

# CAC Alpha Conference 2020: Igniting the Spark of Digital Evangelism

## Rev Glenn Tan

Member of Board of Witness & Evangelism (BoWE)  
Assistant Pastor, Toa Payoh Chinese Methodist Church

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there is not just a “physical hunger that the church needs to run towards, but also there is a spiritual hunger. In this situation you have to pivot very fast... **We pivoted online and we found that a whole load of people who would never have come to our church are listening in online.**” In his video address, Rev Nicky Gumbel, Founder of the Alpha Course, highlighted that even though the pandemic has forced churches to be physically closed to congregations, online evangelism has opened a valuable opportunity for many to hear the gospel.

The Alpha Course is not a new iteration of evangelism in the church. In fact, it was started in 1990 with Rev Nicky Gumbel explaining the basic tenets of the Christian faith in an engaging and easily-comprehensible manner over 10 weeks. To meet the changing needs of churches, the course has since evolved to include a youth video series, a documentary-styled Alpha film series and a soon-to-be-released Chinese Alpha film series produced in China.

On 14 and 15 August 2020, the CAC Board of Witness & Evangelism (BoWE) partnered Alpha Singapore in organising “Ignite: CAC Alpha Conference” to introduce churches to the sharing of the gospel via videoconferencing platform, Zoom. Sixty-two members from twelve CAC churches were joined by participants from other local churches, as well as participants from New Zealand and China. In

his opening keynote address, CAC President Rev Dr Gregory Goh urged and reminded participants that many people have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel. He thus exhorted churches to not just simply devote resources to evangelism, but to also exhibit a zeal for evangelism that characterised the Methodist movement.



In the address by Rev Pan Hung Yi from New Zealand, Rev Pan emphasised that the essence of the Alpha Course was not just a tool for evangelism but a vital component of discipleship that enables **the church to build up a culture of respect, honour, evangelism, and teamwork.** An Alpha practitioner for the past 20 years, Rev Pan shared that he is convinced “Alpha can be used to transform the culture of the church.”

At the close of the “Ignite” conference, Ms Angelic Cheah, executive director of Alpha Singapore reflected, “The CAC-Alpha collaboration is a start of our journey to set the stage for this new season to reach out to our community and to bring pre-believers to encounter the Love of Christ.” Following the conference, a number of CAC church participants have joined Alpha Singapore’s online labs to learn more about the practicalities of running an Alpha Course online. In addition, Alpha Singapore is committed to customising trainings for churches and is organising an Empower training in November 2020 to prepare churches which are planning to run the Alpha Course in 2021. More information can be found on Alpha Singapore’s website <https://singapore.alpha.org/>

