

Alpha Ireland Newsletter 2008



Committed to the re-evangelisation of Ireland and the transformation of society

Alpha Ireland Newsletter

December 2008

Alpha Statistics

- 163 countries running Alpha
- 36,363 registered courses worldwide 2008
- Over 11 million Alpha participants so far
- 100 course run - Ireland North & South
- 3068 Alpha Marriage Courses run in 70 countries
- 484 Alpha Pre Marriage Courses in 31 countries



Greetings and Happy Christmas

At the end of another year with so much economic uncertainty, it is wonderful to know the only true God and His son, Jesus. In one way nothing else really matters but to know, love and serve him faithfully in this life and we will enjoy Him in the next eternally. Isn't it a privilege to hear the intimate prayer Jesus said to his Father.

"Now this is eternal life that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do." John 17v3,4

It is wonderful to see so many people come to know the only true God and Jesus, His Son through attending the Alpha Course. It is a God Inspired course for our times.

There have been many highlights during the past year. These include the 3rd cross denominational Pub Alpha in Tullamore, an Alpha with the Homeless in Dublin,, 3 Polish Alphas, a first workplace Alpha as well as new Alphas in a number of places.



Paddy Monaghan
National Coordinator

Training Seminar in Clonliffe College Dublin



Over 100 attended the Alpha Training Seminar in Clonliffe College Sept 08 – see the banner on the gates of Clonliffe. It was so encouraging to see the enthusiasm of those who attended. Alan and Diane Morris led an Alpha Marriage Workshop and Michael Fairley led an Alpha Youth Workshop.

Pub will be venue for Gospel Course

This was a heading in the Offaly Express Newspaper in Sept 2006 describing the forthcoming cross denominational Alpha being held in Dempsey's Pub in Tullamore. 16 people attended the Training Seminar in the pub and the

Alpha was a great success with some 25 attending. It was sponsored by the Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland and Catholic churches and held in the pub which was a neutral venue. Since then 2 other Alphas have been held in a

different pub. They have just finished Alpha in Loughrey's Pub in Tullamore. Maybe the Taoiseach might find time to attend the next one. Course organiser William Hayes presented Mr. Cowan with a Bible in Irish in Tullamore when he was elected Taoiseach.



First Alpha in Restaurant in Dublin

Christine Hand from the Vineyard Church ran Alpha in Café Sophia in Wexford St., Dublin 2 this Autumn. Christine and friends had built a friendship with the owner of Café Sophia which closes each evening at 7pm. Out of this friendship the owner offered to keep Café Sophia open each Wed till 10pm and provide the meal for the

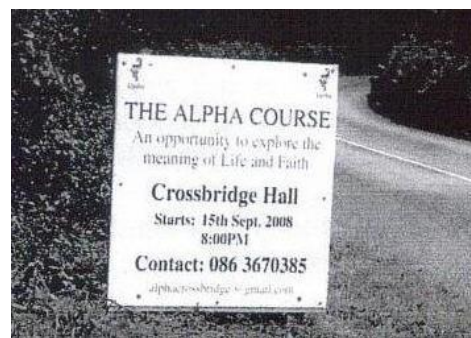
Alpha guests. Some of the staff were also touched by the whole experience and they even requested more Alpha Newspapers to leave in the restaurant during the Day. 20 guests completed Alpha and a number gave their lives to the Lord. The next Alpha in Café Sophia will be on Wed 4th March at 7.30

“John, an unbeliever, read Jonathan Aitken’s autobiography, learned about Alpha in Café Sophia and gave his life to the Lord on the Away Day which was held in Avonri in Blessington”

Tinahely, Co. Wicklow

Loreto Mutton came to know the Lord through attending the Alpha Course in Bray led by Rev. Ken and Ruth Wilson. She then helped out as a Small Group leader on the successful Alpha Course in Gorey last Spring – which had 95 at the opening meal, out of which 45/50 committed to do the Alpha course. Loreto and husband Ken then formed a team in their local Catholic Parish to run Alpha in Tinahely and got the backing of their Parish Priest. After Training they launched Alpha in Autumn with 30/35 guests for the 10 week programme. A local carpenter made 7

signs advertising Alpha. See sign **BUT** on the night of the launch Wicklow Co. Co. impounded the signs. If we reach out for Jesus expect opposition. Loreto and team pressed on and the Alpha was a great success and God touched many people’s lives. Loreto says: “Alpha opened up the scriptures to me. It helped me realise God loved me and knows me personally. I have come to depend on my new friend and trust him. In return I have been given the confidence to help set up Alpha locally.”



Sign advertising the Alpha course in Tinahely

Alpha in Home for Elderly

Rob and Rosemary Davey ran the first Alpha for the elderly in Mitchelstown, Co. Cork. They received the backing of the Catholic and Church of Ireland clergy locally and were very encouraged by the course. Incidentally Alpha International have just brought out a special Guest Manual and Leader’s Manual for the Elderly in large print.



Debra & Michael McCabe

Alpha for the Deaf

Debra & Michael McCabe of St. Marks has a real burden to see the Alpha Express DVD interpreted with a signer for the Deaf community in Ireland. Seven members of the deaf community have completed Alpha and the feedback was very positive. Debra is fund raising to raise the money to complete the project, which has the support of the Deaf community. Please remember Debra in prayer.

Dublin Catholic Archdiocese

Dublin Catholic Archdiocese has appointed a Vicar for Evangelisation – Fr. Ciarán O’Carroll - has taken up his appointment from the 1st Sept. 08. He will have a staff of 5 and is overseeing a major push on evangelisation in Dublin in 2009 including distributing the Gospel

of St. Mark to every home in Autumn 2009. This is a very encouraging development. Members of the Alpha Board are on the Diocesan Committee for Evangelisation. Fr. Ciarán is very impressed with the quality of Alpha material and he sees

Alpha as one of key tool for evangelisation in Dublin.



Alpha

Promotion Highlights

- We had an Alpha stand at the Redeemed Church of God Rally in Fairyhouse, Co. Meath. It was attended by 7,500 people and was very dynamic. It was great to be given an opportunity to speak about Alpha and encourage all their 70 Parishes in Ireland to embrace this God given tool – speaking to all the Pastors in Jan 09 on Alpha.
- We gave a presentation in a Solicitor's office in Dublin to 6 staff on workplace Alpha – launching a lunchtime Alpha on Tues. 13th Jan. 09. This follows another lunchtime Alpha run by a businessman in Newtownabbey for 20 employees in his factory.
- We had a stand at the Catholic Charismatic Conf in Athlone – attended by 1,000 people and the Marino Institute's recent Catechetical Conference.
- We had an Alpha stand at the AGI (Assembly of God in Ireland) National Conference in Castlebar, attended by 600 for 3 days. A highlight was that one of the guest speakers – Paul Reid of CFC church in Belfast strongly recommended Alpha to the audience and said his church had now run 53 Alphas.

Salvation Army, York House

What a wonderful job the Salvation Army do for Dublin's homeless. Their York St. hostel accommodates 79 men and is nearly always full. This was the setting for the launch of the Alpha Express (using the 20 minute DVD) last Jan. We had 6/7 residents and 5 staff

along with a team from outside that I led. It was a wonderful experience. I felt the Lord led our team to start each evening with a meal with all the residents and reach out to as many as possible. The Alpha went very well and the Away Day in Glencree Reconciliation

Centre was special – also a beautiful location. Enclose photo of the presentation of the certificates on the last night.



Certificates being presented on completion of Alpha course in Salvation Army



Ballynacargy, Co. Westmeath

Fr. John Nally participated in the cross community Alpha in Tullamore while a curate there. He also travelled to Clonliffe College, Dublin each week for a Parish Council Alpha. He then launched an Alpha in the local

Secondary School in Tullamore for 6 Leaving Cert pupils who were really blessed by it. He is now Parish Priest in Ballynacargy and has just finished an Alpha in this small country parish with 35/40 attending each evening. It was a

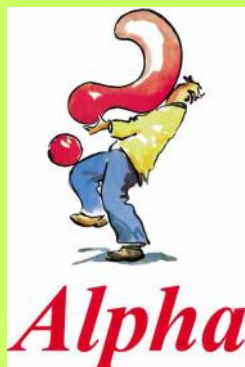
wonderful success. Each evening a team of parishioners prepared a lovely meal for all participants. One parishioner Mary stated that : "Alpha let me see that I didn't have to pray to God through an intermediary - I could talk to him directly"

Northern Ireland

Alpha International have appointed a N. Ireland Alpha Coordinator – David Dickenson. They have also agreed that the Alpha for Catholics coordinator in N. Ireland – Paul McCourt will work in the new office in Belfast one day per week. This is a big encouragement to us.

Global Day of Prayer

Alpha Ireland partnered with GDOP in Republic –. Some 350 attended the event including Bishop Colm O'Reilly. It was great that the Government was officially represented by Mary O'Rourke TD.



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Please contact the office for information or check our website to locate an Alpha course near you.

Marriage Week Ireland 7th—14th Feb. 09

Alpha Marriage is linking with 10 other ministries to launch Marriage Week Ireland from 7th to 14th Feb. 09. As part of this Basil and Glynnis Good and Alan and Diane Morris will lead an Alpha Marriage Course over 7 weeks starting on Tues. 10th March at 8pm in Dublin. Cost is €70 per person. To book ring Glynnis - 01 2824098. Anne and Paddy Monaghan will be leading an Alpha Pre Marriage course starting from Tues 3rd March until Tues 7th April (excl. 17th March). To book ring Paddy - 01 2369821.

Goals for 2009

- Planning two Training Seminars in Cork and Galway. Cork 7th Feb contact Sr. Bridget at 0214251100.
- Plans to run Alpha Course in Cloniffe College for Parish Council Members and all others who would like to run an Alpha in their own community. It will start on Thur. 19th Feb. at 8pm.
- Nicky Gumbel is planning a brief visit to Dublin on Mar. 20th.to meet some church leaders. We are planning a Fundraising breakfast on Sat. 21st Mar. Remember in Prayer
- Irish Promo DVD: We are facing challenges on “irishising” the 12 minute DVD re finance & quality.
- Youth Alpha: Exploring with other ministries a new Youth Alpha resource for schools.
- Invitation to London from Sun. 7th June to 10th June 09 – 1,000 are expected from all over the world to London for a Leaders Conference – if you have run Alpha or are considering running one, please join us on this strategic trip. Details from Alpha office.



Alpha Ireland Management Committee

From left to right - Basil Good, Fr Pat Collins, Helen Murray, Paddy Monaghan, & Ray McNicholas

Basil -With materialism in decline, our prayer is that Ireland will return to putting their hope in Christ
Pat - Alpha, Is there anything better?
Helen - My life changed through Alpha, that is why I am so enthusiastic about it
Paddy - Alpha gives me hope. It is amazing to see so many lives being changed through it
Ray - Alpha is the best evangelisation tool in the country

Alpha Office

Office has been very busy. Andrew Monaghan has been working part time since Sept. and he has been a real blessing. We are so thankful to all who contributed to this ministry in 2008 and especially to the 25 people who give on a monthly basis. Please pray for increased provision for this ministry in 2009.

New Alpha Materials

- Nicky Gumbel has launched a new book – Is God a Delusion? which challenges leading atheist and scientist—Richard Dawkins.
- Excellent testimony Book – One Step beyond – testimony of homeless man who found Jesus through Alpha. He is now running Alpha in for prisoners.
- Alpha Ireland has developed some helpful resources for the Alpha Away Day flyer—contact the office
- We have also developed some support material for Catholic parishes running Alpha – on Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, St. Patrick's Confession, evangelisation and Lectio Divina.