



Alpha Canada

Annual Review 2020



THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN
AND A NEW EARTH... REV 21





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Message from Shaila

Moving Forward, Together

Dear Friends,

We could never have anticipated what God had in store for the church in Canada in 2020. The church has continued to see success and has had great struggles. Despite all the challenges that church leaders have faced in this season, we've seen the body of Christ continue to work together and even thrive for the sake of the gospel in our nation.

In March 2020, we as an organization stopped and prayed, the Board engaged more deeply and regularly, and management ensured that our staff and our finances were healthy. Then we turned our focus to the church.

The global pandemic has required the church to respond in unprecedented ways to continue the work of evangelism. As churches all over Canada are adjusting to new ways of doing life and ministry, we have focused on our values and our culture which has allowed us to make the appropriate pivots to our service model to the church. Alpha online became our primary focus and we prioritized creating new resources to train and equip the church.

Serving the Church

To support churches in their effort to evangelize, we doubled down on prayer support and direct person-to-person contact. In 2020, we developed a team that coordinated praying for and with church leaders and Alpha volunteers as well as provided personal one-on-one coaching in all our regions and contexts (Youth, Prison, and Catholic). This has given us closer contact with our customer—the church in Canada—so we can pivot quickly to meet her needs.

Online Engagement

In 2020, we saw online engagement dramatically increase across the board. We increased our digital investment, ensured that our content was easily accessible, and our delivery and support moved online. In this season of isolation and uncertainty, people were looking for connection as well as support to share their faith with a hurting world. Comparing the same time period in 2019 to 2020, we saw a 239% increase in email engagement, a 58% increase in Facebook video views, a 52% increase in Vimeo video views, and a 23% increase in website traffic.

In this pandemic period, our team hosted more than 50 online events with over 4,500 attendees. These webinars and interactive training sessions extended our impact with great success. All our materials are currently published and available on our website.

As more and more leaders are equipped to share life, faith and Jesus, we are excited to see the new ways that God is using Alpha to reach people in Canada.

Reaching the Next Generation

This year was especially challenging for Canada's youth pastors and leaders navigating the pandemic while continuing to successfully engage their youth. We are pleased to share that out of 2,100 online Alphas, 539+ of them were for our youth.

Financial

We are so grateful for our faithful partners that allowed us to continue God's work. We made adjustments throughout the year to manage cash flow and expenses. By the grace of God, we were able to exceed our revenue targets, but 30% of that income came in the last three weeks of 2020. Looking forward, we will continue to closely monitor expenses in 2021 so that we maintain a financially healthy organization to ensure we can live out God's call on the ministry.

Looking Forward

The church has been through a tumultuous year. The landscape of ministry has changed so dramatically that for many, the ability to focus on evangelism—which in itself requires extra effort—was especially challenging this year. With empathy for this changing landscape, we have adjusted our own strategy accordingly. We pivoted to Alpha online and to webinars to meet the needs of churches as they work to keep their congregations engaged and on mission. The management at Alpha Canada continues to monitor and listen to our stakeholders and to champion evangelism in Canada through our support of the local church.

In 2020, we have learned that as an organization, Alpha Canada needs to be attentive to the changing needs of the church and extremely adaptable in the way we respond to those needs. Our whole team is committed to moving forward in prayer knowing that the Holy Spirit is our most strategic partner.

My hope is that this report will fill you with gratitude for all that He has done through the local church in every corner of our nation using Alpha.

Thank you for your partnership.

Love,



Shaila Visser

National Director, Alpha Canada







2020 Highlights

Celebrating Your Impact

We knew that the impact of the pandemic would be reflected in our statistics as well. We saw an increase in the number of Alphas that were run across Canada. Churches pivoted to Alpha online and ran courses in smaller groups with fewer guests. Along with the increase in number of courses, we also saw an increase in the average number of Alphas that churches ran per year.

The format of Alpha online reflected the overall downward trend of volunteers in 2020. In-person Alphas require people to set up venues, cook, welcomes guests, perhaps even music teams. Online, fewer volunteers are needed to run successful Alphas.



65,453

People heard the good news of Jesus on Alpha



22,712

Began or Restored a relationship with Jesus.



4,859

Alphas ran in churches/orgs across the nation



2,238

Churches and organizations ran Alpha



459

Churches/orgs ran Alpha for the first time



28,648

Volunteers participated in running Alpha



1,155,619

have experienced Alpha in Canada (all time)

New Resources and Ways to Engage and Equip the Church

The shift to an online focus in 2020 allowed Alpha Canada to scale both the breadth and depth of our support for the church in Canada through new online resources and ways to engage with Alpha leaders across the country.

Alpha Cohorts

Alpha Cohorts was a new initiative in 2020 creating space for Alpha leaders to share their experiences with each other over Zoom. These conversations take place three times throughout an Alpha course and are facilitated by an Alpha Canada staff member.

These opportunities to connect provide a space for course administrators to share their wins and learn from each other. Some key topics have been around invitations, hosting, and the logistics of the Holy Spirit weekend.

1:1 Coaching

1:1 Coaching is an opportunity for Alpha leaders to connect directly with a member from the Alpha Canada team to ask any of their Alpha-related questions. Coaching allows us to keep our ears to the ground and learn what areas churches need the most expertise in regarding their Alpha experience.

In 2020, through 1:1 Coaching, our team had over 250 personal touchpoints with Alpha leaders across the country.

Webinars

Beginning in March 2020, shortly after the world went into a pandemic lockdown, Alpha Canada began hosting online events to encourage and equip church leaders and volunteers to run Alpha online. Since that time, we have hosted more than 48 online events with over 5,492 attendees.

These webinars and learning labs were specifically curated to respond to the needs of the Canadian church in their efforts to evangelize in this season. The content ranged from Alpha 101 to specific webinars around the values and best practices of Alpha such as *The Power of Invitation*.

"The webinar was a tremendous help. We both feel so supported by Alpha Canada and are excited to see what God will do on our Alpha course."

**- Pauline and David,
Coquitlam, BC**



"We had a really great experience running Alpha at York! It helped us be more outward facing and evangelistically positioned during these pandemic times. Thank you for all your help!"

**- Jill Roias, Power to Change,
York University, ON**



Online Team Training Videos

To meet the growing demand for online training resources, Alpha Canada produced three new Alpha Online Team Training videos. These videos serve Alpha leaders by helping them empower and equip their teams to host an amazing Alpha experience online.

Alpha Online Guide

Along with the new online team training videos, Alpha Canada partnered with Alpha Australia to develop *The Complete Guide to Alpha Online*. Available in both English and French, this downloadable PDF takes leaders through the step-by-step process of planning and running an effective Alpha online. Since launching the guide in late 2020 in Canada, it has been downloaded over 1,000 times!

Série Alpha Jeunes

Over the last number of years, Alpha Canada has been focusing on Quebec as a region with tremendous opportunity to reach people with the gospel. Building on the success of the Alpha Youth Film Series (AYFS) to impact students for Jesus, we released the new French-dubbed Alpha Youth Series in 2020. The project included new interviews of students in Quebec to localize the content, making it appealing and relatable for the Québécois context, to its multicultural students, as well as to Francophones globally.

We launched the first iteration of this project in June to support Francophone churches in engaging youth during the pandemic. We were hoping that 5 French Youth Alphas would begin and use this new series, and we were very pleased that 19 signed up within the first 3 weeks!

“Before Alpha, it was really hard to talk about spiritual things, but when doing it virtually, you’re not interrupted and can really listen and be in a calm place.”

- Miguel, Alpha Youth Online Guest, Montreal, QC

Online Learning Stats



250
new touchpoints
through 1:1
Coaching



48
online events
with over 5,492
participants



3
new Alpha online
team training
videos



1,000+
downloads of *The
Complete Guide to
Alpha Online*



Our Impact

"Without your generosity, I would not be sitting here. I would not be tumor-free. I would not be having a relationship with God. I would not be a forgiving person. I'm so grateful that I have all of this peace in my heart and in my life now that I never had before."

- **Cheryl, Alpha Online Guest,
London, ON**

"We saw dozens of new students get connected to our ministry, many of which continue to engage with us to this day."

- **Spencer Conway, Youth Pastor,
Rock Church, Halifax, NS**



2,127

Alphas ran online



1,177

Churches and organization ran Alpha online



1,622

Youth Alphas ran, with 561 of them online



22,256

Youth heard the good news through Alpha

Alpha Online

Celebrating Transformed Lives

Despite the challenges that 2020 brought, we saw God move in a way that we could not have begun to predict. Alpha online worked! It brought people to Alpha in the safety and comfort of their own homes. There were no longer the restrictions of travel or needing transport to get to an Alpha. People could join with the simple click of a button and more people came than anticipated. We heard guests say that they felt more comfortable sharing and opening up online. The Holy Spirit moved and is still moving across Canada, transforming lives through multiple platforms and in digital spaces.

Guest Story

Nick grew up in the church but rejected his faith and in his late teens, he walked away from Jesus.

At a wedding, Nick ran into an old friend who invited him to an Alpha. When COVID hit and Nick found out the church was going to move their Alpha online, he decided to continue with the course and discovered that being in the comfort of his own home made it easier for him to open up and share.

When they reached the talks on the Holy Spirit, Nick was overwhelmed by the love of God and surrendered his life to Jesus. Nick experienced the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in his life and went from being a guest at Alpha online to helping host a small group at the next one!

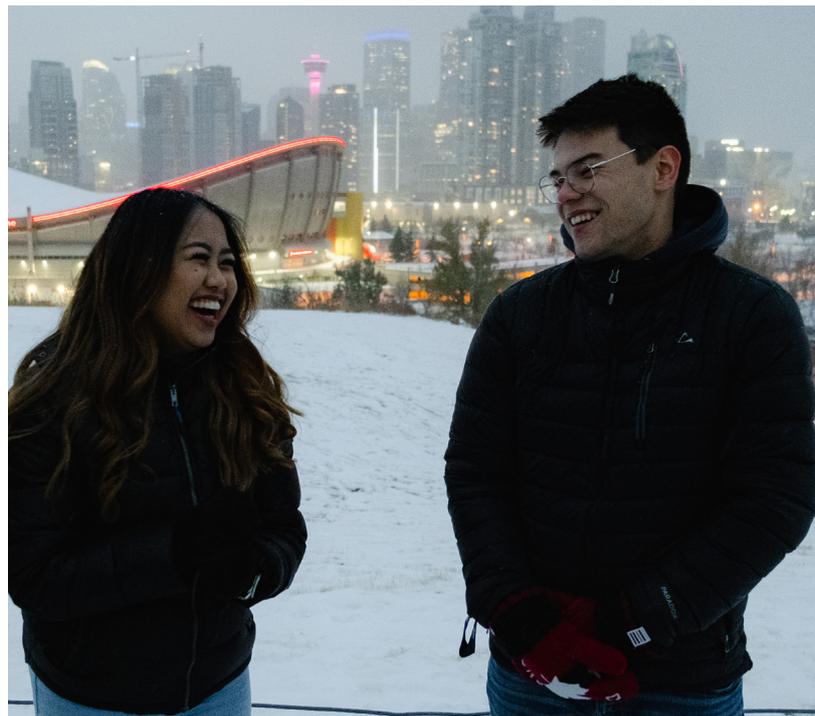
"We got to the message about the Holy Spirit and after the conversation was done I said something along the lines of, 'Holy Spirit, are you there?' And I broke down for what felt like hours. And I just apologized for running away and everything I had done over the years."

**- Nick, Alpha Online Guest,
Vancouver, BC**

Youth Story

Youth all across Canada dealt with major interruptions to their plans in 2020 and had to overcome challenges that we never thought their generation would face. However, even with these challenges, they continued to share Jesus with their friends!

We heard an amazing story of a group of Calgary students across different churches who joined together to run Alpha online for their friends. The online space helped create community for youth who were feeling isolated and alone and gave them a chance to ask questions about life, faith and God.



Serving Canadian Church Leaders

Collaboration is Key to Spread His Word

In late 2020, we interviewed 44 leaders in Protestant churches across Canada on what was taking place in their midst in this unique season and how COVID-19 had impacted their ministry, specifically evangelism. The purpose of these interviews was to listen and to learn how Alpha can most effectively serve the church moving forward. Many of these leaders shared how running Alpha was an effective way to engage their congregations and share the gospel with their communities during the pandemic. **You can read the full report at alphacanada.org/blog/leading-with-hope/**

“Alpha online has been a great tool to help see our mission accomplished. I was able to run it myself and found it impactful and it’s so easy to run it online at any moment.”

**- Ed Fontaine, Senior Pastor,
Springvale Church, Stouffville, ON**

“Alpha equips the church to have a welcoming place to invite people. We are using it as a gathering place for people who want to learn more about Jesus. Our church has adapted Alpha during COVID as an opportunity for individuals to host a group of their own choosing. For some, this involves them inviting their own family and friends who are exploring faith. It’s become a significant way to expand our reach and connect meaningfully in this season while using the insights and teaching provided by Alpha.”

**- Kelvin Honsinger, Executive Pastor and Interim Lead Pastor,
Glad Tidings Church, Burlington, ON**



Celebrating the Global Alpha Family

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” - **Matthew 28: 19-20**

Alpha Canada celebrates our global network. This year we saw 26,000 churches run Alpha with **1.3+ million people participating**. The Holy Spirit moved and is still moving across the world, transforming lives.

Regional Highlights

African

- 49% of all courses were hosted for young people
- 497 churches ran for the first time
- ≈50,000 people reached in Sub-Saharan Africa

Asia Pacific

- 400% increase in number of available resources

Europe

- 1,000+ guests at online Alpha for the Diocese of Fréjus-Toulon
- 35% increase in Alpha courses in the UK

Middle East

- 1st ever Youth Alpha ran in Saudi Arabia
- 300 online Alphas run by 1 Hub Church in Kuwait

Latin America

- 45%+ increase in Alpha participants

North America

- 21% increase in Alpha Youth participants in the United States

Our Neighbours to the South

Alpha Canada and Alpha USA have worked alongside each other for many years. This pandemic year has been no different. They shared their report from the Barna Group and two data points, in particular, captured our attention:

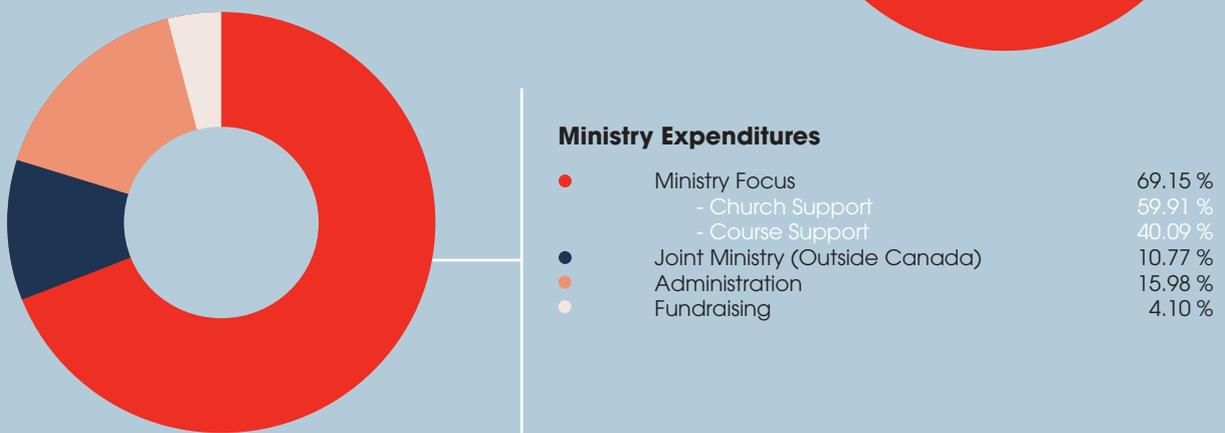
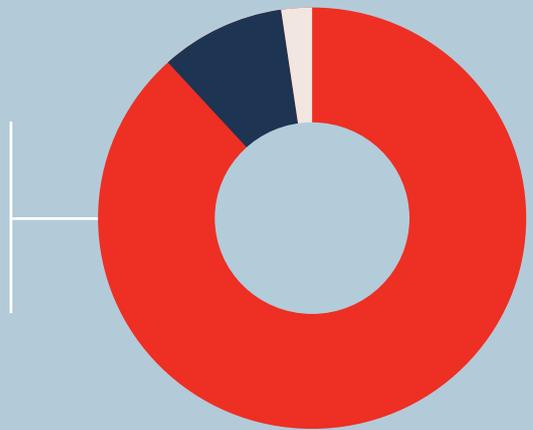
Nearly half (47%) of Christian Millennials think sharing one's faith is wrong. Yet, 94% of these same Christian Millennials think knowing Jesus is the best thing that could happen to anyone.

The disconnect it seems is not in people wanting others to know Jesus. It's how they learn about Him—the method—that concerns the next generation. This data gave Alpha Canada insight into our continued need to envision people for a “Life Shared,” emphasizing genuine relationship and invitation to active community in the local church.

When the church leads with radical hospitality, listening and trusting in the Holy Spirit, and empowering guests to navigate their journey on their own terms, we all win.

Alpha Canada continues to glean from our partners around the world as we grow in evangelism together.

2020 Financials



"It's wonderful to support Alpha and the work we can all do together to reach our nation for Christ."

**- Ken and Christine Yeager,
Giving Partners, North Vancouver, BC**

Our Mission

To inspire and serve the Canadian Church in its mission to help people discover a relationship with Jesus Christ, using Alpha.

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