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## The Alpha Course is NOT TRUE to the Bible

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A ten-week course designed to introduce the Christian faith to new believers and unbelievers in a relaxed, informal setting is becoming increasingly popular in the United States and Canada.

Called the ALPHA Course, this program originated at the Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), an Anglican church in England, and was developed by the HTP pastor Niki Gumbel for use by other churches. ALPHA is endorsed by world religious leaders such as Robert Schuller, J.I. Packer, Luis Palau, Alister McGrath and Gordon Fee. The name ALPHA is derived from the first letters of the following phrases which describe the purpose and goals of the course:

**A**n anyone interested in finding out more about the Christian faith:

**L**earning and laughter:

**P**eople meeting together:

**H**elping one another:

**A**sk anything.

Typically, individuals desiring to learn about Christianity meet for several hours a week for ten weeks at a location designated by a host church.

While it is important for new believers to become more familiar with the Christian faith and for unbelievers to hear about Christ, the problem with ALPHA is what is **not told** to those participating in the course. Because ALPHA is promoted predominantly by Anglican and Episcopalian churches, those in attendance at courses hosted by these churches will certainly never be told that **salvation is obtained by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ** and that **Biblical separation from any other gospel or from false doctrine is a Scriptural mandate**.

In contrast, ALPHA promoter Richard F. Grein, Anglican bishop of New York said,

"This course's beginning is oriented toward warming the faith of baptized people and then goes beyond that to the unbaptized." Obviously in the eyes of Grein, baptism is the dividing line between those who are saved and those who are unsaved.

Those churches that host ALPHA courses not only include Anglican and Episcopal churches, but also Roman Catholic churches, mainline Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches and many independent Evangelical and Charismatic churches including those involved in the Vineyard Fellowship.

Just recently, the largest ALPHA conference in the United States, held at St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Winter Springs, Florida, attracted 600 people. *Religion Today* noted that the attendees "received a welcome from Bishop John Howe of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida" as well as ALPHA founder Niki Gumbel.

Bible-believing churches should strive to teach the Word of God to believers and preach the Gospel to unbelievers...but to become a part of a movement that us using a watered-down, user-friendly approach to teach Christianity to believers and unbelievers is an affront to the complete message of God's Word which commands separation from false teaching.

We now hear that Cardinal Keeler of Baltimore has said that his archdiocese has found the Alpha Course very useful for leading non-Roman Catholics to their churches. "Those who complete the ALPHA course are ready and eager to take part in the small communities that are forming in parishes - ready and eager to learn more about our Church and her sacraments and to evangelize others."

In England, Roman Catholic Bishop Griffiths of Hexham and Newcastle stated, "We want to evangelize, but we don't seem to have found the right method. I think that the ALPHA course offers easily the best method so far invented."

These commendation by Roman clergy underline the fact that the ALPHA Course is helping Rome to spread her pernicious influence and to lure people to embrace her soul-destroying errors. If the ALPHA Course was scripturally sound, Rome would have nothing to do with it. Churches which claim to be Reformed and Protestant are belying their profession when they make use of it.

