



WHAT'S AFTER ATX

2020 AUSTIN CITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN

WHY A CITY-WIDE CAMPAIGN?

Christ Together Greater Austin seeks to serve all churches by helping each local expression be their best in what God's called them to do and to do things together as the Church in Austin that none of us could do alone.

One of those is to raise the spiritual awareness of Austin every few years through city-wide campaigns like Explore God, Love Where You Live, and now, **What's After ATX**. The idea is to raise awareness on a topic about God and faith across our city that helps church congregations engage their neighbors in spiritual conversations. Ultimately, we long to see those conversations turn to the life-changing Gospel and new disciples in Christ. The Austin metro continues to grow rapidly—now the eleventh largest U.S. city—and so has the lostness. The need for city-wide evangelism is greater than ever.

WHY WHAT'S AFTER ATX & NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES?

In our age of modern medicine, one in 25 people have been pronounced clinically “dead” or near death yet were resuscitated (Gallup Poll). They came back to life claiming to have had a glimpse of a world beyond this world. A world vastly “more real” than our three-dimensional earthly experience. Millions of people have had these near-death experiences (NDEs), and our culture is fascinated by them. However, Christians have not helped interpret these experiences for the culture.

After 35 years of research studying over one thousand NDEs, John Burke wrote *Imagine Heaven: Near Death Experiences, God's Promises, and the Exhilarating Future That Awaits You*. *Imagine Heaven* incorporates 120 people's experiences coloring in the Bible's picture of the life to come. Not only do these experiences validate the Heaven of the Bible and the message of Jesus for skeptics, they help believers imagine just how great the life to come will be (like Colossians 3:1-3 encourages), inspiring us to live for eternity.

Imagine Heaven quickly became a New York Times Bestseller, and John was interviewed by multiple mainstream news shows, indicating the hunger in the culture for understanding NDEs and how they relate to the Bible. Whenever John speaks at churches across the country, hundreds of people come to faith.

Church members say it's an easy invite to ask, “Have you heard of near-death experiences? When people are pronounced dead, then are resuscitated and they claim to glimpse Heaven...we're talking about that at our church, and we're even going to hear from people who have had these experiences...wanna come?” Many non-believers come because they're curious.

Imagine Heaven shows very clearly how the common reported elements of these experiences line up with Scripture. We are creating a smaller “give-away” abridged version of *Imagine Heaven* titled *What Comes After Life?*, so that church members participating in the campaign could give booklets to their neighbors and invite them to meet-up groups to talk about it and see video testimony by credible NDErs.

During the campaign, Christ Together will invest \$300k+ for a media campaign that raises city-wide awareness on the topic of life after death from this medical resuscitation perspective. Each church that participates in the series will have access to the sermon series, along with video interviews to use in the message of very credible people who had NDEs (a spine surgeon, a tenured college professor, a pastor, a commercial airline pilot, people of different races and religious backgrounds—all testifying about Jesus and the life He promised). Training for your congregation in how to conduct neighborhood discussions, along with video curriculum, will help your church members engage their neighbors in spiritual conversations as well.