

BASICS BANK Rachel Finlayson



I remember sitting at the evening service at P's & G's one evening which is where my calling began to ECM. Rich Cornfield was preaching about how we have become a generation of 'slacktavists', sitting at home liking things on Facebook that pulled at our heart or signing petitions online to stop certain worldly actions or to free someone wrongly imprisoned. He challenged us to spend time in prayer seeking God's guidance as to whether He wanted us to 'step up' in our local communities. I had heard of ECM but was not familiar with their work.

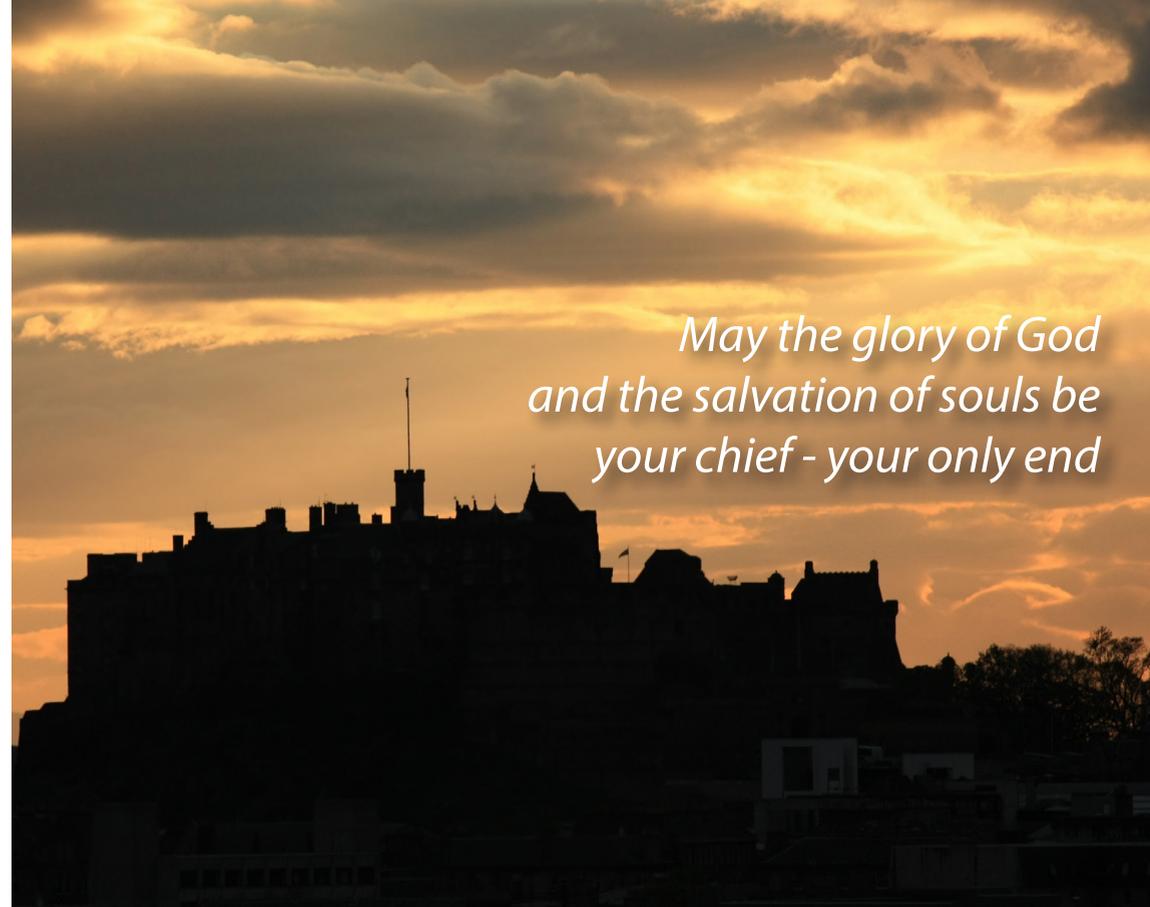
As I sat in my chair at P's & G's, I began to pray and in a very short space of time ECM kept coming to my mind and I had an overwhelming sense of God's presence, to the point I felt unaware of anything else in the room. When I got home I looked at the ECM website and felt very excited and drawn to finding out more. I decided to do a 10k run to raise funds, but most importantly awareness of the work of ECM. Running is not something I do as a hobby and as I am also registered blind, I knew it would be a challenge! I raised funds and did the 10k which went well and I felt happy I had contributed, even in a small way to the work of ECM.

However, God had more in mind than a 10k run! At the time all of this happened, I was studying for a Bachelor of Divinity Hons at New College. I was extremely unhappy and was struggling with a number of aspects of the course. I decided to go in and chat with Lawrie at the office, which just happened to be a few doors away. I came away from his office knowing there was something more God wanted of me there. I arranged to go and visit one of the Basics Banks BB@CCE where Lawrie and Steve both worked on a Thursday. It was wonderful to see God's love in action and I came away very emotional knowing that my Uni days were

over. I prayed a great deal about what God's purpose was for me and many times He would say 'feed them with love'. I started volunteering at BB@Granton and on my first day, I could barely speak. I watched as staff and volunteers showed such love and compassion to people who were in genuine need. People were being hugged, prayed for, laughed with and chatted to and I knew at that moment, God had called me to ECM BB.

I volunteered at BB@Granton for 7 months and loved every minute of it, watching as week by week, lives were being slowly transformed and people who came in totally broken were leaving a bit more whole. I learned quickly that although food had its place as it brought people to us - through connecting with people relationally and addressing their emotional and spiritual needs, that is where real change happened in people's lives. I was lucky enough to be offered a job with ECM as a Missionary, which I was a little nervous about! Although I had worked for the past 19 years with vulnerable adults and children in various settings, this felt different.

I have been working as a Missionary at BB@Leith for 3 months now and I feel so incredibly blessed and privileged to have such a wonderful job! We are getting a lot of referrals now and the team are all wonderfully gifted in so many different ways, but we are all united in bringing glory to God and seeing His will done through this ministry. I love people, I love supporting people in tough times - but most importantly, I love God. Being able to do a job where my gifts are used to support people in times of crisis and share who God is and who He can be for them is wonderful. So, my calling to ECM was an unexpected one, but I am so glad I just trusted in Him to lead me to where He wanted me to be. Who knows what's next, but I am excited to be on the journey.



*May the glory of God
and the salvation of souls be
your chief - your only end*



EDINBURGH CITY MISSION

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INTRODUCTION

The following is the same words I used in a newsletter in 2013
"As I sat pondering what to write, I was reminded of something that was said on my first visit to Brazil, we were welcomed by one of the leaders of the local church in Curitiba, one thing that he said has stayed with me ever since - "All that we do for ourselves fades and dies but all that we do for God remains".

We at ECM have come through a difficult time over the last year or so, as we have examined what we do, what we are here for and what is our vision for the future. Like Gideon's army we have been pruned down to the bare essentials but we have come to the point where we are confident that, what we are doing is what God wants us to do and we will build on that foundation".

At that point in time I believed we had pruned ourselves down to exactly what God wanted for us, I had no idea that the Christian Heritage Centre would no longer be part of our ministry. During the early part of the year it was decided that CHC would separate from the rest of ECM and become CH-E (Christian Heritage - Edinburgh).

We committed to support the setting up of CH-E in principal and financially. Paul and Isolde then set about the task of setting up the new charity and all that comes with that. We are pleased to say that CH-E is now up and running and ministering in the city.

Pioneering - Resourcing - Equipping are still the three words that describe what our Vision is.

BASICS BANK - although there are many food banks in and around Edinburgh, giving help to many thousands of people, our Basics Bank continues to have a clear evangelical thrust. So, in the midst of all the love and practical help we give there is an evangelistic edge to what we do. We firmly believe that



BASICS BANK Steve Wright

Praise the LORD! Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever. Ps 106:1

It seems so much has happened since I last gave you all an update. Change is always happening, changing. Changes at the Mission, Changes in the World, even Changes in the Church as the Anglican Communion agrees to Women Bishops!!

For me, I have been through a period of enforced change. A serious leg infection meant that I've had to rest for 7 weeks, at a time when the "Basics Bank Network" has grown, reminding me that this is His work, and I, just mere servant.

We now have 7 locations, where groups of churches are working together, to meet practical, emotional and spiritual needs of all those who come across our path, to sit and listen and then explain the Gospel in words they understand.

So during the week we have opportunity to minister in Wilson Memorial Church, Portobello Road, Granton Baptist Church, Dunbar Parish Church, Community Church Edinburgh, Musselburgh Baptist Church, Bruntsfield Evangelical Church and our newest partnership with Ebenezer UF in Leith. With such growth, we've had to employ another Missionary – Rachel. A great addition to the team. Please pray for Rachel as she settles into the team and answers to the call on her life. Pray too for Sarah as she mentors Rachel during her first 3 months.



Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. Isa 1:17

The issues we see aren't necessarily changing, but the changes in the benefit system, many of which seem unjust have caused a 50% increase in the numbers seeking our services. This year we will have over 600 new referrals, we will have to support them for longer and we'll give away over 60,000kgs of food. Without being political, the changes in the benefit system are hitting those who least can deal with it. This apparently random withdrawal of benefits and changing of types of benefit affect the mental health of many we see. This is a JUSTICE issue, not a political one so can we pray to a just God for justice for those who can't defend themselves.

A large change in my roll is to move away from the day to day operation of the 4 Basics Banks that I directly oversee, as well as having responsibility for the whole of the Basics Bank Ministry, The Lord has opened doors for ECM to partner with Edinburgh City Council, NHS and Citizen's Advice in seeking practical ways to prevent reoccurrence of people's food poverty. It is a very complex situation covering budgeting, parenting, nutrition, benefit reform and recovery from addiction issues. More Change. Please pray as I adjust to the changing role and seek His wisdom to do His will.

As we at ECM, the Church and the World live and struggle with what seems constant change, Scripture can offer comfort and hope....

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb 13:8

the best help we can give anyone is to introduce them to our Saviour, Jesus. Every bag of food is given with love and concern for those who receive. (See more details in Basics Bank article).

GOSPEL CAFE - I am in the early stages of discussing the possibility of setting up Gospel Cafes in 6 city churches, in line with the ethos of our Basics Banks this will have a clear Gospel focus, with ECM working in partnership with the local church in reaching their community with the good news of Jesus Christ. I am excited about the potential of the cafes for making a difference not only to communities but to the church as well. Please contact me if you would like to know more about Gospel Café.

EVENING CAREVAN - The Carevan continues to reach out to those in need 364 nights of the year. In partnership with Bethany Christian Trust we continue this long established service to the needy and homeless on the streets of our city.

LUNCH TIME CAREVAN - This is a new venture which started in November 2013. It has proved to be a popular addition to the joint ministry as it goes out on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

You will see that the number of ministries has decreased from what we had in the past but I am confident that we are where we are meant to be and that God is in control of the future. There is huge potential in the number of Church partnerships we can set up and as we work together we can expect God's blessing as we work in unity for the gospel.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters for their prayers and financial support and our volunteers for their commitment, hard work and dedication over many years, without you we could not do what we do.

Lawrie

Lawrie Hudson

A story from one of our Basics Banks

D came to a Basics Bank two weeks ago, His wife left him 4 months ago, unable to bear the strain, and is working on the other side of town. She pops in to see them from time to time. He is looking after their 4 children. The eldest, a girl is expecting her first child imminently and her partner has moved in with them. The next one is a boy who has fallen into bad company, drugs etc. The next in line, a girl had attempted suicide the week before we met. The youngest, a boy has just been diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome. All are upset by the parental break-up. It was suggested that 3 of us from church might pray for D at the weekly prayer meeting (Wed 6pm) D was keen on this idea and said that on the following day at 6pm, he would sit with a cup of tea and think of us praying. Today he told me that soon after our meeting a fortnight ago he had felt dreadful, that he had never before been in such a dark place, that he could no longer cope and that he would end it all with pills and alcohol. However, before doing so, at 6pm he had sat down quietly as he had promised. He said that by 7 p.m. the burden had lifted from him and he was able subsequently to talk with the people he had difficulties with and reach a calm space with them. In particular he and his 16 year old daughter had talked over her distress and he had been able to share a little of his own. He and his wife had also talked together away from the stresses which had caused the upset. He felt they had reached a deeper, loving understanding than they had had before. He said that since the dramatic events of that Wed evening, all kinds of little encouraging things had been happening. He gave two examples: his older son had said something really friendly (I can't remember what) and, amazingly, his troubled daughter had made a chocolate cake and offered him a slice. He looked and sounded transformed by his experience and amazed by it.