

BASICS BANK

Rachel Finlayson



Each day is a pleasure and a privilege to work in a role I felt, and still feel so called to. The Lord has blessed me and the team at Leith Basics Bank in so many ways over these past months; let me share some of that with you.

Basics Bank is such a wonderful place to work and show God love. Week by week and month after month, it bears fruit beyond what I thought possible. It is not about the food, as I have always said – it is so very much more than that.

Each week many familiar faces come to Basics Bank and they are all so very welcome. It is more like a community where there is no division between staff/volunteers and the people who come through the door. We simply accept people for where they are at in that moment and support them in whatever way we are able, being guided by Him. A number of people who come along have attended Churches across the city over the past few months and also at the Church where we hold the Basics Bank, we praise God for His continued blessing on these wonderful people. One woman whom I have spent a lot of time with at Basics Bank and outwith often tells me that Basics Bank is the highlight of her week as she feels very loved and accepted there.

The woman I speak of came to us a few months ago and it was apparent that it was very uncomfortable for her to be there. She was not keen to sit in the main tea/coffee room, preferring to be by herself and was very angry and guarded. She had been sanctioned as had been 20 mins late for her Jobcentre appointment. She had no income and now had no funds available to feed her family. Over the weeks and now months, she has relaxed and week by week, she has become more open and trusting of the environment. She became pregnant and was overjoyed, she already had 2 sons and appears a great mum. However, on the day her finances were due to be reinstated, she sadly lost her baby. Although the hospital gave her evidence of what had happened, as she had missed her appointment, she was sanctioned yet again. She did appeal this decision but it was not upheld. The following week her mother died and the first thing she did was come to Basics Bank as she felt that she would get the comfort and support she needed there. We were able to support her financially so she and her partner could attend her mother's funeral down south. If we had not been in a position to assist

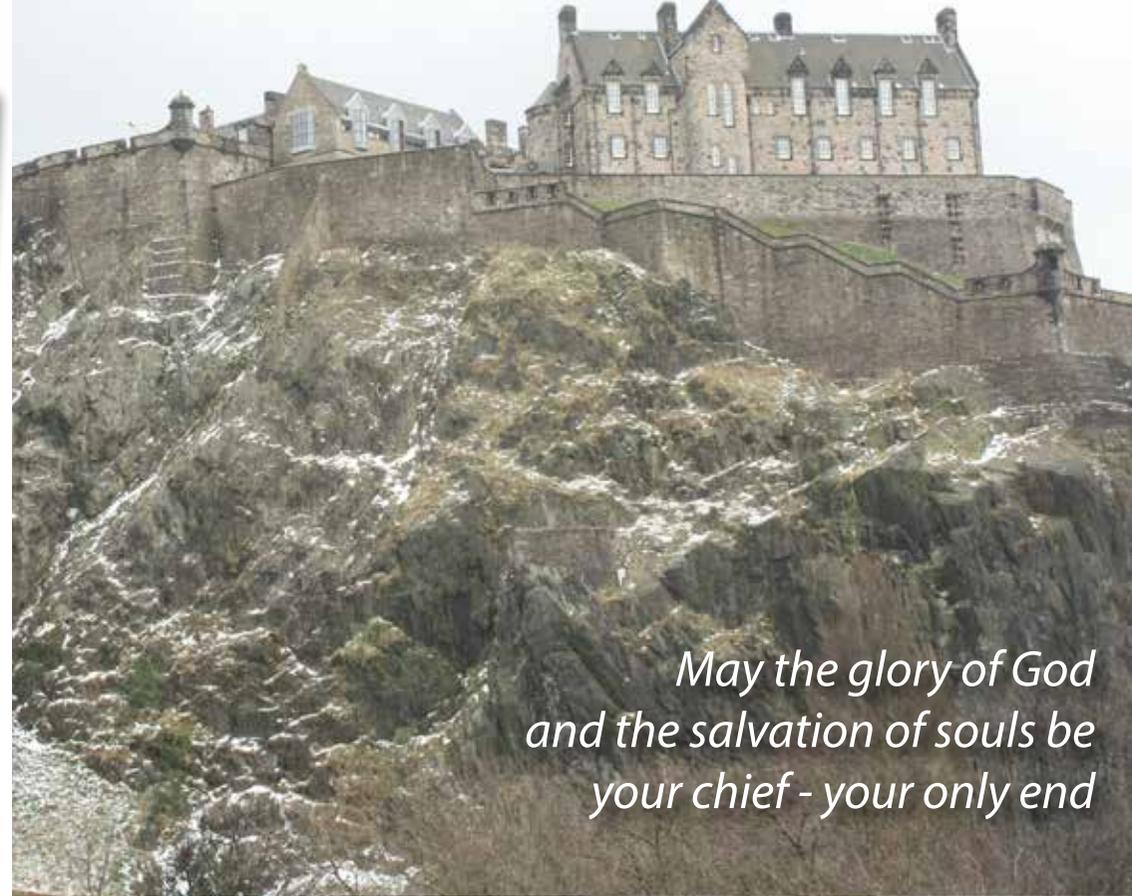


Rachel speaking to St Mary's after school club.

her, she would have been unable to say goodbye to her mum as she had no income to pay for the train or bus. This woman has shown incredible strength through all of these horrific ordeals and I am so very proud of her. I spend a lot of time with her outwith Basics Bank going to toddler groups, meeting for coffee or just supporting her to attend medical appointments. One day a few weeks ago, she spoke of going to Church as a girl and that she was curious about God. I suggested she come to Church with me one Sunday and she agreed and came. She said that she really felt the presence of God and that she felt very emotional throughout. In that moment, I knew it is NOT about the food! She has come to Church numerous times since and it is beautiful to watch someone who has been so obviously broken begin to step forward in faith – not just in God, but in herself and her ability as a woman and a mother.

This is one story out of so many. The people we meet are often at their lowest and so very broken. We offer them tea, chat, hugs, support, love and the opportunity to encounter our amazing God.

I am hugely expectant about where the next 6 months will lead me, but I know in Him, anything is possible and am just so very blessed to be part of such an amazing ministry.



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



EDINBURGH CITY MISSION

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All I want for Christmas

Is it two front teeth or is it as the song goes, "All I want for Christmas is YOU". Each one of us will have something unique that we would like for Christmas, we will also have differing monetary values on what we want. The range of these gifts will be vast, some will want a new car, and others will want some new jewellery, the latest gadget, PAD, tablet, mobile or laptop. Others will be happy to have a good Christmas meal with a nice juicy Turkey to enjoy with the family on Christmas day. There will also be a lot of people who will give lots at Christmas but will still be paying for it next Christmas. Others will have nothing.

Before I go any further, I am not an Ebenezer Scrooge who says "Bah Humbug" to all things Christmas. I love Christmas, I love Christmas day with the presents and meal and enjoying them with family and friends. I have loved seeing the faces of my children and now grandchildren opening their presents, I

We really appreciate your partnership in the Gospel to reach the lost in our city, and would like to express our sincere thanks for the prayer support, financial giving and donations of food received throughout the year.

Please continue to pray for us as we seek to make a difference for the Kingdom in the city of Edinburgh.



have laughed at adults opening presents that never reached their top 50 never mind the thing they have always wanted!!!! Christmas for me has always been an enjoyable time. . . . in the main, although there was the time when I was so looking forward to my new fitba boots, of course they would have to be Pumas, my heart sank as I ripped the paper off to reveal a Stylo Matchmaker box; I still say this set my footballing career back irretrievably.

My prayer for all who read this is that you will know the real meaning of Christmas. That the great creator God gave His only son Jesus to die on a cross, to pay the price for our sin so that you and I might be reconciled to Him, God didn't send Him to condemn us but that through Jesus we might be saved.

Have a Blessed Christmas.

Lawrie

Lawrie Hudson

BASICS BANK

Steve Wright

Well, It's on the horizon!! Christmas . . . family, food, presents and carols. Who doesn't look forward to Christmas?

Graham Kendrick in his song, "Thorns in the straw" gives us an insight into Christmas from Mary's perspective perhaps and this week I've been reflecting upon that. As we prepare something special for the folk we see in "Basics Bank", fruit cake, chocolate and presents I was reminded that so many people find this time of "Happy Families" really difficult. Family breakdown or bereavement perhaps. The first Christmas without a regular income. For these, and many others the financial and emotional strain will be too much.

I've spent much of this week with a friend of mine. His mind is damaged by alcohol, his body broken by life. The line between reality and confusion is often blurred. When I went into his flat I was reminded of the reports from Missionaries working for ECM during the 1830's. As I looked at the scene of depravity, I was made keenly aware that this was someone's son, a father,

a brother. Someone who once loved and was loved, but somewhere, somehow something changed.

As I prayed for him, holding his hand I sensed Immanuel, God with us. As I looked at the squalor, I was reminded that Jesus was born in similar surroundings, vulnerable and helpless. And in the words of the Prophet Isaiah

"The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

For a child is born to us a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders, and he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end.

To all who have contributed to the work of "Basics Bank" this year, **Thank You** and may you know His Peace, in increasing measure, this Christmas time.



DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Sarah Johnson

This November marks the fifth anniversary of my starting work at Edinburgh City Mission and it has been an amazing five years. I began working at the the West Pilton Christian Centre with an incredible team of people and we did mission through the cafe and outreach centre there. Of course my work is now based in the Basics Banks but our heart remains the same. - Mission. I'm a missionary; not a term I ever use when describing myself but then I guess we are all missionaries are we not? What does it look like to be a missionary. The Bible makes it clear that we are called to bring good news and light into this world, to the people or the 'one' person that God places in our path.

One such person was a woman I met over two years ago at one of the Basics Banks. I will call her Beth. Beth hardly spoke at all. She was a lonely, isolated and angry young woman who had experienced a serious sexual assault that had led to worsening mental health problems and the loss of the job she loved. She rarely slept well and battled daily with suicidal thoughts and even occasionally gave in to those thoughts, overdosing on painkillers or sleeping tablets in a cry for help. I began to meet with Beth regularly and even visited the hospital with her in the middle of the night during one of her lowest moments. I talked about my faith and she did begin to warm to everything I told her but eventually she decided she wanted to cut ties with



me and I had to take a step back. These things happen and we can often feel that we have failed or that God was not working when things don't work out as we would like them to work out. Usually that's the end of the story and we never discover what, if any, difference we have made. Last week, however, Beth was really on my mind and I decided I needed to send her a text after a 21 month break. I was astounded that after an initial very hostile response from her she very quickly opened up and warmed to me again telling me how her life was in many ways transformed from the one she had lived 21 months earlier. She had full time work and had been travelling the world with a new found courage. I had felt such a failure 21 months previously but talking again to her it became clear that I was in fact an important part of her recovery and I had indeed helped her. The door has been opened to rebuild that relationship which is probably a rare opportunity and I thank God for that.

At Christmas time, like no other, we are aware that there is an enormous divide between those who have and those who have not. Those that have family, loved ones, order and structure in their lives. Those that have a reliable income and friends that want to build them up and encourage them. Working for ECM has shown me that mission isn't about me doing a job, it is about my life. As a church family we need to be always on the look out for the 'one' person who we meet that is lonely, depressed, struggling in life. We need to try coming along side them, opening our homes and doing life together with them.