

# Pentecostalism: a Century-Old Challenge

## Poses Question for the Church, Says Vatican Aide

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ROME, DEC. 5, 2006 (Zenit.org).- A century after its birth, Pentecostalism poses serious questions to Catholics, says a Vatican aide.

Monsignor Juan Usma Gómez, who since 1996 has overseen Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue in the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said that the questions raised by the phenomenon of the Pentecostal movement point to "pastoral vacuums" and the need for "a correct proclamation of the Gospel."

"The Church must not be afraid of the Pentecostal growth" and must not respond "with aggressiveness, even if at times some of these groups act aggressively," the Vatican aide contended.

His comments came at a recent meeting organized by the Rome Pro Unione Ecumenical Center. The meeting last Wednesday helped to mark the first centenary of the Pentecostal movement and its relationship with the Catholic Church.

The Pro Unione center organized the gathering between Catholic representatives and figures of the growing Pentecostal-charismatic movement, which was born in Los Angeles in 1906 and today boasts 600 million faithful worldwide.

Currents within Catholicism have been influenced by Pentecostalism, such as the Charismatic Renewal Movement.

One of the characteristics of Pentecostalism is baptism in the Spirit, which is manifested in a variety of ways, such as speaking in tongues.

### The Spirit

Father James Puglisi, director of Pro Unione, explained to ZENIT that "the Pentecostal Movement is growing very much, and the Catholic Church must wonder why, without fear."

The meeting, centered on the challenge of the so-called gifts of the Spirit, presented the Pentecostal movement from the ecumenical, anthropological, moral and spiritual point of view.

Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, Pontifical Household preacher, noted that Pentecostals and charismatics highlight the Holy Spirit "without forgetting God the Father and God the Son."

Some Pentecostal members, such as Stanley Burgess of Regent University in Virginia and Ruth Burgess of Missouri State University, extended a hand to the Catholics, to enhance their experience of the Holy Spirit.

Dominican Father Bruce Williams of the University of St. Thomas in Rome, the Angelicum, explained that ecumenical dialogue cannot start with "adulation" or "litigation" but with the willingness on both sides to listen.

The speakers agreed on the need to intensify meetings of this kind and to work on common projects between Pentecostals and Catholics.

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