



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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### The Alpha Course "Renews" Romanism

The following article is taken from the Evangelical Catholic Initiative Newsletter of April 1998. The ECI is seeking a renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. We are reproducing this article on the Alpha Course since it clearly shows the true nature of this course and what it is designed to promote.

**Christians, take heed! That which builds up the Harlot Church of Rome is not an instrument of God.**

#### *The Alpha Course in Ireland Key Tool for Catholic Renewal*

Alpha is a 12 week introduction to the Christian faith in a non-threatening environment. The 12 talks cover such topics as: Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? How should I read the Bible? It was developed by Holy Trinity Anglican Church in London and they have produced excellent material to enable any group run an Alpha course.

Alpha has had phenomenal growth in the past 7 years. In 1991 there were 4 courses and now there are over 5,000. 250,000 attended Alpha courses in 1996 and 500,000 in 1997. Courses are held in homes, schools, churches etc. in many countries including Russia, Australia, South Africa and Ireland. It is also having a real impact in prisons and with youth groups. In the U.K, 12 Catholic parishes use this course as part of the Christian Initiation Program for Adults. 450 people packed Westminster Hall last May for a conference for priests and lay leaders, which was repeated in the Autumn. It received the blessing of Cardinal Basil Hume and Thomas Williams. Bishop Ambrose Griffiths said: "Alpha is a most powerful evangelistic tool". He saw Alpha as being very significant ecumenically, saying that, "we should have the humility to learn from other Christians". He pointed out that, while Alpha is not a complete exposition of Catholic doctrine, "it doesn't contain anything that is contrary to Catholic doctrine."

In Ireland Alpha is also experiencing growth with courses held by Catholic groups in Belfast, Carlow, Kells, Newry, Navan, Leixlip, to name but a few. A Youth Alpha course is being run by the Catholic Youth Council. A group of local Christians in my own parish of Leixlip, Co. Kildare were encouraged, by the wholehearted support of the Parish, to initiate an Alpha Course during Lent 1996. 20 attended including the local curate and two Parish sisters. Excellent teachings were given by various speakers. A second course was held in the Parish last year and 40 parishioners attended and are keen to continue to meet as a follow up to the course.

Fr. Pat Collins Vincentian Priest and author, writes in a recent issue of Intercom:

"At this difficult time, Alpha seems to be one of God's answers to the urgent needs of the age. It is ecumenical; it appeals to people in disadvantaged areas; it encourages lay participation; it appeals to young adults by means of Youth Alpha. It could be one of the most significant contributions to the current decade of evangelization."

I encourage you to prayerfully consider starting an Alpha course in your local Parish as an effective means of reaching friends and neighbours with the gospel. Resource materials are available from Scripture Union, Tel. 01 8363764 or 2802300. A full 2 Day Training



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Conference for Catholic clergy and lay leaders, involving Nicky Gumbel and Sandy Miller will be held on the 10th and 11th Sept. 1998 in St. Patricks, Drumcondra. For details send SAE to ECI. - Jim Donnan.

*It does not take any comment to highlight just what the Alpha Course is in the eyes of Rome. That is condemnation in itself.*