

NOTE ON THE FINAL REPORT OF THE CATHOLIC–PENTECOSTAL DIALOGUE
“DO NOT QUENCH THE SPIRIT”

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I have read [this report](#), the fruit of the sixth phase of the Catholic–Pentecostal dialogue, with interest and great personal enrichment. In my opinion, it is an excellent text in terms of the range of biblical references and the attention to the history of the respective traditions. It touches upon an aspect of the doctrine and the life of the Church in which, unlike other contexts, we observe with satisfaction a fundamental and encouraging agreement between Catholics and Pentecostals.

[Charismatic, hierarchical and institutional]

This agreement has been possible due to the Second Vatican Council, which in *Lumen gentium* spoke of the charismatic dimension as being constitutive of the Church, together with its hierarchical and institutional dimension (LG 12). The charisms are no longer seen as being reserved to particular individuals, the saints, but as gifts freely given by God to all Christ’s believers. The agreement is also the fruit of the actual experience of charisms that millions of Catholics encountered after the Council, thanks also to a healthy “contagion” from Pentecostal brothers and sisters.

[On Isaiah 11, charisms or not]

A note at no.16 of the document remarks on a disagreement between Catholics and Pentecostals regarding the nature of the “Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit” which, according to Catholic tradition, belong to the sanctifying action of the Spirit and not to his charismatic action. I think that even this difference, in the light of more recent studies, is less sharp than is usually thought, at least when one takes into account the earlier tradition, predating the Scholastic. In this earlier tradition, the “seven gifts” appear rather as a particular category of charisms, specifically destined to those who govern, as in Isaiah 11, which is at the origin of the theme, and where they appear as gifts that would characterise the future King

Messiah. This is a discussion that would usefully be further pursued.

[Charism of the discernment - no. 82]

With regard to the charism of the discernment of spirits, I think that there should be an acknowledgement of the merit of the Pentecostal movement for having brought back into light the original sense that the gift has in the New Testament. There the gift is more closely linked to the real life and worship of the community rather than to a generic spiritual “accompaniment” or “direction”, as has transpired in the traditional Catholic interpretation.

[Oversight]

Agreement ends when one seeks to determine where authority lies with regard to evaluating and having the last say on the authenticity or otherwise of charisms. After outlining all the points of convergence, the text also mentions, in a rather hasty way, a point of divergence. It states: “But there are also differences in the way Catholics and Pentecostals understand these gifts, their exercise, discernment and oversight” (no.109). The last word in this phrase is the most problematic. How does one evaluate the authenticity of a charism or of a charismatic individual if a higher authority claiming the obedience of an individual does not exist or is not recognized? Who protects the community in this case, if a charismatic answers to no-one but him or herself? It is easy to understand the reasons why a deeper study on this point has not been attempted in the context of a dialogue on charisms, and one cannot but agree with them. Such would involve much more fundamental spheres of the respective ecclesiologies. It is the knot that ecumenical dialogue, at all levels, is called to untie in the future, and not necessarily in one direction only.

Source: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/pentecostals/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_2011-2015_rapporto-sesta-fase-dialogo_en.html *Information Service* N. 147 (2016/D).

[..] is added by StuCom

The whole report [Do not quench the Spirit: Charisms in the life and mission of the Church](#), published by the Potifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. [All reports of the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue](#)

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