

One

transformed
by God
through
the Alpha
course to
give Him
the glory

LIFE
CHURCH
COMMUNITY

Volume 1, Issue 2 July 2010

AlphaHouston 3262 Westheimer Road, #157 Houston, TX 77098 713-960-9701 alphahouston.org

The Alpha Invitation: It's the Process of Creating Unity

The process to create unity can often be a difficult one but that doesn't hold us back.

The idea for unity is not new and certainly not new to Alpha Houston. Since the inception of the Alpha Houston office in 2001, the board and staff have dreamed of having enough churches offering Alpha in the Greater Houston area to be able to invite the City of Houston to dinner at a church near them.

"We knew this would be a monumental vision, but little did we know how big that vision really could be," said Debi Tengler, Director of Alpha Houston. First, we have to let people know what Alpha is all about. Statistics show that across the US only 8% of those asked can give any type of definition as to what is the Alpha Course. Then you build trust and that takes time. Alpha Houston has

shown, through the grace of our of our Lord Jesus, that they mean what they say and that they are going to be here to help assist churches reach their communities for Jesus. It is all a process. Jesus tells us that, "He will build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This vision of inviting the City of Houston to dinner seemed a great distance away until February 2010 when Reverend Larry Hall, Rector of St. John Episcopal Church the Divine, held a Pastors Breakfast to support the Alpha Houston office. Attending the breakfast were two representatives from St. Francis Episcopal who caught the vision and wanted to help this come to reality.

Shortly after the breakfast, Father Bob Wismer, Associate Rector of St. Francis, and the Alpha team from Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church

met together to invite their zip code of 77024 to dinner. This quickly spread to include seven West Houston zip codes now all collaborating to invite their area to dinner to meet Jesus.

CHURCHES WORKING TOGETHER


Churches have signed up to run the Alpha Course concurrently starting mid-September. The goal is to unite churches and inspire people to invite their friends, co-workers and family to discuss the questions of life using the Alpha Course.

The BIG vision of inviting the City of Houston to dinner at a church near them is now much clearer! It is exciting to see "One Life, One Church, One Community" transformed by God, and then to see our City touched one zip code at a time. Alpha Houston celebrates the unified effort to make Jesus available to all who are seeking.

THIS POSTCARD IS PART OF THE WEST HOUSTON INVITATION

BEAR GRYLLS
Host of "Man Vs. Wild"
Discovery Channel™

"IS THERE MORE TO LIFE?"

THE ALPHA COURSE |  alpha.org
explore the meaning of life



Jesus said, "If I be lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself."

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

The second week we arrived we found about 26 homeless people waiting for us. We all looked at each other and within a split second we all divided up and went to their tables and began shaking hands! One man told me that he woke up that morning and said to God, "God, I don't have anything to eat this morning! I don't know what to do." About that time another man passed by him and told him to come to First Methodist. He told him that we were having a Bible Study and a good breakfast. He came and he was fed and cared for!

For the past several weeks we have met new people who mostly live on the streets. One man in my small group said that he had been running all of his life and he was tired of running. We are amazed and delighted how many of them know the Bible and can recite it instantly!

This whole thing has been a God thing for us. We love all of the men and women who are coming! We have been in the presence of disciples without degrees! We love them, feed them and pray for them. We can't wait to see who all God will send to our next Alpha meeting.

*Rev. Ann Spears for
the Alpha Team*



"I took the Alpha Course and my life has never been the same."

MICHAEL YOUNG
Vice President
Max Petroleum
Chairman of the Board
Alpha Houston



George Barna, the famous pollster, states that over 54% of those attending the Alpha course make a commitment to Jesus.

We'd Love Your Pics

Have lives been transformed in your Alpha course? Has your church been changed? We, at the Alpha Houston office, would love to hear about it.

We encourage you to send us testimonies and pictures. Email them to info@alphahouston.org.

Michael Young has found himself in the Oil and Gas industry for over seventeen years. But after taking the Alpha Course, little did he know he would be part of making it available to the entire Greater Houston area. December of 2008 found him stepping into the lead role of the Alpha Houston Board. He has never looked back. Young's influence spreads from Kazakhstan with Max Petroleum to the far reaching limits of Houston. He and his wife Margaret are members of St. John the Divine Episcopal Church and have three beautiful children. "We are all about sharing the transforming power of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and Alpha is a great tool to do just that!"

The West Houston Alpha Invitation

“It’s churches from ALL denominations in zip codes 77024, 77042, 77055, 77056, 77057, 77077 & 77079 doing The Alpha Course SIMULTANEOUSLY starting in September 2010 so we can see our entire community reached for Christ. It’s not to late—join with us.”

Bob Wismer, Assistant Rector, St. Francis Episcopal

Hold The Dates!

August 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

October 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

City Wide Training

Debi Tengler, President and Executive Director of Alpha Houston, along with a team of experienced Alpha practitioners, will conduct the annual fall City-Wide Alpha Training. The training will cover everything a church needs to consider before hosting an Alpha course, including:

- Principles and Practicalities of Running the Alpha Course
- Successful Leadership Development, including Training for Table Leaders
- How to Minister Effectively

Let Us Train Your Leaders

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church
11612 Memorial Drive
Houston, Texas 77024

Saturday, August 14, 2010
8:30 am to 3:30 pm
Cost is \$20. Lunch is included

Joint Kickoff Meal

Alpha practitioners from several churches are bannng together to organize what perhaps will be the largest Kickoff Celebration Dinner yet in Houston. Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church, located at 11612 Memorial Drive, will be the site of this kickoff, which is scheduled for Sunday, September 12th, 2010. The doors will open at 6:00 pm.

The Celebration Dinner will be hosted by:

Bering Drive Church of Christ

Christ Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Memorial Drive Christian Church

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church

Memorial Drive United Methodist Church

St. Francis Episcopal Church and

St. Martins Episcopal Church

Register now by calling the Alpha Houston office at 713-960-9701. It promises to be a great event. There will be an opportunity to sign up for an Alpha course at the location and time of your choice.

Joint Weekend Away

Mark your calendar for **October 22-23, 2010**. This is the time in the Alpha Course when the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit will be discussed.

Need a refresher? Come and see. Join us. Make your reservations now at info@alphahouston.org

Donations Welcome

GOODSEARCH: www.goodsearch.com

GOODSHOP: www.goodshop.com

MAIL: 3262 Westheimer, #157, Houston, TX 77098

ONLINE: www.alphahouston.org

THANK YOU

Alpha Houston, a 501(3)(c) non-profit organization, accepts donations to help make Jesus known or better known.

Perhaps it's your turn.

Alpha is a worldwide phenomenon. It's found in over 160 countries. It's run in tens of thousands of churches of all denominations. More than 15 million people have taken this opportunity to explore the meaning of life. It's for you!

Save the Date

CITY WIDE ALPHA LEADER TRAINING

Saturday, August 14
8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Cost is \$20. Lunch is included.
Memorial Drive Presbyterian



Alpha Houston

AlphaHouston 3262 Westheimer Road, #157 Houston, TX 77098 713-960-9701 alphahouston.org



The 2010 Alpha Americas Conference

Debi Tengler, President and Executive Director of Alpha Houston, along with five others from Houston, just got back from an amazing conference in Chicago. It was a time of vision building, great speakers, fellowship and planning.

Alpha practitioners from all over North and South America gathered to learn better how to utilize the strengths of the Alpha course to revitalize their churches and evangelize their nations.

Tengler brought with her **Colin Millar**, the Prayer Coordinator from the Board of Directors, her administrative assistant, **Lucinda Bailey** and three people who work with Alpha at local churches around Houston. **Brian Owen**, an associate pastor from **Grace United Methodist Church** in Katy, plus **Larry Henneke**, Executive Pastor at Our Saviours Lutheran/Alpha Advisor from Victoria, got some wise counsel directed to pastors. **Sonya Heath**, who recently discovered the Alpha course, rounded out the Houston contingency. She is active with Alpha at **First United Methodist Church** in downtown Houston.

One of the highlights of the conference was a presentation by Bishop Todd Hunter, acclaimed social researcher

and Christian strategist. Hunter believes that Alpha is God's best tool for meeting the needs of our post-modern generation. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul makes it clear that he voluntarily became a servant to any and all, in order to reach a wide range of people. Hunter says "That's our challenge, today as well."

Chameleon Think

"If we are to reach the six million people in the greater Houston metroplex, that will mean that we will have to learn how to communicate with the religious, the irreligious, legalists as well as meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated along with overachievers—whomever God brings into our path. And we've got to have insight into how to bring the Gospel—the Good News—into their world in a way that is meaningful to our audience. And it might be inconvenient," Hunter states.

Hunter, quoting from *Un-Christian* (Kinnaman & Lyons) states: "One of the generational differences is a growing tide of hostility and resentment toward Christianity. In 1996, 85% were favorable toward Christianity's role in society. ... But now, a decade later, they have lost much of their respect for the Christian Faith. These days nearly two out of every five young outsiders (38% of the population) claim to have a 'bad impression of present-day Christianity.'"

The younger generations do not think that they are listened to or that their viewpoints are important.

The Solution is Alpha

The shift in society's view of the church has resulted in the marginalization of the church and the secularization of society. Christianity has lost its place at the center of American life. Researchers point out that "Christians must learn how to live the gospel as a distinct people who no longer occupy the center of society. We must learn how to build relationship bridges that win a hearing."

Kinnaman and Lyons found the under thirty crowd believe that "Christians like to hear themselves talk. They are arrogant about their beliefs, but they never bother figuring out what other people actually think. They don't seem to be compassionate, especially when they feel strongly about something."

True Respect

True respect for people is a key factor in effective evangelism. Actively listening to others is a wonderful way to demonstrate genuine respect. On the Alpha course all of the guests are encouraged to speak their mind. There is no question too hostile or naive Hunter says, "The Alpha Course scratches right where post-modern people itch!"

Volunteer
of the Month

We'd like to recognize ...

Linda Jones

for her unceasing
prayer & support!