

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Structure (1967–1976)

We would normally consider the Catholic Charismatic Renewal to have begun in March 1967 with the Duquesne Weekend and with the “First International Conference” in October 1967. It was informally led, as is normal with a new movement. It did, however, have a gradually developing structure that was one of the keys to its strength. This was modeled (informally and only semi-consciously) on the Cursillo movement, at that time a successful international movement.

From the beginning, the movement began with a semi-formal set of events. The local communities, especially the Ann Arbor community (subsequently the Word of God) and the Notre Dame community (subsequently the True House community and then the People of Praise community) provided the services that gave a structural form to the early movement. They were enabled to do this because they were “the first on the scene” and because they also had the capability to support significant services. Behind this was a set of relations among leaders that went back to the arrival of the Cursillo movement in Notre Dame in 1961.

Such a description does not exhaust the dynamic of the early renewal. The essence of the charismatic renewal was the encounter of individuals with the gift of the Spirit and the change in their Christian life as a result. Much of this came through the initial leaders and the groups they formed. People came to the early centers and were transformed. They then returned home and often formed new groups, usually modeled on the first groups. To be sure, others got involved by contact with Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal groups. Some got involved simply by reading or word of mouth. Nonetheless the bulk of the movement got involved by connection with the original groups. The experience of the beginning of the movement was that it was an action of God, although almost every one could trace their encounter with the action of God to some human person or persons who had already had that encounter.

The early charismatic renewal was not a structured movement where everyone becomes part by entering a structured program. Nonetheless, at the beginning it did have an overall structure. That structure supported the rapid growth of the movement in North America and in much of the rest of the world. A key step was the formation and acceptance of a national and international structure with the establishment of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee (CCRSC) in 1970.

Below is a simple chronology of the CCRSC, with attention primarily given to its membership. That indicates that the main early leadership was drawn from the leadership of the first communities. The listing is significant, because it indicates that the main leadership of the renewal was stable for the first 9 years, the formational period beginning with the Duquesne Weekend. It also indicates that there were some changes in the leadership, but changes could be made without disruption. Finally, it indicates that the ultimate chief challenge was the international spread of the movement, which required another level of organization.

The initial leadership was North American and capable of molding the North American renewal and that was influential in the rest of the renewal. It was not, however, determinative of all the subsequent developments and those developments outgrew the responsibility of the North American leaders. The information below indicates that it was the need for an international

structure that ended the position of the early leadership group (in 1975–76) although in various ways they remained active in the renewal as individuals and often on the NSC as well.¹ Bishop Joseph McKinney, the episcopal advisor, and Fr. Kilian McDonnell, the theological adviser, once appointed met with the CCRSC most of the time up to (and after) 1976.

This description does not describe what the CCRSC originally did and what its influence was. Rather it is a chronology of the leadership structure itself. It does, however, indicate the points where the CCRSC began the various events and institutions that formed the charismatic renewal.

There is a fairly complete set of minutes and other archival material, now kept at the Servants of the Word Center in Chelsea, MI. The below information was compiled from those archives by Stephen Clark.

The Chronology of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee

Notice in *New Covenant* on p. 7 of issue #1 (July, 1971)

“In April, 1969, after the Third International Conference, a representative group of mature leaders from around the country approved the suggestion of the Notre Dame community² that a Communication center be established at Notre Dame to aid the development of the charismatic renewal. In June, 1970, the services provided nationally by the Ann Arbor community and those provided by the Notre Dame community were unified, and both were put under a committee which was set up to develop a responsible approach to national services.

The committee, now called the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee was formed to be a working group. It was made up of people who had been accepted as national leaders in the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church, who could commit themselves to regular work for the committee, and who were geographically close enough to one another to be able to meet regularly.

The present members of the Service Committee are James Byrne, Notre Dame; Steve Clark, Ann Arbor; Bert Ghezzi, Grand Haven, Michigan;³ Fr. George Kosicki, Detroit; Ralph Martin, Ann Arbor; Fr. Edward O’Connor, Notre Dame; Kevin Ranaghan, Notre Dame.

In the course of the year, the different services were organized and improved (June and January conferences, Charismatic Renewal Tapes and Literature; Communication Center, New Covenant) and an advisory committee was established to ensure a broader national voice in developing and evaluating the services being performed. ...”

¹ It was in connection with the Rome Conference (1975) that Cardinal Suenens and his “secretary” Veronica O’Brian proposed that the ICO be moved to Brussels and also that a covenant community be established in Belgium. It took a while for all the relevant bodies to agree to this and then for organizational arrangements to be made. This involved Ralph Martin living outside the United States and Steve Clark and Fr. Kilian McDonnell living outside the United States for much of the year. It also occasioned the organizational changes in 1975–76 that resulted in the CCRSC becoming a North American committee with a somewhat different membership.

² At the time, there were two communities at Notre Dame. One was called True House and was led by Jim Byrne. At the outset this was the primary group responsible for the communication center and the international conference, although both groups worked together.

³ Bert Ghezzi was not in the list of CCRSC members in the minutes until January 4, 1971.

July 14, 1970

The first formal organization was set up on July 14, 1970 and was called “The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee”.⁴ By then there were certain organs of service including:

- The Center for Service and Communication (later: The National Communication Office) run by “the Notre Dame Community”. This was agreed to by a group of leaders after the Third International Conference.
- The International Conference, run by “the Notre Dame community” and a tape ministry at first dependent upon the international conference
- “The Pastoral Newsletter” (later: *New Covenant* beginning in July 1971) run by “the Ann Arbor Community”
- A Leaders Conference run by “the Ann Arbor community” and also a leaders newsletter that later was called “The Pastoral Newsletter” (at this point only experimental)

Those who were part of the formal founding of the CCRSC were: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Fr. George Kosicki,⁵ George Martin, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O’Connor, Kevin Ranaghan. George Martin functioned as the secretary and it was agreed that Jim Byrne would function as the chairman for the first four meetings.⁶

October 13, 1970

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Fr. George Kosicki, George Martin, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O’Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

The minutes are currently missing.

January 4, 1971⁷

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, George Martin, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O’Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

January 30, 1971⁸

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi (absent) Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O’Connor.

February 5, 1971 – Meeting of Incorporation

Members elected to the Board of Directors: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O’Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

Jim Byrne was the chairman of the meeting; Fr. Ed O’Connor was the secretary

⁴ Notes of the meeting, written on July 16, 1970

⁵ Of these, the only one who was not part of the “pre-community” formed by the Cursillo at Notre Dame was Fr. George Kosicki.

⁶ The Ann Arbor community became the first covenant community in September 1970 and the first charismatic community formally organized. It established a model for covenant community structure. In the next few years, a number of other covenant communities were organized.

⁷ The minutes described this as the National Service Committee.

⁸ The minutes described this as the National Service Committee.

March 23, 1971

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O'Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

Fr. George Kosicki was the secretary

May 17, 1971⁹

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O'Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

Fr. George Kosicki was the secretary

June 21, 1971

First meeting of the CCRSC and the Advisory Committee

July 6-7, 1971¹⁰

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O'Connor, Kevin Ranaghan.

August 16, 1971¹¹

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Fr. Ed O'Connor, Kevin Ranaghan (absent).

Bishop Joseph McKinney invited to be episcopal advisor (accepted August 20).

November 11, 1971

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

The legal corporation is called Charismatic Renewal Services (CRS). The Board of Directors will be the Service Committee (the name CCRSC is reaffirmed). Bert Ghezzi is the chairman of the CCRSC (when was he elected?). The Administrative Committee of the CCRSC is Jim Byrne, Steve Clark and Ralph Martin.

January 31, 1972

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

March 16, 1972¹²

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

⁹ The minutes described this as the National Service Committee.

¹⁰ The minutes described this as the National Service Committee.

¹¹ The minutes described this as the National Service Committee.

¹² The minutes described this as the Service Committee.

April 25, 1972¹³

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

June 25-26, 1972¹⁴

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

August 24, 1972¹⁵

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

October 28, 1972¹⁶

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

The CCRSC formally accepted responsibility for the international charismatic renewal and established ICO as the international communication office. See the memo below.

April 16, 1973

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

The CCRSC agrees to sponsor the first International Leaders Conference at Grottaferrata near Rome in Italy (the location was determined subsequently).

April 24, 1973

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki (absent), Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan (absent).

June 26, 1973

Members: Jim Byrne, Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Jim Byrne resigns from the CCRSC and resigns as President of CRS.

August 21-22, 1973

Members: Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, Fr. Ed O'Connor, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Kevin Ranaghan is given responsibility for CRS-South Bend

¹³ The minutes described this as the Service Committee.

¹⁴ The minutes described this as the Service Committee.

¹⁵ The minutes described this as the Service Committee.

¹⁶ The minutes described this as the Service Committee.

October 30, 1973

Members: Steve Clark, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Fr. Ed O'Connor writes a letter critical of the CCRSC and resigns. Bishop McKinney writes a response upholding the CCRSC.

The People of Praise becomes a sponsoring community of CRS, de facto replacing True House.

Paul DeCelles and Fr. Harold Cohen are elected to the CCRSC.

Fr. Kilian McDonnell is appointed theological advisor to the CCRSC.

December 12, 1973

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

February 7, 1974

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

April 15, 1974

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki (absent), Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

May 15, 1974

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

The committee agrees to an international conference at Rome in 1975 (commonly known as "the Rome Conference").

July 29-30, 1974

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Steve Clark was elected chairman of the CCRSC and President of the Board of Directors of CRS and Kevin Ranaghan was elected President and CEO of CRS.

The CCRSC agrees to support the next National Shepherds' Conference.

November 20-21, 1974

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

February 12-13, 1975

Members: Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Bert Ghezzi, Fr. George Kosicki, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Bert Ghezzi and Fr. George Kosicki will no longer be members. Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Fr. Tom Forrest, and Fr. Mike Scanlan are invited to be members.

The CCRSC endorses the national conference for priests in the charismatic renewal.

April 16-17, 1975

Members: Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Ralph Martin, and Kevin Ranaghan.

Kerry Koller was elected to membership.

The CCRSC agrees to pursue a series of "Malines documents".

CRS with the approval of the CCRSC establishes the pastoral newsletter.

On May 9, 1975 the CCRSC was re-incorporated with the above members, including Kerry Koller, and Fr. Mike Scanlan named as directors.

August 4-15, 1975

Members: Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Fr. Tom Forrest, Kerry Koller, Ralph Martin, Kevin Ranaghan and Fr. Mike Scanlan.

The CCRSC agrees to co-sponsor a major ecumenical conference in summer 1977 (commonly known as "the Kansas City Conference").

November 10-11, 1975

Members: Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Paul DeCelles, Fr. Tom Forrest, Kerry Koller, Ralph Martin, Kevin Ranaghan and Fr. Mike Scanlan.

Fr. Mike Scanlan was elected chairman of the CCRSC, replacing Steve Clark. Paul DeCelles and Ralph Martin will no longer be members of the CCRSC. Gabe Meyer is invited to join the CCRSC. When Steve Clark cannot be present, Bruce Yocum will replace him.

The Board of Directors of CRS was more clearly distinguished from the CCRSC and is to be composed of two representatives each of the CCRSC, The People of Praise, and The Word of God.

February 11-12, 1976

Members: Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Fr. Tom Forrest, Kerry Koller, Gabe Meyer, Kevin Ranaghan and Fr. Mike Scanlan.

May 13-14, 1976

Members: Bill Beatty, Jack Brombach, Steve Clark, Fr. Harold Cohen, Fr. Tom Forrest, Kerry Koller, Gabe Meyer, Kevin Ranaghan and Fr. Mike Scanlan.

The name of the CCRSC was changed to the “National Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the United States” (informally the National Service Committee / NSC).

The International Communications Office (ICO) is an autonomous office of the National Service Committee.

Excerpt from a Memo on The Establishment of the ICO (ICCRS)

The following are the key dates:

October 1972: Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service Committee (CCRSC) approves the establishment of the International Communications Office (ICO) as a clearinghouse for the international CCR

January 1973: ICO established in Ann Arbor under Ralph Martin’s direction and an announcement was made in *New Covenant*

October 9-13, 1973: The First International Leaders Conference in Grottaferrata officially recognizes the establishment of ICO as a clearinghouse for the international CCR.

The ICO (now ICCRS), in other words, was established well before 1978. We do not know of any significant change in 1978. That may have been the year in which Fr. Tom Forrest became the director of the ICO and Ralph became the chairman of the council, but that is all we might know of.

The above can be documented, mainly through *New Covenant* articles. *New Covenant* at that time was the main national and international vehicle of communication for the CCR. Some comments:

- The CCRSC was the first official body for the CCR and was recognized by the American bishops as such. Because of that, it was recognized internationally for the first few years as the de facto leadership body for the CCR. For that reason, when the CCRSC set up the ICO, it was readily recognized, and that was confirmed by the Grottaferrata Leaders Conference, the first international leaders conference called by the CCRSC.
- We probably began the ICO on an informal basis in 1971.
- Cardinal Suenens invited us in Rome in 1975 at the International Conference to move to Brussels and bring the ICO with us. He was, in fact, offering to be the patron of the movement.
- We did this a couple of years later. From then on the ICO was understood to be under Cardinal Suenens’ patronage. It was the same ICO that previously functioned as the international communications center.