

# Silent?



The Newsletter of  
Manchester City Mission

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# Clear Call

# Director's Bit



**Manchester  
City Mission**

It's an oh so familiar image at this time of year. The Christmas card adorned with a silhouette image of the stable scene set against a star lit sky. If we listen closely, we can almost hear the familiar strain of the all-time favourite carol, Silent Night, in the background.

Quite a lovely carol. Quite evocative of all things Christmassy. Quite probably a wildly inaccurate description of the soundtrack to the nativity! Was this a silent night? I don't think it was.

I may not be an expert, but if memory serves me right, the process of giving birth seems to be a somewhat noisy affair. Not to mention choirs of angels singing Glory to God in the highest!

And then we have the shepherds. They weren't silent; they made known the saying that they had been told concerning the child. Furthermore, they carried on making noise "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen" (Luke 2:20 ESV).

The church should not be silent at Christmas or at any other time of year.

This edition of Clear Call is all about making some joyful noise about Jesus, whether it be on the streets, in prisons, in the marketplace or wherever we find ourselves.



# Noisy in the prisons



Nick Stirling has been MCM's prison chaplain since Covid closed the Narrowgate Shelter. He made a lot of noise about Jesus back in the shelter days, telling people who were experiencing homelessness about Jesus, through 'one to one' work and the worship which took place in the nightly shelter devotions.

He is still noisy now, leading courses like 'Alpha' and 'The Bible Course' - an eight-session course designed to help people explore the BIG story about Jesus.

Nick says, "Prisons are always noisy places. There is the constant chatter on our two-way radios, the loud clank-closing of heavy doors and steel barred gates, and the rattle of meal trolleys or cleaners' carts up and down the corridors. Most disturbing of all are the sounds made by an inmate in distress."

At Christmas time, more joyful noises are added to the clamour. As the Prisoners Choir and band rehearse for the Carol service, they stand in competition with the inevitable caterwauling and door banging emanating from the cells of less pious prisoners.



**This Christmas, let love be the loudest noise in our prisons. May the quiet strains of the Gospel of Peace drown out other noise!**


# Competing voices in the home

Cath Stirling spends a lot of her time on the phone; much of it waiting to get put through to the right department and then to the right person. Advocacy is a challenging occupation; there is no shortage of people who need support because there is no shortage of housing problems, benefit failures or folk who have simply fallen on hard times.

Cath represents those of us who get bewildered by bureaucracy and lost in the endless game of switchboard shuffle; being passed from pillar to post. For some it's just too much, especially at this time of year when money can be tight and there are competing demands on scant resources. Cath said, "Some of my clients feel like there are different voices shouting loudly for their attention: 'You have to pay this bill'; 'You have to get the kids a present'; 'What about the rent?'"

**"Some of my clients feel like there are different voices shouting loudly for their attention:"**

It seems ironic that celebrating the birth of the Prince of Peace has become so stressful, especially for those on the edges of society. The support that Cath offers can help reduce the noise of internal conflict so that people can make the right choices. **Sometimes, all it takes is a phone call.**

This time last year, 'A' and her family were thrilled when Cath found them a home in time for Christmas. They are now looking forward to a 2nd Christmas in their own home. 



# Peace in the marketplace



It's a classic seasonal paradox. The time when we think about peace on earth has become anything but peaceful, especially when it comes to the marketplace. Advertisers seem to crank up the volume earlier and earlier each year and at least one marketing company suggests that Christmas advertising campaigns should begin in October!

We might get a warm fuzzy feeling when our Christmas shopping trip is accompanied by the seasonal sounds of the brass band, but surely there is a part of us that laments the manipulation of the season for commercial ends.

This is why the Nourish Food Clubs are so important. To be able to get a decent shop for £4 can help to stretch the Christmas budget and bring relief from the background drone of financial pressure that so often drowns out the herald angel's song.

Assistant Director Louise McCabe (pictured centre with Nourish volunteers and staff from Cranswick Continental Foods of Bury, who donate the gifts) said, "Young families in particular feel the pressure to supply ever more expensive toys and gifts for their children. Nourish Food Clubs also have a 'gift and toy bank' at Christmas, providing children with presents that they might not otherwise have."



# Noisy in the streets



## Operation Joy

Town and City centres can be challenging, bustling places at Christmas. An annual trip to the Christmas Market in Manchester can be quite overwhelming. Once a year is more than enough for some people.

In Proverbs chapter one the streets are full of people who are foolish or simple enough to reject Godly wisdom, some even daring to mock. Yet Wisdom, poetically personified, is determined to be incarnate, entering into the world of fools and mockers to make her invitation clearly heard to anyone who will take notice.

Operation Joy enters into the world of those who have not yet accepted Jesus as Saviour. The words that Paul, Daryl, and their team speak are Gospel words of Wisdom for those who have ears to hear!

**“Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice;”**  
(Proverbs 1:20 ESV)



# Quiet, but not silent.



Last summer there was a lot of noise on our streets as protestors, fuelled by Islamophobic sentiment and fake news, went on the rampage. A lot of bottles, bricks, insults and accusations were thrown around. Emotions ran deep and the message of hate was broadcast at maximum volume.

This time of year gives Sarah, from our Seven:9 project, an opportunity to turn up the volume a little as she shares the message of Christmas with Muslims in schools, in the Holy Book discussion groups, and in the English class - which enjoys a party with celebratory food.

**In contrast, the message about the love of God, in Jesus, for Muslim people needs to be like a quiet, but constant, melody; persistently woven into the background hum of everyday life. Too loud can be counterproductive.**



# Equipping the Noise Makers

## This year has seen the launch of the Insight School of Evangelism and Threshold Coaching

MCM's School of Evangelism is a program designed to train, equip, and give experience of evangelistic mission.

Manchester City Mission is offering this training, free of charge, to anyone who feels called to evangelism and is willing to commit a few hours per week to gain valuable experience working with highly experienced City Missionaries.

### The Insight Evangelism program includes:

- † The three principles of evangelistic resonance: Incarnation: Compassion; Proclamation.
- † The PERDA Framework: How to set up fully integrated outreach initiatives.
- † The ENGAGE Matrix: How every believer has a part to play in evangelistic mission.
- † Working with homeless people.
- † How to work with church leaders to set up outreach activities.
- † How to lead a team.
- † Practical experience in a wide variety of evangelistic projects including church-based outreach.
- † Monthly 1:1 coaching and mentoring sessions.



**Insight**



# Threshold Coaching

**Threshold Coaching is a new MCM project offered freely to those in Christian ministry of all kinds.**

Director Terry Durose was awarded a Level 7 Diploma in Leadership Coaching and Mentoring in February 23. He draws upon 30 years of experience in Christian service, and 12 years as a professional mentor to Bible College students, to create a safe space for people to explore ways forward in their ministry.

Numbers are limited however, so if you think this service might benefit you, please email:  
**[mcmterrydurose@gmail.com](mailto:mcmterrydurose@gmail.com)**  
to arrange an initial meeting.

*My coaching sessions with Terry over the last few years have been most rewarding. The sessions have helped me to rediscover myself both physically and spiritually, allowing me to deal with issues systematically, which has helped me to steadily recover from the debilitating effects of long COVID.*

*By God's grace and patience I will achieve my goals and God's plans for me, in Jesus' name.*

*T - Theological Student.*



## Threshold Coaching

To find out more about Insight and Threshold, or to register your church as a potential placement provider for the School of Evangelism, please contact **Terry Durose** on **07946 582328** or at **[mcmterrydurose@gmail.com](mailto:mcmterrydurose@gmail.com)**

# Stories you may have missed...

## A Family Reunites

A young lady 'B' received a birthday card from Paul and asked if he could find her father on Facebook. Paul searched Face-book and found the name. When he opened the page there was a post saying, 'Happy Birthday 'B', please call.'

Early in 2024, Paul received a message, out of the blue, from 'B's mother who also wanted to reconnect with her daughter.

Having contact with both parents has built 'B's self-worth and helped her to realise that there are people out there who care for her - and that God cares for her too.

Nourish were pleased to receive this praise from the Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity:



**Nourish**

*I am glad Greater Manchester Mayor's Charity were [sic] able to help organisations like this one.*

*They are the lifeblood of the Greater Manchester support networks and so it was great to head down there and capture the vital support they offer to the people of our city-region."*

As we come to the end of 2024 it is good to reflect on God's goodness and to give thanks for his blessings.



## Combating Food Poverty

A national charity, The Hygiene Bank, has accepted Nourish as a beneficiary.

The Hygiene Bank provides all manner of house-hold products and toiletries.

Hygiene poverty affects over 3 million people in the UK and this extra provision will mean so much for our Food Club members.



## Joy in the Prison

Cath and Nick Stirling were visiting Forest Bank Prison to take a service. Cath had forgotten to take ID and had to take a 1 hour round trip to go home and collect it. As she was driving home she asked God why it had happened? Why had she forgotten to take ID when she has been before and knows full well how strict the system is.

She arrived back at the prison with only 15 minutes of the service left. The 'lads' did some good-humoured jeering about her lateness, so she told them about the forgotten ID and how, no matter how much she had smiled, cajoled or said, "I'm with him", they would not let her in. She then reminded the lads that one day, they will stand before the gates of heaven and, unless they have the right ID, they would not be able to enter. A short while later, 7 souls raised their hands and were led into the kingdom.



## Vital Communication

Paul had wondered if there would be any demand for the pre-paid SIM cards that had been provided to MCM by 'Good Things Foundation'. However, just 2 weeks later, Paul met 'C' in Piccadilly Gardens who explained that she was finding it hard to stay in touch with the agencies dealing with her case because she had no credit. Paul asked what provider she used and it turned out to match some of the SIM cards that Paul had been given. Shortly after, a similar request for credit was made by someone else on the streets. Communication is vital for those trying to move on and we are blessed by the support given to us which allows us to offer targeted care in our work.

*-The SIM cards are provided as part of the National Digital Inclusion Network.*



**Operation Joy**



# Manchester City Mission

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