

Alpha Ireland Newsletter 2009



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

December 2009

Alpha Ireland Key Events 2009

- Nicky Gumbel shares Alpha vision in Dublin
- First Priests Alpha in Ireland
- First Alpha in drug Dublin rehab centre
- 238 attend Catholic Diocese six Alphas
- 2 Alpha Marriage courses - Dublin pub
- Major Galway outreach uses Alpha
- Alpha training in Galway and Dublin
- Upgrade of Alpha Ireland website
- Over 120 courses run North & South
- Youth Alpha - major Schools Initiative



Greetings from the National Coordinator



Paddy Monaghan - National Coordinator

34 years ago I stood in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome in 1975 along with 10,000 Catholic Christians and heard the following prophecy given during the closing Eucharist at the International Catholic Charismatic Conference.

'Because I love you I want to show you what I am doing in the world today. I want to prepare you for what is to come. **Days of darkness are coming on the world;** days of tribulation... Buildings that are now standing will not be standing... **I will strip you of everything that you are depending on now, so you depend just on me.** A time of darkness is coming on the world, but a time of glory is coming for my church, a time of glory is coming for my people. I will pour out on you all the gifts of my Spirit. I will prepare you for spiritual combat. **I will prepare you for a time of evangelism that the world has never seen... You need the power of my Spirit** in a way that you have not possessed it.'

It seems the Lord was giving a clear call to prepare for the times we live in today – post 9/11, financial collapse, Catholic church crisis etc. The prophecy speaks of days of darkness and a severe refining followed by a wonderful revival. This prophecy speaks of a time of evangelism that the world has never seen. I believe that Alpha is a key part of this. Last year 1.5 million people attended an Alpha course in some 165 countries. In Ireland Alpha has grown from 15 in 2005 to over 120 in 2009. This included the Dublin Catholic Archdiocese which hosting 6 Alphas in the Autumn for Parish councils and those in ministry.

To build on the potential that is undoubtedly there to see this whole country come back to a living relationship with Jesus we need to see a release of finance into this ministry. I would love to see an Advertising campaign in Dublin supporting Alpha and facilitating many more people being invited on Alpha Courses. Please pray for a release of the finance needed – see Page 3.

We were blessed to host a visit of Nicky Gumbel last April. Nicky's key message was the urgency of proclaiming the gospel. Like St. Patrick I would hope we could all say "I am not ashamed of the gospel. It is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, first to the Jew and then to all others" (Romans 1v16). Let us together believe for a mighty move of the Holy Spirit in Ireland in the next 5/7 years.



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6 Alpha Courses in Dublin Catholic Archdiocese



The visit of Nicky Gumbel led to Fr. Ciarán O'Carroll and Ger Gallagher from the Office of Evangelisation attending the Alpha International Leaders conference in June in London.

As usual it was professionally organised and attended by some 1,200 delegates of which the biggest grouping was Catholic. Alpha International had made a major effort to draw in Bishops and Archbishops and 60 attended. Fr. Ciarán was officially representing Archbishop Martin.

Alpha Ireland was invited to run 6 Alpha courses as part of the Year of Evangelisation that the Archbishop had initiated. We had a total of 238 people on the

first night, most completed the course and all of them said they would read the Bible more as a result of doing Alpha. These Alpha courses were held in Shankill, Tallaght, Whitehall, Clonliffe, Blanchardstown and City Quay. The feedback was superb. One priest participant said:

"I enjoyed the talks. They were light, refreshing and helped me in my ministry. It reminded me to pray with the Scriptures. It revive faith in Ireland we need to help people form and build a relationship with Jesus Christ. I plan to now Alpha in my Parish and school"

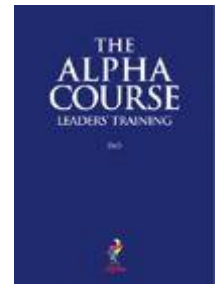
A follow on Seminar for these participants will be held in Clonliffe College, Dublin on Sat 16th Jan. 2010 from 10am to 4pm.

New Alpha Materials

- The Alpha Course on DVD is available in the 20 minute and 40 minute format. It was updated in 2008.
- The Alpha Marriage Book, Manual and publicity material have been totally updated and relaunched in a very attractive format.
- A book on Parenting was launched by Nicky and Sila Lee which is proving popular. A DVD based on this will be launched in early 2011
- The Why Jesus booklet is also proving very popular. It is one of the best evangelistic tools for one-to-one evangelism. The Creideamh outreach in Galway purchased 2000 copies.

Training DVD

The Alpha Training DVD has been much appreciated. It is very helpful when it is used over 3 / 4 sessions with whatever teams are planning to run Alpha. Training Seminars were held in Galway and Dublin in Sept. An Alpha Training evening will be held in Marianella Retreat Centre on Tues. 19th Jan at 8pm for those planning to run an Alpha.



Nicky Gumbel's Visit to Dublin



The Lunch with Nicky Gumbel on Fri 20th March was attended by 180+ in the Davenport Hotel in Dublin. People travelled from Belfast, Derry, Longford, Cork and Waterford. Archbishop John Neill opened the event with a strong endorsement of Alpha; Jackie McClafferty gave a wonderful testimony and Nicky spoke about the urgency of the gospel. See our website for Jackie's testimony and a podcast of Nicky's inspirational address. One leading businessman was deeply touched by the Lord and came to the Alpha office to find where his nearest Alpha course was – he has since completed a local Alpha course.





Creideamh Outreach Galway

A major evangelisation initiative took place in Galway in the first 2 weeks of July with the backing of Catholic Bishop Martin Drennan. Some 200 lay missionaries from around Ireland and the UK were involved. Some 40 local people from 4 Galway parishes were actively involved and a key

part of the training programme for them from March to June was doing an Alpha Course. 25,000 newspapers were distributed in which Alpha featured quite strongly and part of the follow up was an Alpha course and the Training Seminar in Sept.

Breakthrough for Youth Alpha

5 Ministries concerned with promoting the gospel are joining with Alpha in sponsoring a Youth Alpha Initiative aimed at Transition Year in Secondary schools. They are Catholic Youth Care, Kerygma Teams, Scripture Union, Youth for Christ and the Church of Ireland Dublin Youth ministry. This follows the successful launch of a similar project in Scotland. We have now finalised an Irish Youth Alpha Introductory booklet and a Promotional leaflet. Scripture Union had a Youth Alpha stand at the annual gathering of School Chaplains in Galway in November. To resource this initiative we need a full time Youth Alpha person promoting this in the Schools. There will be a Training Seminar for Youth Alpha in Marianella Retreat Centre on Sat 13th March 2010. Cost is €20 from 9.30 to 5pm. Helen Lawson from Alpha in Scotland will be a guest speaker along with Fr. John Nally, Jim Donnan, Anne Loughman, Jonny Sommerville and Paddy Monaghan. To book please email alphairel@eircom.net.



Alpha Marriage Course

3 host Couples in Taylors 3 Rock Pub: Alan and Diane, Basil and Glynis and Seamus and Ann Marie



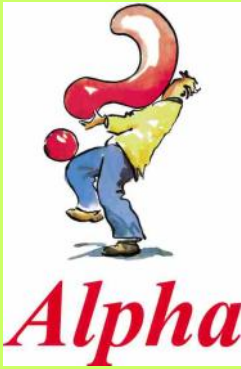
2 very successful Marriage Courses were held in Taylors 3 Rock Pub in Rathfarnham in Spring and Autumn. The 7 week courses, which cost €100 per couple, were attended by 16 couples and 10 couples respectively. One couple were on the point of divorce and their marriage was renewed by them doing the course. Alpha Ireland also contributes to National Marriage Week which will take place between the 8th and 14th Feb. 2010 – please check out website www.marriageweekireland.ie.



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Alpha Statistics

- 163 countries run Alpha
- 42,530 registered courses worldwide 2008
- 12.3 million Alpha participants so far
- Alpha has been translated into 111 languages
- Launch in 2009 of Alpha DVD in Arabic
- 3,068 Alpha Marriage Courses in 70 countries
- 484 Alpha Pre Marriage Courses in 31 countries



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Please contact the office for further information or for a full Alpha stock list and prices. Check our website to locate an Alpha course near you.

Finances / Fund Raising

Costs:

Alpha Ireland has been run at a cost of €70,000 pa including administration and costs of an office in Glenageary, Co Dublin. This is funded by 30 people who contribute on a monthly basis, 2 charities and some gifts, plus a contribution from the Alpha material we sell.

Potential:

A wonderful framework has been laid that could die or be built on. The number of Alphas in Dublin could be increased by 400% from 30 in Dublin in 2009 to 130pa in 3 years which would make a radical impact on the City as follows:

1. Grow number of Adult Alphas from 25 to 100pa in 3 years.
2. Increase Youth Alpha courses from 4 in Dublin to 20 pa.
3. Increase Workplace Alphas in Dublin from 1 to 10pa.

To Achieve

1. Move Alpha office from Glenageary to rented property in centre of Dublin.
2. Employ full time Youth Alpha worker, who will coordinate with 5 other ministries.
3. Employ full time National Coordinator
4. Run an Advertising Campaign in Dublin, which would cost approx. €60,000. This would cover buses, trains and cinemas.
5. Budget would need to increase to €200,000 (includes Advertising) per year for next 3 years to achieve the immediate potential.

Please pray for a breakthrough on this. Would you be willing to partner with us in this exciting venture? If so please fill in the enclosed Standing Order Form asap.

Alpha Ireland Mg Committee Highlights



Basil Good: 2009 has been a very encouraging year as we have seen Alpha being formally accepted as an evangelistic tool in the main churches. I was very encouraged by the Alpha Marriage Course in 3 Rock Pub, which used the new updated Marriage Course DVD. I am optimistic as we continue to grow the ministry in 2010.



Helen Murray: The highlight for me was the success of the 6 alpha courses that ran simultaneously in the Dublin Archdiocese as part of the Year of Evangelisation - it was a real privilege to be involved and see people's lives change as they embrace the Gospel Message. I would love to see this happen again in 2010 in dioceses throughout the country.



Paddy Monaghan: I was really encouraged by the coming together of 6 different ministries around Youth Alpha and the prospect it holds for impacting second level schools in the years ahead. I believe Alpha has a big part to play in turning this country back to Jesus in the next 5/7 years.



Evelyn Hamilton: After more than 20 years involvement in Alpha, it has lost none of it's appeal. In the last year, I have enjoyed helping those, who were on our Alpha courses, to run Alpha for their own communities. I believe Alpha will expand in 2010 in Ireland and want to help make this happen.



Pat Collins: The highlight for me was a meeting of the new ecclesial groups with Archbishop Martin where he said they were a key means of evangelisation and renewal. In Sep. this was followed by an Alpha Training Seminar in Clonliffe College which was memorable because of the large number of people who attended and their enthusiasm for evangelisation.

Alpha Ireland Office

Office has been very busy. Andrew Monaghan has been working as part time administrator and he has been a real blessing. We are so thankful to all who contributed to this ministry in 2009 and especially to the 30 people who give on a monthly basis.



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