Interested in becoming a Prayer or City Pastor?

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Plymouth City Pastors

- taking Love to the streets

1st Anniversary Newsletter – celebrating 12 months since January 2025 as Plymouth City Pastors, part of ROC St Angels – see www.streetangels.org.uk

We hope this newsletter will challenge and inspire you as to the greatness of God and will thank our team and supporters. More testimonials can be found on the Testimonies page at www.plymouthcitypastors.org.uk

Will I have to stop being a City Pastor?

Some months ago I got a sharp pain in my right knee which gradually grew worse over time, to the point where I was wondering if I would soon have to stop being a City Pastor, given that it involves a lot of walking of course. I really didn't want to have to do that as I love what we do and the fulfilment that it gives me in serving others on our streets

The pain got really bad one night and my team gathered round to pray in the early hours. After I had slept and got up I am delighted to say that God then healed it later that morning so the next time we were on patrol, the team was nagging me to slow down a bit! Thank you Lord, I'm now looking forward to continuing as a City Pastor, although perhaps at a slightly slower pace!

Another "impossible" situation

We had a radio call for assistance at the Safebus, where we met a guy from Penzance who had been on a train; met a few guys on board who persuaded him to get off at Plymouth, then promptly abandoned him! He had no ID, no wallet, no money or cards, no phone, no key..... and wasn't forthcoming with his name or any other details

We wondered if he might be autistic but he told the paramedics he was bipolar. With no information to go on, we started to wonder about a place of safety. Then the senior paramedic managed to obtain the man's mother's phone no. That itself was a miracle - how many of us can remember phone numbers nowadays? We rang mum; to her great relief as it transpired he'd been missing for 2 days! The police discovered he was registered as a missing person and really helped us. In all this the senior paramedic was so caring and it was a privilege to work alongside him

So, so many miracles/answers to prayer! That he arrived at the Safebus walking from the rail station. That he could even remember his mum's phone number; that he remained calm and trusted us. Overall we knew though that the real miracle was that our God was once again showing his amazing love and care and even allowing us to play a small part in getting this man safe in what might otherwise have been called an impossible situation!

Could I have a Bible?

While talking to a street sleeper, he asked for a Bible, understanding we don't normally carry them but he was happy for next week's team to be informed and bring him one.

This was mentioned in conversation in our break and *as it happened*, I had a New Testament & Psalms in my car so we were able to take it to him after our break. We have since seen him and he said he's been reading it every night! Thankyou Lord for arranging yet another *"coincidence"*!

Pop Up Church

We are privileged to regularly work alongside a small & faithful "Pop Up Church" team in Stonehouse each Tuesday and Thursday evening, where the combined team cares in various ways for "working girls", the homeless, residents of the George Hostel and some people with mental health problems

The life stories we hear can be quite sad, even harrowing sometimes but we are grateful, even when we haven't a clue how to help someone; that a listening ear and/or the offer of a hug, alongside a hot chocolate are so readily accepted and might be a signpost for that person to find God's love for themselves one day

1 Space Blanket + God's love =

On Saturday we met a young man who warmly shook our hands and thanked us, saying that some years ago, he had got drunk and embarrassed himself in front of his pregnant girlfriend by wetting his pants.

One of our teams wrapped him in a space blanket; the effect of which was that ***he's been off drugs ever since despite having been on them since age 13*** and growing up in a family which regularly took drugs. He's also still with the same girl

– WOW! The power of a space blanket when mixed with God's love. Thankyou Lord!

Finances

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Devon Community Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Plymouth Astor Trust, Holcim, Plymouth Ladies Probus, A C Ballard deceased Trust, St Judes Mission Partners, Best Bar None, St. Winwaloe's, East Portlemouth, Church 41, Plymouth Against Retail Crime, Yealm Lodge GVAV South West Ltd.

If you would like to donate, please visit our website Donate - Plymouth City Pastors

Thank you again everyone – we simply couldn't' do what we do without you! 😊

Listening....with care

As part of our training we are reminded that there is a difference between hearing what someone says and listening to them

I was talking to a man who was heartbroken as his previously healthy dad had just died suddenly, leaving him and his mother totally bereft and in a state of shock. I listened as he told me how close they had been as a family and now how bewildered and grief stricken he and his mum were; wondering how on earth they were going to face the future without dad

My heart went out to him and I found all I could do was to say *"I'm so, so sorry to hear that and I wish I was able to do or say something more for you and your mum"*.

"That's ok" he said*, it's just good to know that someone cares"*

Thank you Lord for the Prayer Pastors!

We were patrolling on the Barbican when one of our team spotted a young lady in a doorway. We went to check if she was ok and found she was *"ever so slightly worse for wear"* and had been separated from her group of friends. She was anxious and confused and, to make matters worse, had left her phone with her friends so had no means of contacting them. We offered to ring her friend or boyfriend, but (as often happens), she couldn't remember their phone numbers.

Plan B was called for so, after finding out the names of said friend and boyfriend, messages were sent via Facebook Messenger to let them know she was safe and to arrange somewhere for them to meet up. Although the messages showed as delivered, we had no reply, so we decided to walk with her to the taxi rank with the idea that she could perhaps get a taxi home.

Unfortunately, she decided she really didn't want to go home just yet and was about to wander off on her own saying in no uncertain terms she'd be ok and really didn't want any more help from us!! Obviously, we appreciated that, being an adult, she was perfectly entitled to continue alone but we were still concerned about her as she was in a vulnerable state, heavily *"under the influence"*, so we phoned back to base again for prayer from our wonderful Prayer Pastors.

Lo and behold, the young lady's boyfriend appeared! He was obviously very concerned about her and somewhat irate that she'd ended up in the company of a group of strangers but once the girl had reassured him that we were helping her and we had explained to him who and what Plymouth City Pastors are, they went off happily to enjoy the rest of their night out.

Just as we thought we were out of options, our Heavenly Father had intervened again and the couple were safely back together. Another example of God's never-ending goodness and answered prayer .....

.....underlined by these thoughts from Exodus ....

I listened to a talk on Exodus 17 in the Bible, about Joshua's battle and victory against the Amalekites but the battle was only won with Moses' lifted hands and with Aaron and Hur's support. The speaker made the point as to why God said in verse 14 ***".....make sure that Joshua hears it"*** , because otherwise Joshua, who had been in the thick of it, killing Amalekites left right and centre, might have thought that he and his army had brought about the victory by themselves, as opposed to Moses, Aaron and Hur being a vital part of the fight and of course, God himself, who granted them the victory

– a lovely picture of what we do isn't it? No way could we City Pastors do what we do, or see some of the miraculous and *"coincidental"* encounters we are privileged to; without the support of our amazing Prayer Pastors and our awesome God!

Stoke Village patrols

Part of our work is providing a late evening patrol once every four weeks in Stoke Village. These began in May 2024 as an extension of Safer Stoke, a cooperative of local residents, Councillors, the Police, and others. Mostly these evening patrols are much quieter than in the City Centre, and folk who are out and about live fairly locally.

As always though, it is definitely prayer which is of paramount importance. One of the Prayer Team is a local resident who is passionate about the difference that prayer can make in the community. She is able to supply details of current issues in the area; providing plenty of material for prayer, on top of situations which the City Pastors phone through from their patrols

As our interest in the area developed, we felt a need to be known and offer ourselves to a wider audience, so began a, *'Meet the City Pastors'* afternoon, once a month - a drop-in time with a cuppa, biscuits, cake, conversation and prayer. These are gathering momentum but mostly they reflect our nocturnal patrols; giving us opportunity to engage with whoever happens to pop in. As with our night patrols, we are sensitive as to whether we offer prayer on the spot or not. We just ask for the name of the street where people live, from which we are compiling an ongoing list for our prayers

Teamwork - Great example of cooperative working last weekend – we were called by CCTV to one of the pubs as the door staff were concerned about a drunk gent who was talking about taking his life.

When we arrived, they and some customers had been talking to him, helping him to reconsider, which made our job slightly easier. We walked him to Safebus, encouraging him of his worth and that whilst suicide might seem like the easy option, it really wasn't the best

We were grateful that the paramedics readily welcomed him onto the bus and talked with him. We left, confident that he was in safe hands

Talking of teamwork…….

We were helping a girl with some very erratic behaviour including continually throwing herself onto the pavement and just running across the road whilst being looked after by an extremely long suffering friend. She'd refused all offers of help from the Police and the Paramedics on the Safebus. We, could spend as much time with her as needed however and she didn't dismiss us.

Long story short, the friend managed to get into her phone and encourage the girl's sister to come from home by taxi. The two sisters spoke together huddled on the pavement. No in depth details came out, but we gathered that the sister doesn't live at home, and *'She's not a proper mother, we need to get you out of there'*. The sister phoned their step-dad, who agreed to come in to them. *'He'll know what to do.'*

We decided, at that point, to leave them – step-dad was only coming from St. Budeaux; but as we walked away, they called us back as the girl had become unconscious. We were really close to the Safebus so we called the Paramedics there. She came round and the Safebus staff were going to stay with them until step-dad came. Before we did then leave, we were able to tell the Safebus staff that maybe her reluctance to be taken home earlier was to do with her mother's relationship with her, but it sounded as if the girls trusted their step-dad.

I have been reflecting how we are able to spend as much time as is needed with those we encounter. There is much respect and collaboration on all sides between us and the professionals working out there, but they are unable to spend the amount of time which we can.

It's the teamwork between ourselves and others in the Evening & Night -Time Economy that must stop so many incidents having different endings – plus our God's care putting us in just the right place at just the right time of course1

Heart-wrenching

I continue to be amazed at the privilege in some of the meetings we have – we were talking to a street sleeper who was grieving as his dad had just died and he was tearfully trying to make up a rap to sing at the funeral – the words he had though were along the lines of *"Please come back and be here again"*. I found it quite heart-wrenching to see his sorrow and I was grateful that he happily accepted a hug

I asked if he'd like some prayer which he was happy for so I prayed and asked the Lord to show him the reality His comfort and fatherhood. He was so grateful and thanked us all profusely with hugs and handshakes. I came away struck again at God's tender mercy in putting us there for him and for us to have the privilege of showing him God's love through the hugs and listening ears

Been there done that (?)

I was thinking about the way God prepared us a bit last night, when in talking to the team before we went out I *"happened"* to say about not being in the mindset of *"been there done that"*, knowing how to handle whatever might come our way that night etc

Then we come across 2 *"standard, easy peasy*" situations, R. who just needed waking up and walking a bit, as far as it seemed at first, yet our God knew he needed to share his pain and get it out, so appointed us to be there for him. We listened to his traumas for quite some time before it seemed appropriate to say our goodbyes with due hugs and thanks from him

Then our guy from Liskeard, being sick, seemed to just need some water and help to the taxi rank, yet as we walked away; none of us had any peace about leaving him there; especially as we knew that some taxi drivers might refuse to take him that far. We went back and felt prompted inside to see if there was a coach going where he needed to go; which it turned out there was, in 15 minutes, which gave us plenty of time to get him to the coach station and on to the coach!

Both *"appointments"* because God loves everyone so much and pours out His mercy so often whether people know it or not ..... and even more amazing maybe that He gives us the privilege of being involved and used for His purposes!