

"Significant Common Ground" Found With Pentecostals

6th Round of Conversations Considers Gifts of Holy Spirit

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 17, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Vatican's ecumenism council initiated a sixth phase in conversation with Pentecostal groups, saying a final report should be ready by 2015.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity reported on a seven-day round of conversations that concluded Thursday.

The Catholic-Pentecostal teams are considering Charisms in the Church: Their Spiritual Significance, Discernment, and Pastoral Implications.

Dialogue between the Vatican and these Pentecostal groups began in 1972.

The goal is not "structural unity," the Vatican statement clarified, but "to promote mutual respect and understanding in matters of faith and practice."

Bishop Michael Burbidge of Raleigh, North Carolina, and Reverend Cecil Robeck, professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Assemblies of God in Pasadena, California, are co-chairs of the dialogue.

"Our work and conversations this week have led Catholics and Pentecostals to a deeper understanding and appreciation for some common ground we share regarding charisms of the Holy Spirit," Bishop Burbidge said. "As we continue the dialogue in future years, we are renewed in our commitment to discuss respectfully the challenges that face us as we seek and pray for unity as brothers and sisters in Christ."

The topic of this first session was "Charisms in the Church: Our Common Ground." Other topics on the agenda for the sixth phase are: discernment (2012), healing (2013) and prophecy (2014). It is expected that the final report will be ready by 2015.

The Vatican said participants "rejoiced in the significant amount of common ground that was identified despite the differences between the two traditions. Both Catholics and Pentecostals recognize the abundance of gifts given freely by the Holy Spirit, and that the Church has a discerning role to play concerning their exercise."

The group considered topics such as the biblical foundations of charism, the historical and theological overview of the subject, the spontaneity or permanence of gifts, and the roles of clergy and laity.

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