The last census (2010) in Brazil indicates that, despite declining as a percentage of the overall population, Catholicism continues to be the country’s dominant religion. 64% of the population—about 122 million—consider themselves Catholics, while Pentecostal Protestants represent 22.2%.\(^1\) According to a recent study by the Pew Forum (2006), the majority of these Catholics (57%) identify themselves as Charismatics.\(^2\) Officially, 10 million Brazilians are organized in 20,000 prayer groups and diocesan, state, and national coordinating bodies, as well as missionary projects and training programs for youths and leaders that are the backbone of the Charismatic Movement in Brazil.\(^3\) These numbers point to emergence of the Catholic Renewal Movement (CCR) as a major creative player in the revitalization of Brazilian Catholicism, a role that, given Brazil's increasing global clout and the fact it is the country with the largest number of Catholics in the world, has potential implications beyond the nation.

In 1968, nearly sixty years after American Protestant Pentecostalism came to Brazil, American Jesuit priests introduced the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Campinas, in the state of São Paulo (Carranza 2000: 29). Like the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements, CCR has preached a stern message of sexual and family morality and has engaged in direct combat with Afro-Brazilian and non-Christian religions, such as those in the New Age movement, accusing them of being evil (Mariz & Machado 1994; Machado 1996; Mariz 1999; Almeida 2003; Carranza 2005; Mariz 2009; Mariz and Aguillar 2009). Moreover, like its Pentecostal counterparts, the Brazilian CCR movement relies on mass evangelization through the media,

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\(^3\) Interview #10. M.V, September 2011, from the archives of the Center for the Study of Latin American Pentecostalism, coordinated by Paul Freston and supported by the Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Initiative (PCRI), University of Southern California (directed by Donald Miller). The interviewee is president of CCR-Brasil.
large public events, and religious marketing. The core element of both Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianities is a global missionary project.

Owing both to its pneumatic theology and spirituality and the peculiar interaction with society at large as well as with other religions, the CCR has initiated a process of ‘Pentecostalization’ within the Catholic Church. By igniting a liturgical modernization through the appropriation of a ‘gospel culture’ that has been traditionally associated with Protestantism, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal has expanded the religious market with a myriad of printed, audiovisual, and digital products that it has made available to Catholics, as they negotiate the increasing visibility of other (competing) religions. Furthermore, Charismatic Catholicism has attracted new generations of priests, creating new ways of living the priestly vows that have become quickly disseminated across dioceses throughout the country. Though led by laymen, this transformation in the clergy has aimed at strengthening institutional authority, not challenging it. In this vein, CCR stands in contrast to Protestant Pentecostalism, which tends to involve internal dissent and has a tendency to cause divisions in the churches where it has been set up.

Despite tensions between the institutional authority and the prophetic leaderships of CCR, and within this lay leadership, the Catholic Church has managed to prevent schisms by establishing ‘relatively autonomous territories’ and by valuing the diversity of charismas of each new leadership. Within the CCR, these territories are called ‘new communities.’ Since the 2000s, several studies in Brazil have pointed to the importance of these new forms of religious congregation (Braga 2004; Oliveira 2004; Pereira 2008; Campos and Caminha 2009; Gabriel 2009; Portella 2009; Silveira 2009; Carranza 2011). The organizational model behind these new communities goes back to the ecclesial movements during the second half of the twentieth century. Then, as now, the goal was to turn the clock back on the process of loss of Catholic identity and practice produced by secularization. The new communities, however, take the additional task of holding off the advance of Pentecostalism. Still, in both cases, the method is the same: to evangelize the ‘structures of everyday life,’ shaping them according to the designs of a Neo-Christendom.4

4 Urquhart (2002: 7–29) identifies Opus Dei, Communion and Liberation, Focolares, and Neocatechumenates as part of this ‘Neo-Christendom.’ According to him, these movements played a key role in John Paul II’s papacy, giving infrastructural support to the massive events that characterized his international visits.