

SPECIAL APPEAL

Christmas 2015

As this year draws to a close, we've written a special Christmas newsletter for you, our Evangelical Alliance family. I've pondered all God has done thanks to appeal gifts this year, and I've been filled more than ever with gratitude for you and your support. It's generous people like you who make this work possible. So let me begin with heartfelt thanks.

Over the past year, supporters like you have:

- ★ helped raise up future Christian leaders,
- ★ enabled young people to re-engage with their faith,
- ★ brought churches together to do more than they could apart,
- ★ and given voice to the Church's good news.

I cannot thank you enough.

In fact, you've helped raise a wonderful 70% of our appeals target this year to support four of the Alliance's most vital initiatives: Public Leadership, *threads*, Gather and advocacy.

In your enclosed Christmas newsletter you can read just how much of an impact your support has made this year. You can also find out what's coming up for each of these key initiatives. Because we need your help now more than ever to make a difference. There's still 30% more to raise towards this appeals target to do all that we believe God has called us to do.

First, I'd like to share with you the difference your support has made to one young lady: Emma Constantine. You may remember that last February we wrote to you about our Public Leadership initiative and asked for your support in part for a young leaders training weekend in July. Because of your gifts, 27 aspiring and established public leaders, including Emma, came together in Sussex...

"I first heard about Public Leadership when I was considering leaving my job. I was aware of the gifts and passions God had given me, but I felt I wasn't making the most of them in my role. I needed some direction and inspiration."

Emma was struggling to find the support and direction she needed from her church. *"I feel hugely supported by my church when leading kids' ministry or other roles within church, but in terms of my workplace and public leadership, I don't feel I have as much direction or clarity."* So we asked her how she found the Public Leadership training she received:



Emma Constantine

"I loved the weekend conference. The teaching was hugely encouraging. It was good to be reminded of what it is to follow and use our God-given gifts, to spend time praying and listening to Him, and to understand better the biblical basis for leadership. One of the best things was the time given to build relationships and encourage one another in our spheres of influence."

"It enabled me to pin down where God's calling me to be a leader. I can now say with more confidence and clarity that God has given me a passion for shaping education. I truly believe in the power of education to make a difference in every young person's life, but I feel my creativity and gifts don't flourish in the mainstream system. I would ultimately like to be part of shaping a system where all young people can succeed. I'm delighted, therefore, to have just started work as a teacher with an educational charity that works with uneducated and unemployed young people. Praise God!"

Praise God indeed! Because of your support, God is using Public Leadership to help support, inspire and equip future Christian leaders in public life. You've already made such a difference to Emma and others like her. Could you help many more? A gift of £80 could help train and support one young leader at a training weekend.

Please consider a special gift this Christmas to help us raise the remaining shortfall and make a huge difference through one of these initiatives: Public Leadership, *threads*, Gather and advocacy.

So thank you. I can't say it enough. Your generous and often sacrificial gifts are what make this work possible. As Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers." (1 Thessalonians 1:2)

I hope you will be encouraged by what you read in the enclosed, and give further to this work that you have enabled us to begin. We know you understand the need.

Warmest wishes this Christmas,

Steve

Steve Clifford
General Director



PS As you pause and take some time to review the year gone by, can I ask that you consider a special gift this Christmas to support the area of our work that moves you most?



Your support for *threads* has also made a huge difference to young adults on the fringes of church. Matt is 32 and stopped going to church a couple of years ago. This is Matt's story:

"A couple of years ago I stopped going to church. There wasn't much provision for or understanding of my stage in life. I felt like the odd one out and so was on the fringes of church life. I started to find the services boring, with a lack of relevance to me. It was disheartening and left me disillusioned."

"threads is great. There are articles on lots of subjects you don't normally see addressed and that I find really relevant to me. I like to share something of my experiences and story in response to articles, and it's good to hear from others too and realise I identify with a lot of them. threads is a reminder that faith is different from just church or religion and is encompassed by everything we do."

