

Charisma, Gender and ‘Glocality’: Catholic Charismatic Women in the 1970s

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Abstract This article addresses the role of women in Catholic charismatic renewal, with reference to the movement in both the United States and England. It examines the renewal in relation to a wider mid-century context in which the role of Catholic women was being re-evaluated. It looks closely at the role of women in Catholic prayer groups, showing how while a ‘rediscovery’ of the Spirit contributed, broadly, to a democratising tendency where the laity were concerned, the place of women was contested. It shows how the dominant approach to gender to emerge in the United States – a patriarchal model linked to high profile charismatic ‘covenant communities’ in the upper Midwest cities of South Bend and Ann Arbor – did not have the same influence in England, where a more egalitarian approach tended to develop. This study of gender in the Catholic charismatic renewal is therefore also a case study of the ‘glocality’ of the Catholic charismatic movement.

Keywords Charismatic Renewal. Gender. Catholicism. Glocality. Notre Dame. Covenant Communities.

Summary 1 An Englishwoman in South Bend: Ford and the CCRSC (Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Committee). – 2 ‘Glocality’ and Gender in Catholic Charismatic Renewal: The English Experience. – 3 Conclusions.



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In 1970, the theologian Josephine Massyngberde Ford published *The Pentecostal Experience*, one of the first scholarly books to defend the experience of Baptism with the Spirit in the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.¹ “We must notice”, she asserted, “that the title of St. Luke’s second work is ‘Acts of Apostles’, not ‘*The Acts of the Apostles*’. Acts is meant to be a protocol for the normal life of the Church, just as the Gospels show Christ who is to be imitated by each of his followers”.² Ford had entered the ‘pentecostal’ experience of the Spirit at the end of the 1960s, following an extended period of dryness in her prayer life. Many others – both staff and students – at Notre Dame had the same experience around this time. Ford believed that a recovery of life in the Spirit was addressing a void left by “the decline in such public devotions as vespers, rosary recitations, and novenas”.³ It is likely that her interest in the Spirit had roots in her experiences before joining the Faculty of Notre Dame University in 1965. After finishing her doctoral studies in her native England, Ford had joined the staff at Makerere University College in Uganda, and a plausible reading of *The Pentecostal Experience* is that time spent in this region made her more open to supernatural realities. She said of the everyday existence of evil spirits it is “difficult not to believe what one has experienced”, describing how where the Holy Spirit was working “evil spirits or the devil often make direct attacks or are very active in certain insidious ways”.⁴ Ford became unequivocal in her endorsement of charismatic experience and practice for the contemporary Catholic Church.

By 1970, the small university city of South Bend, just four hours’ drive from Chicago, was a global hub for Catholic charismatic renewal. *The Pentecostal Experience* described the potential of charismatic prayer groups, arguing that their strength was the recognition of the Ephesians 4 claim that “some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”.⁵ Ford also saw potential pitfalls, like fundamentalism in the interpretation of Scripture or the human tendency to confuse the supernatural with the psychological. Another was the risk of slipping into parallel regimes of authority. “The charismatic movement”, she warned, “can give rise to much suffering”, and one problem was that certain in-

1 Later, Ford appears to have preferred the spelling Massyngbaerde. The following three paragraphs draw on O. Garvey, “In Memoriam: Josephine Massyngbaerde Ford”, and on Schaal, “Waiting to Die”.

2 Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 9.

3 Cf. the report of Ford’s teaching in “Pentecostalism is Filling Spiritual Void”.

4 Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 55.

5 Ephesians 4: 11-12 (New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition).

dividuals could become prominent and even “vie with the authority of the hierarchy”. The Ephesians 4 list of ministries, she asserted, made no reference to leaders. Rather, in the New Testament epistles, leadership was assumed to belong to “the bishops, the presbyters and, possibly, the deacons and deaconesses”. The answer, she argued, should be “to rotate leadership among both men *and* women in the prayer meetings”.⁶

Ford’s italicised ‘and’ was doing some heaving lifting. This article addresses the role of women in Catholic charismatic renewal, with reference to the movement in both the United States and Ford’s country of birth, England. In both places, from mid-century the role of women was being re-evaluated. These decades, for example, had seen greater involvement of lay women in the liturgical movement.⁷ In her transatlantic ministry, the English Catholic publisher Maisie Ward is one prominent example of a woman involved in the propagation of the lay apostolate.⁸ At Vatican II, while some in the hierarchy appeared to hold on to an ideal of female domesticity, others – such as Archbishop Hallinan of Atlanta – urged a more prominent place for women, including consideration of the possibility of their entrance to the diaconate.⁹ As the historian Mary J. Henold writes of the NCCW (National Council of Catholic Women), “they used the dual influences of the women’s movement and Vatican II to fling open the doors to a larger world of adult responsibility, committed female leadership, and engaged spirituality”.¹⁰ Change was in the air, and with this came tension. Margaret Mealey, of the NCCW, wrote in 1966: “By the action and pronouncements of Vatican II, women have been given their wings. But too many pastors and bishops are reluctant to let them fly”.¹¹ Neither were the laity convinced about women’s leadership: a 1979 poll in England showed that only 47% of Catholics supported the idea of women priests.¹² It was this flux concerning understandings of gender roles that charismatic prayer groups had to negotiate. While the ‘rediscovery’ of the Spirit contributed, broadly, to a democratising tendency where the laity were concerned, the place of women was to be contested.

The transatlantic setting and comparative approach of this article is adopted not primarily because of Ford’s American-English connections, but rather because of the transnational character of the

⁶ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 59.

⁷ Harmon, “The Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action”.

⁸ Harmon, *There were also Many Women There*, 134-50.

⁹ Chinnici, *American Catholicism Transformed*, 280-1.

¹⁰ Henold, ““This is Our Challenge! We Will Pursue It””, 199.

¹¹ Quoted in Henold, ““This is Our Challenge!””, 197.

¹² Clements, Bullivant, *Catholics in Contemporary Britain*, 86-7.

Catholic charismatic renewal. Its media and leaders moved in kinetic exchange between these contexts, with the United States the primary exporter. We shall see that the dominant approach to gender to emerge in the United States – a patriarchal model linked to high profile charismatic ‘covenant communities’ in the upper Midwest cities of South Bend and Ann Arbor – did not have the same influence in England, where a more egalitarian approach tended to develop. Alongside this, analysis of the English material draws upon the newsletters and magazines, hitherto unused by historians, of the National Service Committee for Catholic charismatic renewal in that country.¹³ What follows offers insights into the range of understandings of gender, ministry, and leadership amongst Catholic charismatics. In doing so, it also provides a case study on the ‘glocality’ of the Catholic charismatic movement; and how, as David Lyon says of contemporary religion (with reference to the theoreticians such as John Urry), “both local distinctiveness and global generality are simultaneously apparent, in interconnected ways”.¹⁴

1 An Englishwoman in South Bend: Ford and the CCRSC (Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services Committee)

In the years before she published *The Pentecostal Experience*, Ford had become one of only two women in the Faculty; and three years later, the first woman – a New Testament and Rabbinic scholar – at Notre Dame to receive tenure (she later also became the first woman to file a case of sex discrimination against the university, asserting that less qualified men were achieving promotion). She was also the first laywoman to be appointed to the Catholic Biblical Association of America.¹⁵ Ford had experience of breaking glass ceilings. In order to understand the tensions over gender amongst United States’ Catholic charismatics, the experience of Ford offers a telling case study.

The Pentecostal Experience very deliberately adopted throughout an inclusive terminology, and although gender is not a primary theme, it does operate close to the surface. A section of the book examined charismatic experience in the history of the Church, listing the likes of Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas as examples of individuals who had undergone “the full flowering of their apostolate in Christ” and “what Catholics call ‘a second

¹³ Private archive of National Service Committee (hereafter: NSC papers), in possession of the Author.

¹⁴ Lyon, “Wheels Within Wheels”.

¹⁵ “Woman Scripture Expert Talks Here”.

conversion' or 'a release of the spirit'.¹⁶ However, in Ford's *ressourcement*, the leading example – a person “in whom the ministries of the Spirit... were fully realized” – was Catherine of Siena.¹⁷ Ford offered an assessment of Catherine's ministry in relation to the gifts of the Spirit listed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. In this analysis, she recognised in Catherine the gift of wisdom and knowledge, describing how “professional theologians came to interview her, hoping to catch her upon some theological point, especially misinterpretation of scripture, but they always went away more impressed with her wisdom and understanding”. She afforded Catherine also with the gifts of faith, healing (for example, the healing of her confessor from the plague), prophecy, and discernment of spirits. It was not clear, Ford admitted, whether Catherine received the gift of tongues; but she reminds readers that Catherine reportedly “learned to understand the Latin office quite suddenly”.¹⁸ Catherine was an inspirational figure to Ford for a further reason: now recognised as a doctor of the Church, her *Dialogue on Divine Providence* had been influential to prelates, and she was even given the opportunity to present her learning to the pope and cardinals, which Ford pointedly reminded readers was “a privilege denied to women at Vatican II”.¹⁹ For Ford, the Spirit's work in Catherine of Siena had empowered her to influence the entire Church.

Ford's views on the appropriate status of women in charismatic renewal were encompassed in a wider interpretation of the role of the laity. Her pentecostal *apologia* addressed their function in the charismatic prayer group. She responded to the objection: “Instead of sharing religious experience, should it not be kept secret or even not ‘indulged in’ at all?”. In answer, she referred to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, a line of argument used more widely for equality for lay women in the post-Vatican II environment. Ford reasoned that prayer groups offered a context for the one body ministry described by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13 (“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were made to drink of one Spirit”). For Ford, then, a central point was that the Catholic pentecostal prayer group should be democratising: “it means that everyone, *regardless* of sex, age, nationality, or even religious difference, should be allowed to follow the inspira-

¹⁶ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 10-11.

¹⁷ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 10.

¹⁸ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 12-13.

¹⁹ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 13.

tion of the Holy Spirit”.²⁰ Ideally, such a gathering would be a place where everyone played a role in the building up of Christ’s people. Crucially, for Ford, prayer groups did not require the setting up of new leadership structures. The leadership of the Catholic laity was to be found in the Church hierarchy; but in the prayer group “we are all each, each one with each other”.²¹

The prayer group model described by Ford was to be a context for the kind of lay involvement which many Catholic women, moderate and radical, were seeking after Vatican II. However, Ford’s approach was not dominant in the emerging Catholic charismatic renewal, either in the immediate vicinity in South Bend, or nationally. As Valentina Ciciliot has described in considerable detail, the male-led, complementarian communities People of Praise (1971) and True House (1971) in South Bend, along with that of The Word of God in Ann Arbor, Michigan, were vital to the emerging Catholic charismatic renewal nationally.²² The communities in South Bend and Ann Arbor provided most of the leadership and personnel for CRS (Charismatic Renewal Services) – a non-profit company which produced teaching materials and a pastoral newsletter for prayer groups, which became the widely read *New Covenant* magazine. Additionally, South Bend had responsibility for the major annual conference on Catholic charismatic renewal in the Notre Dame Football stadium; while the community in Ann Arbor produced the widely read course *Life in the Spirit* – which by 1975 had sold 70,000 copies.²³ CRS controlled the levers of a major media operation, and was assertive in this role, stating in 1974 its aim “to move forward aggressively in sales and service to the charismatic renewal and to the church as a whole”.²⁴ Oversight of the CRS came from a CCRSC – later known as the NSC (National Service Committee). Upon its incorporation in 1971, this group of seven was entirely male and included two coordinators from The Word of God, Steve Clark and Ralph Martin, a coordinator of True House, Jim Byrne, and a coordinator of People of Praise, Kevin Ranaghan. South Bend and Ann Arbor were, as I describe it elsewhere, a ‘cockpit’ of Catholic charismatic renewal both in North America – and, as we shall see, increasingly globally.²⁵

After True House community closed in 1973, The Word of God and People of Praise were left as the primary nodes of Catholic re-

²⁰ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 37.

²¹ Ford, *The Pentecostal Experience*, 60.

²² Ciciliot, “The Origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the United States”.

²³ Jahr, “An Ecumenical Christian Community”.

²⁴ *Steering Committee of the Charismatic Renewal Services Board of Directors Meeting*, 18 June 1974, in *Sword of the Spirit Online Archive*, CCRSC Minutes.

²⁵ Cf. Maiden, *Age of the Spirit*, 113.

newal. Both were ‘covenant’ communities – by 1972, 500 individuals had made a covenant commitment to each other at The Word of God. The communities were Catholic led but ecumenical.²⁶ The expected level of commitment was high, and with this a particular emphasis was placed on submission to authority. The lay leadership structures of the community and family life were male, although ‘handmaidens’ were appointed to provide pastoral care for women. An influence on gender roles in these communities came from Protestant leaders in the charismatic renewal. These were men such as the Californian Lutheran Larry Christenson, author of the complementarian *The Christian Family* (1970);²⁷ but especially the non-denominational charismatics who were behind the magazine *New Wine*, such as Bible teaching luminary Derek Prince, who was convinced that “American men have abdicated from their three main responsibilities – as husbands, fathers and spiritual leaders. God is looking or for a man”.²⁸

As the membership of the CCRSC expanded, it remained entirely male – even if a minority did not hold to the South Bend and Ann Arbor view on gender and leadership. A larger Advisory Group for the CCRSC represented a wider range of opinion on the role of women, but in 1974 only two of its twenty-seven members were female.²⁹ The teachings offered in *New Covenant* magazine were almost exclusively male.³⁰ The 1973 list of contributing editors for the magazine included various male Protestants, but not a single Catholic woman.³¹ During this decade the magazine often included teaching on headship in the family.³² While explicit teaching on the role of women in prayer groups in *New Covenant* was rare, there was a general assumption that leadership should be male. For example, in teaching on headship and subordination in relationships by Bert Ghezzi, a member of the CCRSC based in Grand Rapids, it was said: “All are equals. For example, a husband is his wife’s equal and she is his equal before the Lord. But in their relationship, the husband has a position of headship and she a position of submission. It is a principle of order, a way of relating that helps our groups function

²⁶ “National News”.

²⁷ Christenson, *The Christian Family*.

²⁸ Prince, “Praying for the Government”, 11.

²⁹ “The Service Committee: An Updated Report”.

³⁰ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 109. There were some exceptions. One important one was the influence of Dorothy Ranaghan, who co-edited with her husband *As the Spirit Leads Us*.

³¹ Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Minutes, 21-22 August 1973, in Sword of the Spirit Online Archive, CCRSC Minutes.

³² Pulkingham, “Headship in Christian Marriage”.

in unity and in peace”.³³ In a 1975 ‘question and answer’ piece on authority in charismatic communities, Steve Clark, of Ann Arbor, said of transparency and collegial headship: “Where there is a body of mature men exercising that kind of responsibility there is much less danger that any of them will fall into serious sin or perpetrate abuses”.³⁴ In addition, coordinators of the South Bend and Ann Arbor communities had a prominent role in setting up, with the cooperation in particular of non-denominational Protestant charismatic leaders, systems of lay authority for prayer groups and communities. Ralph Martin, Steve Clark, Kevin Ranaghan, and others took on leadership of the Men’s Shepherding Conferences – ‘shepherding’ being a kind of pyramid system of discipleship for charismatic communities and prayer groups. Thousands attended these male-only conferences in the mid-1970s.³⁵

It is not surprising that Josephine Ford found herself increasingly in conflict with the leadership in South Bend and with the CCRSC more broadly.³⁶ At the annual conferences at Notre Dame in 1969 and 1970 she had public disagreements with the CCRSC. In 1970 according to one report she tried to “seize a microphone” and then “refused to take a seat after she was subdued”.³⁷ Ford critiqued the local and national leadership in speaking engagements and articles; she was quoted, for example, in the *New York Times* of accusing leaders of “not recognizing the Spirit in Negroes or women”. At a conference at the Washington National Cathedral in 1974 she described the charismatic communities in South Bend and Ann Arbor as a “strong, rigid, male, white and nonrotating hierarchy”.³⁸ In 1971, the CCRSC refused to register her for the Notre Dame conference, but she attended anyway.³⁹ In March the following year, Kevin Ranaghan reported to the CCRSC Ford “continues a campaign of adverse letter writing. She continues to come to prayer meetings even after repeated personal requests not to come and also not to speak”.⁴⁰ Since the

33 Ghezzi, “Love and Order”, 15.

34 “Authority in Christian Communities”, 27.

35 On ‘shepherding’ cf. also Ciciliot, “Pray Aggressively for a Higher Goal”.

36 Developments are described in Ciciliot, “The Origins of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal”, 161-2.

37 “Pentecostalism Should not be Confused with Drug Experiences”.

38 Fiske, “Pentecostals Gain Among Catholics”; “Charismatic Movement May Become Too Rigid”. Writings by Ford criticising the direction of Catholic charismatic renewal in the United States could also be found in: “Neo-Pentecostalism within the Roman Catholic Communion”; “Mysticism and Roman Catholic Neo-Pentecostalism”; “Fly United-But Not in Too Close Formation”; “American Catholic Neo-Pentecostalism”.

39 “Pentecostalism Should not be Confused with Drug Experiences”.

40 *Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Minutes*, 16 March 1972, in *Sword of the Spirit Online Archive*, CCRSC Meeting Minutes.

previous summer there had been tensions with the university over the issue. Its President, Fr. Theodore Hesburgh, approached a member of the CCRSC about the treatment of Ford and warned that any continuation would have consequences for access to campus.⁴¹ A Notre Dame law professor had suggested that the CCRSC was violating Canon Law.⁴² Apparently, the chaplain of the university wanted to “exclude Pentecostals from campus”.⁴³ In 1972, Ford was allowed to register for the Notre Dame conference, but claimed her books were banned from the official stalls.⁴⁴ She spoke, tongue in cheek, of a CCRSC “Pentecostal Index”.⁴⁵ The absence of her books appeared to confirm the power of the CCRSC.

In a letter to the *National Catholic Reporter* after the 1972 conference, Ford described experiencing a policy whereby “The Eucharistic kiss of peace and the sacrament of penance are refused to the ‘excluded’ even though they are Catholics in good standing”. As well as experiencing the pain of exclusion, she felt the need to defend herself from assumptions she might be a radical feminist. She reminded readers of her involvement as an advisor to the US Bishops’ committee of the permanent diaconate and on Archbishop Leo C. Byrne’s of Minneapolis and St. Paul’s committee on the status of women. This she said “would seem to suggest that I am not an extreme member of women’s lib”, adding “the fact that the Notre Dame students nicknamed me ‘Minnie Mouse’ and ‘Mary Poppins’ also indicates that, in their opinion, I am not overaggressive”.⁴⁶ As a leading theologian and active pentecostal at a university now at the epicentre of the emerging Catholic charismatic scene, Ford was uniquely qualified for a role in its leadership. Yet, she claimed to experience rejection at the hands of a male leadership.

In *Which Way for Catholic Pentecostals?* (1976), Ford’s assessment of the state of Catholic charismatic renewal in the Church was crystallised as a typology. ‘Type 1’ was essentially the ‘male lay hierarchy’ – or ‘oligarchy’ – which was the dominant grouping of the CCRSC.⁴⁷ Her criticism of their Scriptural position on gender was blunt:

⁴¹ *Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Minutes*, 16 August 1971, in *Sword of the Spirit Online Archive*, CCRSC Meeting Minutes.

⁴² *Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Minutes*, 16 March 1972, in *Sword of the Spirit Online Archive*, CCRSC Meeting Minutes.

⁴³ *Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee Minutes*, 16 August 1971, in *Sword of the Spirit Online Archive*, CCRSC Meeting Minutes.

⁴⁴ “Busting from Bud to Bloom”.

⁴⁵ Ford, “Charismatic Anathema”.

⁴⁶ Ford, “Charismatic Anathema”.

⁴⁷ Ford, *Which Way for Catholic Pentecostals?*, VIII.

There is something frightening in the way women of Type 1 groups have become subordinate to the men. If the national leaders insist on a literal interpretation of Genesis and all the Pauline texts on women (they do not refer to Jesus' teaching), then, to be consistent, they must also work for the restoration of slavery, which is accepted without question by St Paul, and the must also embrace civil obedience, which is taught in Romans 13 but is not espoused by Jesus.⁴⁸

The culture of subordination emanating from the covenant communities at South Bend and Ann Arbor through the media outputs and leadership structures of the CCRSC, she argued, had "been a great impairment to women in the Pentecostal movement and has led to the withdrawal or exclusion of many".⁴⁹

Ford also identified a 'Type 2', which had less influence on the levers of the national structure. The 'Type 2' milieu included the Benedictine monastery at Pecos, New Mexico, where monks worked "hand in hand with religious women"; the prayer groups in St. Louis, Missouri, which was led by two sisters when the primary leader Francis MacNutt was on his frequent healing ministry travels; and university prayer groups such as Boston College and Fordham.⁵⁰ In contrast to the focus on lay leadership at South Bend and Ann Arbor, Ford identified these 'Type 2' charismatics as "clerically and sacramentally orientated". Where gender was concerned, she observed that "Women are accepted as equals and not kept separate, and they minister similarly to men except for sacerdotal powers".⁵¹ Some women in these 'Type 2' circles, she observed, had ambitions to become deacons or perhaps, at a future point, priests.⁵² This approach to charismatic ministry, she argued, "encourages the talents of women and a devotion to Mary, both of which are essential to the mystic life because they bring with them a receptivity, a humanizing element, and sensitivity to the needs of others".⁵³ The model of ministry she identified amongst 'Type 2' charismatics was in line with the democratised life of the mystical Body of Christ which she outlined in *The Pentecostal Experience*.

Ford's typology was in some ways a blunt instrument. Her assessment was complicated, but ultimately rather supported by in broad terms, by another contemporary analysis, upon which she had

⁴⁸ Ford, *Which Way*, 131.

⁴⁹ Ford, *Which Way*, 12.

⁵⁰ Ford, *Which Way*, 71-80.

⁵¹ Ford, *Which Way*, 67.

⁵² Ford, *Which Way*, 67.

⁵³ Ford, *Which Way*, 70.

drawn. In *The Catholic Cult of the Paraclete* (1975), the Jesuit, Loyola University-based sociologist Joseph H. Fichter also examined the role of gender in the movement. His analysis was nuanced; sensitive to the spectrum of Catholic charismatics, who he divided into four groups: Heterodox (essentially the extreme of Ford's 'Type 1'), Pro-Heterodox, Pro-Orthodox and Orthodox (the most advanced of Ford's 'Type 1'). Fichter found that women, who he confirmed, unsurprisingly, made up the most participants in Catholic charismatic renewal, were able to "express themselves more often than men in witness, in prophecy, in spontaneous quotation from Scripture and in other paraliturgical ways".⁵⁴ In this sense, of course, the renewal was operating within a gendered model, widely evident in historic Catholicism, whereby women were deemed to be more given to mystical experiences in the body of Christ. However, he also found that women played a 'principal' role in 45% of the 155 prayer groups he researched.⁵⁵ Given the influence of the CCRSC, it is surprising that this percentage was so high.

Fichter, however, saw there was a tension in women's involvement. He found that "most charismatic women want men to assume the leadership and that it is only by default that they are willing to do so themselves".⁵⁶ Neither was the prominent role of women in some prayer groups necessarily an indication of a challenge from within charismatic circles to traditional notions of female domesticity, either at home or male leadership in the Church. Only 3 in 10 of Catholic charismatic women supported the Women's Liberation Movement and one-third female ordination. Traditional views of gender were strongest amongst those most influenced by Protestant evangelicals and pentecostals, the Catholic charismatics he labelled 'heterodox' (rather than 'fundamentalist') – which would have been those who identified particularly with the approach of People of Praise and The Word of God. Only 21% of 'heterodox' respondents thought the Church should support 'Women's liberation' and 32% were in favour of the ordination of women. This compared to 39% and 40% respectively for those in Fichter's 'Orthodox' Catholic charismatic category.⁵⁷ Fichter's analysis did not indicate to what extent traditionalist views about gender were determined by existing opinion or by charismatic teaching. However, his overall view was as follows: "although females far outnumber males in the charismatic renewal, they are being taught by the theoreticians of the movement to be submissive to male authority. Even the women themselves seem to accept this

⁵⁴ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 109.

⁵⁵ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 108.

⁵⁶ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 108.

⁵⁷ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 53-4.

subordination as the will of God”.⁵⁸ Fichter’s survey adds nuance to Ford’s picture but tends to support the overall thrust of her analysis about the wider influence of South Bend and Ann Arbor on gender.

2 ‘Glocality’ And Gender in Catholic Charismatic Renewal: The English Experience

The Catholic charismatic renewal globally has often been understood as something which originated in the upper Midwest of the United States, and specifically with the ‘Duquesne weekend’ in February 1967, when students and faculty discussed the book of Acts and experienced an outpouring of the Spirit. Indeed, renewal leaders in England tended to concur with a providentialist narrative of Duquesne as the ‘Jerusalem’ moment for the Catholic renewal. A 1978 *Good-news* article, for example, narrated the renewal from small American beginnings to global international conferences: “1967, a handful at Duquesne, Pittsburgh; 1975, the Rome Conference; and now, 1978, the astonishing experience of over 20,000 people at the International Conference in Dublin”.⁵⁹ Linear narratives have their attractions; however, as we shall see, in reality the beginnings of Catholic charismatic renewal in England were organic, involving transatlantic exchange but also indigenous emergences. Recognition of this is important when approaching an understanding Catholic charismatic renewal in ‘glocal’ terms.

The American CCRSC impacted on the emergence of renewal in England, as various examples attest. One of the earliest English charismatic prayer groups was established in London in 1970, and its founder, Gill Davies, had been influenced by reading a copy of South Bend leaders Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan’s *Catholic Pentecostals* (1969).⁶⁰ In 1977, looking back on the rise of renewal in England, Fr. Ian Petit OSB recalled that it had spread “by word of mouth and by books”, listing various titles associated with South Bend and Ann Arbor.⁶¹ Another prayer group, led by Mimi and Tim Turner, in Wimbledon, became a portal for American Catholic charismatic media, and by 1973 was established as a distribution centre for *New Covenant*.⁶² ‘Life in the Spirit’ discipleship seminars, based upon the manual of

⁵⁸ Fichter, *The Catholic Cult*, 105.

⁵⁹ “You Shall be My Witnesses”.

⁶⁰ Davies, “One of the Organisers of the First London Days of Renewal Shares Her Memories”, 22-3. Ranaghan, Ranaghan, *Catholic Pentecostals*.

⁶¹ Petit, “Where are We?”.

⁶² *Day of Renewal Newsletter*, December-January 1973. Jahr, “Regional Distribution Centres”.

the same name developed by Ann Arbor's The Word of God community, were in use in various locations by 1974.⁶³ By that year, English delegates were attending the annual international conference at Notre Dame, and visiting communities such as People of Praise and The Word of God.⁶⁴

It is not surprising, then, that the dominant American model of organisation associated with the CCRSC appeared in England. As in the upper Midwest and elsewhere in the United States, much activity centred around regional 'Days of Renewal'. Gill Davies, the lay organiser of the first of these, in London, originally had in mind "something akin to a Day of Recollection" but opted for a Day of Renewal "'as the Americans do' until we could think of something better".⁶⁵ As in the case of the CCRSC, an English body emerged to coordinate communication and pastoral support: the NSC.⁶⁶ In 1974, a first NSC-run conference, featuring both British and American speakers, was held at Hopwood Hall, just outside of Manchester.⁶⁷ A newsletter, *Day of Renewal* was published, replaced by the magazine *Goodnews* in 1975. Growth was steady, but modest. By 1976 the NSC were aware of 150 prayer groups in the United Kingdom, the vast majority of these in England.⁶⁸ By the mid-1970s, Catholic charismatic renewal in England was a coordinated movement, which borrowed from an American blueprint of organisation.

However, indigenous influences had been active in the English renewal from the beginning.⁶⁹ There are various examples. A layman, Esmond Gwatkin was Spirit baptised through the ministry of pentecostals at a congregation in Portsmouth, and soon established a prayer group in the nearby village of West Meon.⁷⁰ A Catholic schoolteacher and early advocate of renewal, Gabrielle Twomey, was baptised in the Spirit through the ministry of a pentecostal church in Hockley, Birmingham, before she set up a small group in Edgbaston.⁷¹ Fr. Peter Hocken, who became a prominent leader and historian of charismatic renewal, was amongst those to pass through

⁶³ *Day of Renewal Newsletter*, March-April 1974.

⁶⁴ Cf. for example, Petit, "American Visit-June 1974".

⁶⁵ Davies, "One of the Organisers of the first London Days of Renewal Shares her Memories".

⁶⁶ *Day of Renewal Newsletter*, November-December 1973; *National Service Committee minutes*, December 1973, in NSC papers.

⁶⁷ *Day of Renewal Newsletter*, March-April 1974.

⁶⁸ "Putting You in the Picture", 2.

⁶⁹ On the transnational dynamics of Catholic Charismatic renewal, cf. also Maiden, "The Emergence of Catholic Charismatic Renewal 'in a Country'".

⁷⁰ Balkam, "Charism and Institution, 1968-1978".

⁷¹ Bob Poole, "England".

Hockley around this time.⁷² Another example was that of Fr. Simon Tugwell, who with a handful of other Dominicans in 1970 was influenced by pentecostals through a prayer fellowship just outside of Oxford.⁷³ Tugwell became an influential charismatic teacher, with an approach quite different from the dominant model in American. According to Hocken, Tugwell became “fascinated by his encounter with flesh-and-blood Pentecostal faith, and was uninterested in the new movement arriving from the United States, which he saw as pre-packaged and highly organized”.⁷⁴ Tugwell’s *Did you Receive the Spirit* (1972) barely referred CCRSC literature, but did mention Ford – and specifically her warning against the tendency to set up a ‘catechumenate’ for baptism in the Spirit.⁷⁵ Despite the interest of English charismatics in CCRSC-sponsored media – and a liking for transatlantic visitors who seemed to offer expertise and ‘anointing’ – a distinctive identity developed. In July 1973, a writer in *Day of Renewal* asserted that vitality in renewal required achieving a balance between the universal and the local: either an international, “monolithic” movement or fragmented “close groups, settled in their local ways” would “stifle the Holy Spirit”. The author argued:

Perhaps our English tendency is towards the insular. Insularity works in two ways. It leads us to disparage what we have to give, and to be cagey about receiving. In prayer groups up and down the country the Spirit has been at work for some years now in and through our own tradition and temperament. No, we won’t say ‘genius’! But we need to have enough confidence in ourselves to believe that we have something worthwhile to offer to the world’s stock of spiritual wisdom. Equally, with our small numbers and as yet underdeveloped leadership, we can ill afford to neglect what is happening in other countries.⁷⁶

In its emergence and development, it is misleading to see the movement in England as simply an export of the dominant American model.

Furthermore, where there was transatlantic interaction, it was not only with the practitioners of the ‘heterodox’ (to appropriate Fichter’s term) model. Fr. Ian Petit, an important figure in the development of charismatic ministry in the north of England, had first experienced the charismatic renewal on a visit to the Benedictines of Pecos, New

72 Hocken, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”, 299-300.

73 Balkam, “Charism and Institution, 1968-1978”; Poole, “England”; Hocken, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”.

74 Hocken, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”.

75 Tugwell, *Did You Receive the Spirit*, 110; cf. also the reference to Ford at page 91.

76 “International Leader’s Conference”.

Mexico.⁷⁷ As we shall see, this link with Pecos was to be utilised by the English in the 1970s. Ecumenical pathways were also influential. Of particular significance was the friendship to develop between a lay Washington D.C. Catholic, Bob Balkam, and English noblewoman Lady Bronwen Astor. Balkam had in the mid-1960s set up the Gustave Weigel Society (an ecumenical organisation named after the priest who had attempted to forge Christian unity in the Holy Spirit). In 1969 Astor, and another ecumenist, Mary Tanner, persuaded Balkam to move with his wife and six children to England.⁷⁸ By 1971 he, Astor, Tanner, and others had inaugurated a charismatic community next to Astor's Tuesley Manor home, near Goldaming. Balkam became the preeminent figure in English Catholic renewal, but he tended to operate outside of the dominant CCRSC networks in the United States.

What were the characteristics of the English movement? The emphasis of teaching in *Days of Renewal* and *Goodnews* tended to be mutual ministry in the Spirit. As Fr. Joe Laishley, of Heythrop College, wrote in 1974:

Vatican II summarised much reflection when it described the people of God as a prophetic, priestly and royal people. This means that all Christians share knowledge of the mind of God to be communicated to others. The people are beginning to take seriously the idea that they have as Christians their own charisms - gifts of the Lord for the building up of the Body of Christ, gifts which are often rooted in natural and acquired abilities, as teachers, as healers, gifted nurses, doctors and counsellors of all sorts who help to heal people's psychic hurts, and so on and even as good organizers.⁷⁹

English renewal tended to focus on inner healing, personality, and interpersonal relationships, and it display a willingness to explore in some depth the psychological dimensions of these. In these areas of ministry, American teachers who did not fit the dominant CCRSC model, such as Fr. Francis MacNutt and Fr. David Garaets of the Pecos monastery, were influential.⁸⁰ In England, in contrast to the kind of renewal evident in South Bend and Ann Arbor, there was far less emphasis on submission and authority.

The distinctiveness of the English movement was evident in attitudes towards gender. Whereas the leadership of the CCRSC in the United States was entirely male, the NSC, upon its establishment in

⁷⁷ Poole, "England".

⁷⁸ Balkam, "The Spirit Blows Where It Pleases".

⁷⁹ Laishley, "Baptism of the Holy Spirit".

⁸⁰ "Report on the Fruit of the Spirit Conference"; "Coming Events" (1976).

England in 1974, was made up three men (Petit, Balkam and Alan Guile, a lecturer in electrical engineering at Leeds University) and three women: Sr. Bernade of the Holy Cross Convent at Chalfont St. Peter, and two laity, Jillyan Bray, from the Midlands, and Lisa Reynolds, a London based schoolteacher. In 1973, when the English sent a contingent to an international conference for Catholic charismatic leaders at Grottaferrata just outside of Rome, Gill Davies, Sister Bernade, and Sister May Manning attended alongside three male leaders.⁸¹ There was in practice a commitment to a balanced gender representation in the national leadership.

There were, nevertheless, a range of views on the role of women. Petit appears to have taken a fairly conservative line. In a *Goodnews* in 1976, he spoke about the challenge of finding teachers for prayer groups. “The normal Church teachers are bishops and priests”, he said, “but these on the whole have stood aside”. He was clear that this was “thus leaving the burden of sound teaching to fall on the shoulders of lay men, who through no fault of their own are often untrained in scripture and theology”.⁸² Petit’s editorship of *Goodnews* in the mid-1970s may have limited the voice of women in the magazine. Fr. Derek Lance, who later took on the editor’s role, seems to have been more open on the question. In a piece “Christian Leaders: Appointed or Anointed?”, he argued that all Christian leaders were, as in the case of King David of Israel, “found by God”; and seems very deliberately to have used gender inclusive language throughout, referring to leaders as ‘he/she’.⁸³ Some CCRSC-sponsored literature on complementarianism circulated in NSC circles, for example Ralph Martin’s book *Husbands and Wives, Brothers and Sisters* (1978) (in which it was argued that “the authority of the husband is directly linked to the unchanging reality of Christ’s authority in the Church and the Father’s authority in the life of the Trinity”) received some recommendation.⁸⁴ When it was reviewed in *Goodnews* the year after its publication, the teaching on headship was not highlighted as problematic, and it was merely said that “The difficult question of submission between husbands and wives (Ephesians 5: 24) is tackled and this should remove many misunderstandings”.⁸⁵ However, otherwise, complementarianism in leadership received very little attention in England, and in practice women had a far higher profile in leadership and teaching.

81 “Coming Events” (1973).

82 Petit, “A Chance - Alas, It can be Missed”.

83 Lance, “Christian Leaders: Appointed or Anointed?”.

84 *Conference of Diocesan Service Committees*, 2-4 February 1979, in NSC papers. Martin, *Husbands and Wives, Brothers and Sisters*.

85 Horner, Review of *Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children*.

At the first NSC national conference in 1974, a woman, Carol Bandini, a psychotherapist from Fordham University, was the main speaker. In the NSC *Newsletter* Jillyan Bray praised the “The combination of someone ‘spirit-filled’, and an authority in her field of psychotherapy”; drawing attention to her style, suggesting she “immediately captivated the entire conference with her quiet healing presence” and that weeks after one could “hear still her soft American voice”.⁸⁶ The invitation to Bandini seems to have been in no way controversial, as there was plenty of precedents of women teaching at Days of Renewal. Women religious took the platform at these events; with Sr. Bernade of the NSC and Sr. Mary MacAleese, a Parish Mission Sister in inner-city Liverpool, amongst the speakers, as well as various sisters from the USA.⁸⁷ The lay woman Lisa Reynolds also had a teaching role, speaking at events in London and sometimes, as we shall see, in joint sessions with clergy such as Fr. Mike Gwinnell.⁸⁸ In 1977, the Dublin-based lay missionary Frances Hogan led well-attended conferences on reading and studying Scripture.⁸⁹ It is difficult to imagine a woman being offered this kind of responsibility at a CCRSC-sponsored event. Furthermore, married couples leading prayer groups, such as Tim and Mimi Turner, Alan and Betty Guile, from Leeds, David and Rosemary Billaux, from Ruislip, and John and Rosemary Theobald, from Hexham, often spoke at NSC events.⁹⁰ While priests did the majority of teaching on regional and national platforms, lay and religious women were very active.

Clearly for some women, the experience of the Spirit opened up new horizons in terms of an awareness of their own potential. A *Good-news* article by laywoman Joan Williams is telling. She described an impression she had received through the Spirit that she should pray for the gift of preaching and exercise this ministry in prayer groups. She recalled saying to God: “You must be joking Lord, a middle-aged, Catholic, nearly elderly lady of a nervous disposition and not a bit intellectual, to pray for preaching?” But as she prayed, she came to a realisation that she might now step into her own in this gifting, following in the footsteps of her father, who had been an Anglican priest.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Bray, “Report on ‘The Fruit of the Spirit’ Conference”.

⁸⁷ “Advert”; “And the Greatest of These is Love”; “Future Days of Renewal”, 5.

⁸⁸ *Newsletter of the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, November-December 1973; “Future Days of Renewal”, 1; Condon, “Worth Abbey Conference”.

⁸⁹ Guile, “Week-end Meetings on Scripture”.

⁹⁰ *Newsletter of the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, November-December 1973. *Booking Form = NSC Hopwood Hall Conference* (August 1975), in NSC papers.

⁹¹ Williams, “Are You Joking, Lord?”, 9.

In 1974, Sr. Bernade was apparently asked to speak to a group of priests about life in the Spirit, but declined, confiding to another member of the NSC: "I feel I am not really ready for that just yet - in spite of all I have said about gifts! You see the size of my FAITH... not even the size of a mustard seed when it comes to this".⁹² That she did not rule it out was indication of a confidence in her gifting.

The dominant form of Catholic charismatic renewal in the United States tended to seek to keep men and women a 'healthy' distance from each other. This was presumably in part to maintain a separation of spheres, but there was also anxiety that familiarity might result in sexual sin. A wariness of the potential for misunderstanding, or even for lines to be deliberately crossed, in the intimate setting of charismatic prayer meetings was sometimes evident amongst the English leadership. As one NSC document put it, "Christ was betrayed by a kiss, not once, but very often by Christian men and girls who just have not been taught. What passes for 'brotherly affection' among some charismatics stirs many girls' emotions so that they have trouble for days - and the men too. This is NOT of the Holy Spirit".⁹³ However, one could also find teaching on the mutuality of the sexes, including the notion that interaction between men and women was a sign of maturity. In 1972, a conference saw Fr. Mike Gwinnell and lay-woman Lisa Reynolds speak on "relationships and chastity". A newsletter report described about how in a prayer group situation "there will be relationships, some very close, between men and women and it was the purpose of Lisa and Fr. Mike to discuss how these relationships grow and how far they can go". Reynolds apparently argued: "We all need each other; we cannot live a one-sex existence. In this respect we have the marvellous example of Christ who easily related with people of both sexes and all ages".⁹⁴ A relaxed approach to relationships was a factor enabling women to take on a fuller role in the leadership of prayer groups.

There was a contrast between the dominant American model in attitudes towards Mary. In the United States, Ford argued that her 'Type 2' Catholics were more likely to emphasise a Marian dimension in charismatic spirituality.⁹⁵ Those in 'Type 1' circles tended not to make this connection. The *Life in the Spirit* manual contained no reference to Mary in the 1970s.⁹⁶ *New Covenant* did not print a proper teaching article on Mary in 1975.⁹⁷ Robert Hogan concludes in his

⁹² Letter from Sr. Bernade to Alan Guile, 9 April 1974, in NSC papers.

⁹³ *A Charismatic Teaching Crisis*, in NSC papers.

⁹⁴ *Day of Renewal Newsletter*, November 1972, 2.

⁹⁵ Hogan, "Mary and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", 348.

⁹⁶ Hogan, "Mary and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", 253.

⁹⁷ Hogan, "Mary and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", 335.

close study of Mary and charismatic renewal in the United States, “it cannot be said that Marian devotion was a widespread phenomenon by 1978”.⁹⁸ Convergences with Marian devotionism was more obviously evident in England. Lisa Reynolds spoke on “The Spirit and Mary” at a Day of Renewal in 1974. She urged those present: “Let us look at Mary. She who, more than any other human being, was so filled with the Holy Spirit that for all of us in the Charismatic Renewal she should be an inspiration. We who seek more and more to be filled with the Spirit should see in her a model of living in the Spirit”. Reynolds’s teaching pointed towards Mary’s femininity and motherhood:

She was ‘blessed among all women’... how often we forget her womanhood... and yet, if we look through the Gospels and note Jesus’ relationships with the women He met, His gentleness, His understanding, we can almost see the young Man growing up, with such a woman filled with warmth as mother. Her wisdom, love, strength, understanding her joy and peace creating an atmosphere of balance for a child to grow into a man.⁹⁹

At the first NSC conference in 1974, many of the Legion of Mary were present, so much so that there was a special meeting for them where the Magnificat was used “as their own personal canticle of praise”.¹⁰⁰ The interest in Mary increased during the decade, with a *Goodnews* editorial in 1978 commenting, “Mary seems to be making her presence felt again. For some she has always been a charismatic figure; for others their relationships with her has undergone a change”.¹⁰¹ In this acceptance of Mary, the English Catholics were again closer to the expression of renewal evident in Pecos and in the teaching of Francis MacNutt.¹⁰²

3 Conclusions

Catholic charismatic renewal emerged after a mid-century in which the role of women in the Church had been undergoing renegotiation. The renewal - and its central expression of the prayer group - was a context in which women might potentially have found new roles in ministry and leadership. In some instances, they did. However, as we have seen in the case of Ford, there were considerable frus-

⁹⁸ Hogan, “Mary and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal”, 372.

⁹⁹ Reynolds, “The Spirit and Mary”.

¹⁰⁰ “The Legion of Mary”.

¹⁰¹ Lance, “Editorial”.

¹⁰² Hogan, “Mary and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal”, 251, 342.

trations also. Tensions over gender became more transparently evident in 1978, when following the submission of recommendations by a diverse sub-group of Catholic charismatic leaders, the American CCRSC (now known as the NSC) produced a statement on male and female roles in the American movement. This maintained some sense of formal 'neutrality' on the issue, attempting instead to emphasise a common purpose, but recognised that a diversity of views existed. It found too that gender roles were more ordered around male headship in covenant communities.¹⁰³ This article has explored the diversity of views and practices concerning gender in both the United States and England. The different positions articulated in the 1978 statement were evident to some extent in both countries; however, compared to the United States, in England a more egalitarian approach emerged. This demonstrates the 'glocal' dynamics of Catholic charismatic renewal. America had a significant influence on renewal in England: of 49 books recommended in a *Day of Renewal* of 1974, 31 were from the United State.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, American influence was not only from Fichter's 'Heterodox' end of the spectrum, associated with South Bend and Ann Arbor; transatlantic flows of more 'progressive' charismatic expressions - where assumptions about gender were concerned - such as those linked with the Pecos community, also helped to shape renewal in England. Local factors also contributed. English Catholic charismatics did not establish strong connections with independent evangelicals and pentecostals; and were less exposed to issues around 'shepherding' and 'discipleship' and the complementarian assumptions which tended to underpin them. Clearly, too, there a greater emphasis on Mary was promoted amongst the leadership of the English renewal. In England, the approach to gender would have been closer to the kind which Ford, the Englishwoman in South Bend, could have approved.

103 See discussion in Bobzien, *Headship: The Role of Women in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, 48.

104 *Newsletter of the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal*, November 1974, 16.

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