

Pentecostals Say 'Life' Is Coming to Ireland

Ministers in the Emerald Isle say the 'wind of Pentecost' is starting to blow in the nation's second largest city

Church leaders in the second-largest city in Ireland, which has a minute number of Christians, say "God is moving" in Cork City, with many accepting Christ and being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Located on the southwest coast of Ireland, Cork is home to 123,000 people, with a college student population of more than 25,000. However, local Protestant leaders estimate only about 2,000 people belong to an evangelical church. In addition, the area is plagued with alcoholism-among the highest rates in the world-as well as depression, suicide and domestic abuse.

"Cork is a very dark city," said Nick Cassidy, pastor of Donnybrook Pentecostal Church, which is located in the heart of Cork. "It's full of alcoholism and false religion. Less than one quarter of 1 percent of the Republic of Ireland claim to be born again. We have never seen Pentecost come to this country, not in its real form, but the wind is starting to blow."

Cassidy, 38, has witnessed it firsthand. He pioneered the church more than 10 years ago with a handful of adults and three children. Today, Donnybrook () is a congregation of about 400 people, comprised of 20 nationalities due to Cork's large influx of foreign workers.

Located in the middle of the city's notorious "red light

district," the church is referred to by locals as the "Holy Ground" of Cork, Cassidy noted.

"But since the church has taken up residence here, it is truly becoming holy ground," explained Cassidy, noting that 100 people received Christ this summer during one-on-one street evangelism. "Every week we see souls come to Christ and people filled with the Holy Spirit. We have seen prostitutes, drug addicts, alcoholics, suicidal people, people suffering from depression, and people who were sexually abused by clerics become born again and set free from their suffering."

Keith Cullen, 29, accepted Christ this spring after he started attending Donnybrook. "Before that my life had been a bad one," he told Charisma. "I started drinking when I was 13. At 17, I started getting into trouble because of my drinking. In the last five years, I have seen nine friends and two cousins die of suicide.

"Now that I have been saved, I no longer drink and have peace of mind and love towards people," Cullen added.

Tony Kirby, 33, also became a Christian while attending Donnybrook earlier this year. Like Cullen, Kirby had an alcoholic background.

"When I came to church, I met some of the nicest people on earth," Kirby said. "After attending the church for a few weeks, my life changed totally. I stopped drinking, cursing and my way of living got better. I gave myself to the Lord."

An Assemblies of God (AG) minister in the United States for 15 years, John Bailey, 42, and his family moved to Cork earlier

this year to become the only AG missionaries in this region of Ireland. Ironically, Bailey's family immigrated to the United States from Ireland during the Potato Famine.

Today he works with Donnybrook and other area churches, and he said the spiritual landscape of Ireland has changed in the last few years, with many small churches springing up all over the nation.

"At Donnybrook, as well as in many churches across Ireland, there is a pure river of God flowing," said Bailey, noting that on Monday nights, a group of about 70 adults pray for Cork as well as for revival in Ireland. "I truly believe that Ireland is one of those places that God has on His spiritual map. Darkness has prevailed here for many years, but there is a time of refreshing and spiritual life coming to the Emerald Isle."

Eric Tiansay