence of experiential, spontaneous, emotional, honest, deeply personal, and life-transforming encounters. This form of Charismatic and Pentecostal theology and praxis makes them Spirit-filled groups and churches, as evident in their pneumatology, pneumatocentric ecclesiology, and liturgy.

However, some opposing views come because some charismatics who have not been trained as clergy do insist on ministering to the people without proper training. Daniel (2010:175) says that “Some over enthusiastic members of the movement tend to duplicate or replace the clergy in preaching, teaching, etc. Some even claim to be superior to the ordinary clergy in the task for which the latter are specifically trained”.

The opposing views discussed above have caused some of the priests from the Catholic church to leave to start their own churches. Some of the young priests leading the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement left the Catholic church because they were not supported by the church. In South Africa, there are dioceses such as the Diocese of Bethlehem and Pretoria in South Africa where young people left to start their own charismatic churches. Surprisingly some of the priests who left the Catholic church are still using the sacraments of the Catholic church and practicing their priesthood because of their ordination. This means that the roots



of Catholicism are important to them, all they needed was the support from senior leaders to adapt to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement. Because some of these young priests are truly trained in the Catholic church and have experience working with the church to act in a way that disgraces the church is seen as unacceptable (Wambuku & Kimaru, 2018:158).

An African ecclesiological approach in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

It is clear that to avoid cessations and breakaways of Catholics who start their charismatic churches, they should renew from the inside. In addition, an internal renewal helps keep the young people more aligned with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement than the old people. According to Daniel (2010:172):

The bishop, priests, and catechists do agree that because of the work of the Charismatic Renewal, the number of people coming for sacraments has significantly increased. Some Christians who were objectively “bad” people have now committed Christians. It was also noted that the movement has helped reduce the number of Catholics joining the sects because they seem to have been introduced in the Catholic Church, which attracts people to sects.

To embrace the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in the Catholic church, an African ecclesiological approach is proposed as a suitable one for the relevance of the church in Africa. The kind of renewal in the Catholic church according to Mudyiwa and Mokgotsana (2021:5) comes “Through their knowledge of supernatural realities, coupled with a display of some healing skills and techniques that demonstrate the presence of the Holy Spirit at work”.

In Africa, and globally, where so many people are suffering due to issues such as unemployment, poverty, civil-strife, natural disasters and other social ills, the message of prosperity is relevant to them. However, there should be a refocus from prosperity that benefits a few individuals to prosperity that benefits the whole community. In addition, St. Paul understood that when our suffering is united with Christ's suffering it is a redemptive privilege. The mission of Christians is to become like Christ by patiently uniting our suffering to Christ: “For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too” (2 Corinthians 1:5). In addition, such prosperity should have a paradigm shift from only benefitting the pastors and families to benefitting the whole church and ultimately the community. Nkwocha (2019:257) explains that prosperity preaching extends beyond material wealth to include such issues as the renewal of individuals' and communities' spiritual relationship with God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, the renewal of all forms of brokenness, the establishment of health, the reversal of economic misery, and individuals' and communities' political and social well-being.

The catholic church should see the possibility of its members being able to embrace the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement without forsaking their creeds and doctrines. They should view the charismatics as making these adjustments to be relevant to the African people and their contextual problems. Indeed, the gospel should be able to reach out to the people and society in all their different needs. According to Wambuku and Kimaru (2018:163) “for an African mind, salvation means the fulfillment of the life here which includes prosperity, wellbeing, and liberation from disease and all misfortunes”. Therefore, the problem is not the prosperity message per se but how some pastors hijack this message to meet their own needs. Lederle (1986:65) explains that the “teaching is meant to be a legitimate protest against the total spiritualising of the Gospel but some degenerates into materialism by planting the concept in people's minds that we give to God to get his material blessings”. There should therefore be a balance between people's faith and the prosperity gospel, one should not be used to exploit the people of God (Bayiha, 2012). When the balance is struck, there will be a



meaningful role played by the charismatic movement in the catholic church which brings relevance to an African ecclesiological context (Kgatle & Lephoto, 2022).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article addressed the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in a South African context through suggesting an apposite African ecclesiological approach. The article provided a background to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement to evaluate their main characteristics and how they function in a South African context. In addition, the article evaluated the influence of Pentecostalism in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement by looking at some similarities they have with the Pentecostal movement. This was done by also looking at the core practices of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement as these are similar to a certain extent to the Pentecostal experiences. However, it was also found that there are many attacks launched against the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement within the Catholic church. To deal with these attacks and other negative connotations against the movement, this article suggests an African ecclesiological approach. Through this approach, the Catholic church may discover that the movement is not there to cause chaos in the church but rather to become relevant to especially younger African people. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement assists the church in ministering relevantly to the young people who would possibly have left the Catholic church because of its conservative nature. Besides, in an African context, the people are already used to expressing their faith in a way that accommodates their Africanness in terms of culture and tradition. This means that the music, sermons, and other activities in the church should reflect the African life in form and expression.

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