

# Implications of Growth of Pentecostal + Evangelical Churches – for Unity in the Body of Christ

1. Acknowledge that there are large evangelical movements and churches within the Historic Protestant Denominations e.g. the New Wine movement within Anglicanism.
2. We define Pentecostal as including independent evangelical charismatic Churches. There are a number of these Churches formed into Networks e.g. Plumline. There are also different streams e.g. Elim (about 60 churches), Assembly of God (42 churches).
3. Numbers are growing strongly in Ireland – now some 700 Pentecostal churches and perhaps 70 smaller evangelical non charismatic Churches. Pentecostal would amount to over 40,000 and evangelical would amount to around 8,000. In N. Ireland there may be another 300 Pentecostal Churches and 400 evangelical non charismatic churches.
4. Around the world there is an estimated 600 million of Pentecostal/Charismatics, but this includes Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Deducting these, leaves 369 million and growing strongly
5. There has been a fruitful Dialogue between RC and Pentecostals since 1972 and there is much that unites RC and Pentecostals. From the Agreed Final Report in 2006 on the Vatican Website there were some key points of Agreement namely:
  - **Bible:** Pentecostals and Catholics, along with other Christians, **acknowledge the uniqueness of the Bible as the inspired and authoritative Word of God**, normative for the faith and life of the church. Both Catholics and Pentecostals honour the authority of Scripture, and both look for ways in which Tradition carries biblical truth.
  - **Conversion:** RC and Pentecostals both agree that conversion is essential to salvation in Christ
  - **Discipleship:** We have found a good measure of convergence in our understanding of discipleship.
  - **Baptism in the Holy Spirit:** To be baptised with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5), to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) or to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) is seen as a gift of God rooted in Jesus' own promise of Acts 1:8 and Peter's claim in Acts 2:38-39. The most fundamental convergence is the common conviction that Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a powerful action of grace bestowed by God upon believers within the church. We affirm together and **embrace the presence and exercise of charisms** as an important dimension in the life of the church.
  - **Call for Repentance:** **These calls for Catholics and Pentecostals to examine their conscience about the way they have sometimes described one another in the past**, for example calling the other a "non-Christian" or a member of a "sect". Although we have significant differences still on some questions, **we are able** because of this dialogue, **to call one another brothers and sisters in Christ.**
6. Pentecostal would not be included in many Church Forums around Ireland which has caused a lot of hurt .
7. Pentecostal Churches are growing strongly and the average age of parishioners would be around 35/40 yrs. Pentecostal churches would be mission focused, have discipleship programmes, Outreach to the Poor and strong Prayer ministry, and they would teach the concept of tithing. Many would have a full time Youth Minister.
8. For meaningful relationships between Pentecostal and RC it would be essential to build Trust and Respect and these can only be built through time and meeting together.
9. Many Pentecostal Churches would be supportive of evangelism and discipleship within RC AND particularly with those Parish Priests wanting to move their Parishes from Maintenance to Mission.
10. Some would be willing to help and provide resources to Parish Priests who want to move their Parishes to Mission particularly where Trust and Respect had happened between Leaders.
11. Increasingly unity needs to be found through Leaders having a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Saviour and accepting the Nicene Creed
12. Most Pentecostal Churches would be willing to work with RC **IF** it was agreed beforehand that all joint events be Christ Centered and Scripturally based. In the words of one Pentecostal Pastor – “We need to meet not on basis of doctrine but unity of the Spirit (Eph 4.3) and so we can meet in humility, honouring each other, calling each other to holiness and having a heart to seek after truth”.