

May 14, 2020

S T E P B Y S T E P
ADVANCE
Tasmanian
BAPTISTS 



What happens when you plan for 2020, and then it all goes amuck? We all know what that's like! *Zahara Rehrmann* knew she was going to get married. But every day since then?

Way back in March, the Pastors gathered for a Summit at Lenah Valley with theologian Megan Powell du Toit. What she taught has relevance for everyone, and you can read an overview below.

And for our pastors, there are some important announcements to be aware of.

Praying for you during this #isolife.

Jenny

Please read on for ADVANCE | step-by-step

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personal story:

Lessons for a Control Freak During COVID-19

Zahara Rehrmann has given up so much the last few months - and she learnt a whole lot more.

God is in Control



Hi there!

My name is Zahara. I attend Summerhill Baptist Church in Launceston and live with my new husband, Thomas, in Riverside. I was baptised in 2018 and since then my life has been changed in the most beautiful of ways.

I want to share with you what I have learned since the start of this year because it has been the biggest test of my faith, and one of the biggest transformations, since I accepted God into my life. I hope this short story is an encouragement to you in your life and faith journey.

Gifts from God

On January 25th, 2020, the first case on Coronavirus was detected in Australia. On this day I was with my fiancé, unpacking boxes and refurbishing our soon to be home. We were to be married two weeks later, on the 7th of February 2020. I am shamelessly admitting that I am a control freak and so, coming to terms with the imminent lockdown threats was overwhelming.



Like any person, I wanted so badly for our wedding to be perfect. I had completely forgotten the fact that I knew God was with us in our preparations for marriage, it was so clear to us. Fast forward to today, our wedding was perfect, and we had the most amazing time travelling around Tasmania for our honeymoon and we are in our little 1 bedroom, 1-bathroom home.

This was truly a gift from God considering I desired, so badly, to go to Phuket for our honeymoon but Thomas felt led for us to travel Tasmania. I am so glad we followed Gods direction, otherwise we would have struggled to return from our honeymoon due to the lockdown restriction.

The Roller Coaster

A week after returning from our honeymoon I arrived to work fully refreshed and full of excitement. I was also prepared to begin my final year of my university degree (graduating in November). That week after returning from our time away, I got the news that it was highly likely that I would lose my job, and Thomas was unsure if he would return to his.

University was then forced to go online and, as we have all experienced, the restrictions piled on. My extroverted self, in love with the gift of hospitality, had everything stripped back. I had come to faith in 2018

after God intervened in my life when my mum was diagnosed with cancer and so the COVID story has been the first big test of my faith since then.

After everything was stripped back, I was left organising myself and creating a plan, as my inner 'control freak' does. The issue with this was that I could not think of a plan because I wasn't sure what the next week would look like!

For someone who loves 5 to 10-year plans, this gave me an anxiety attack. For the first time (ever) I knew that I was not in control of this situation. I was in the passenger seat of my first rollercoaster and I felt like I didn't have a seatbelt.

Some Critical Questions

I so desperately wanted to fall back on Jesus, because I know that God is our Saviour. But I had the desire to control the situation, which then made me question, 'Am I faithful enough?' and 'Am I a GOOD Christian?'

I felt like the answer to both of these questions was no.

I felt like the answer to both of these questions was no.

Naturally, I felt defeated. I wanted to practice my faith through hospitality and spread love through friendship and companionship, but the law had restricted these things. The only resolution I had was to pray and, in some cases, was to take a big leap of faith and do things that I felt God was leading me to do.

One of these things was to apply for a full-time job. I got several interviews but in all of those cases, I 'missed out' by just the smallest portion. One person always pipped me at the fence. Therefore, I have ruled that path out and funnily enough, I still have my original position (the one that I was told I would probably not have at Easter).

The Learnings

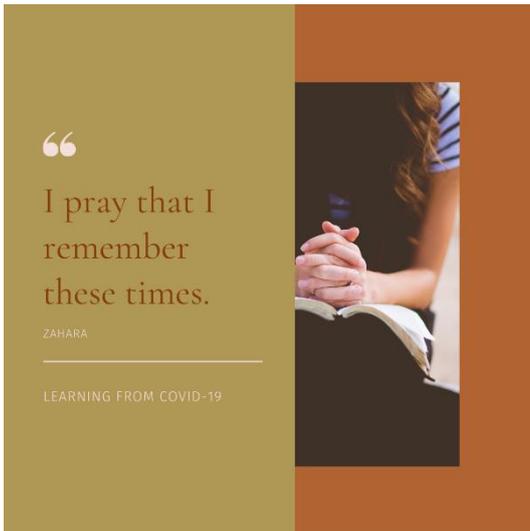
I have prayed about my faith; I have asked others to pray and I have been in some great conversation about these things. I have not had an answer about what direction I would be taking this year (or the next), which normally I would be really frustrated with. Instead I have experienced my life begin to change.

I love the slow down of life. I love the time I get to spend enjoying breakfast with my husband. I enjoy the sleep ins, the midday runs, the gardening, the cooking, and the night-time movies. I have found the love for reading my Bible and the devotion for my prayers.

I have even found the time to relax and write this for you. I honestly don't know what I am doing with my weeks ahead of me. I love to imagine, and sometimes I get too excited to do those things and try and regain control but instead, (every single time) I have been knocked back and 'forced' to live my slowed down life.

I am not bitter, I do not worry that I am not faithful enough, I have realised that there is so much more love in the air. I love to go for my runs and smile at the neighbours. I love to practise my faith in new forms.

Action - and Re-action



One day life will be back to the busy, stressful, and rushed 5-day working week ('normal') and I pray that I remember these times, because they have been so important for my relationship with God.

I pray that I remember to smile at the neighbours as I pass them on my run. I pray that I continue to read my Bible every day. I pray that I have a desire to check up on people and remember their birthdays. I pray that I listen to God and test the pathways laid before me. I pray that I am a peaceful presence in people's lives rather than the fuel for stress.

I have learnt that I have no control over this situation, or any situation to come. I only have control over the way I react to events when they come up in my life. When life goes back to 'normal', I pray that I remember that God is great, and he has control over all things.

missions:

May Mission Month

Australian Baptists are committed to global mission through Global Interaction



Please prayerfully contribute to Global Interaction's annual appeal.
<http://support.globalinteraction.org.au/donation>

DONATE HERE

CAMBODIA

Some of our Tasmanian churches have a focus on the work in Cambodia. You can read about the [GiA work, and life in Cambodia >>>](https://www.globalinteraction.org.au/who-we-are/people-groups/khmer)

From Craig & Kim Barnes

Two years ago today we packed our final few things and boarded a plane. It's crazy to think that it has been two years since we first departed for Cambodia, leaving behind all that we knew to enter a foreign country.

Two years later and once again we are waiting for a flight back, which may be a long time coming! In the last two years though, Cambodia became our home, and so next time we board that flight it will not be leaving for a foreign land, but a returning home.

Many people ask us when we will be going back to Cambodia, but it one of those questions that we cannot answer as no-one can know when borders will open again, and when International flights will take off. In the meantime we are using our time to complete an early home assignment and creatively meet with churches and supporters. We have prepared a short video that reflects on our last two years in Cambodia and gives an update as to our current situation.

Please feel free to share this video with your churches and home groups. Please contact us if you would like to hear more of our stories or to share with your church or small group.

In the meantime, we are praying for you all in this time, we know that our God is great and He holds all things and He sees us and He knows us. Even when we are all physically distant from our friends and family.

Watch the video from Craig and Kim: <https://youtu.be/HbPbwgmTCwQ>



Cathie and Andy Staunton

Others of us in Tasmania know Cathie, Andy and family, Victorians, who arrived in Cambodia late in 2019.

Cathie introduces our team in Cambodia in this video made especially for May Mission Month.

It shows more of an overview of how the team lives in Siem Reap. [You can watch HERE >>>](https://vimeo.com/403600110)
<https://vimeo.com/403600110>



THAILAND

Jit and Jan Yawan

Jit and Jan run Lanternlight Ministries where they work within the disabled community offering rehab, physiotherapy, and prayer. They are supported by Global InterAction via many churches around Australia, including some in Tasmania.



You can watch their latest video >>>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/t1zjkapwnsd9rn1/MMM%202020%20Jit%20%26%20Jan%2002.mp4?dl=0>

Read their latest news >>>

<http://hobartbaptist.org.au/jit-and-jan-news-2020-05-may-pdf-small/>

Or Donate to support their work >>>

<https://support.globalinteraction.org.au/pages/project/thailand---jit-and-jan---lanternlight-ministries---community-based-rehabilitation>

event report:

The Christ Option

Tasmanian Baptists Pastors' Muster, 2-3 March 2020



Pre-COVID-19 restrictions, Monday and Tuesday March 2 and 3, saw the Baptists pastors of Tasmania arrive in Hobart for 24-hours of good teaching, and inspiring connection with one another.

The guest speaker, Megan Powell du Toit is Publishing Manager for the Australian College of Theology. She has worked as a Baptist pastor, editor, preacher, lecturer and writer. As well, she is a podcaster, and co-hosts With All Due Respect with Michael Jensen.

Taking the platform at Citywide Lenah Valley, Megan spoke with insight and wisdom during her sessions as she romped through the Gospel of Luke not just once, but four times!

With a nod to the "Benedict Option", which advocated retreat from the world, instead we discovered the "Christ Option": an application of Christlikeness to our context.

Eating and drinking



Session One took note of the many times Jesus ate with people of all persuasions - he was criticised for feasting, and not fasting, for good reason! It was an encouragement to all of us to place high value on table fellowship, as Jesus did.

Megan quoted author John Vanderslice who said, "The story of Jesus' ministry is a ministry that takes place through meals. It's about sustenance, it's about delight, it's about joy. And it's about forming community." Session Two reflected on the enormous number of stories Jesus told. The Gospel of Luke is full of them! Similarly, in our day and age, the importance of "story" cannot be underestimated as we connect with others.

Monday evening saw us all move to Hobart Baptist, where a public meeting was held as Megan spoke on ways to empower women in leadership. She spoke about the many women who are important to the Gospels, and she also told

her own story.

Tuesday sessions

Returning to Lenah Valley for Session Three on Tuesday, several of Jesus' stories were the focus, recalling the importance of imagination. God is spectacularly imaginative. Megan commented that "we underestimate

how much each of us are made in the image of God." And once we start realising this, that "there is a call for each of us to reach into God's imagination."

And our final session drew on all the earlier sessions, as we were reminded to pick up our cross, every day. This would be by sharing food (Session 1), telling stories (Session 2), and using our God-imagination (Session 3).

These are all costly exercises, because often, these activities in a Christian context are counter-cultural. Especially during a pandemic-inspired shutdown!

"Jesus connected with both sinners and Pharisees over meals. Meals have a relational meaning."

Megan Powell du Toit

Some questions for you to consider . . .

- As you think about eating with others, telling stories, using your imagination, and picking up your cross, what are your goals as you pursue Christianity in Australia?
- And a final challenge: How will you behave as you aim for those goals?



Jenny Baxter
Tasmanian Baptist Women

Bible Study with Megan Powell du Toit

Megan has worked with bible.com.au, producing a 14-day Bible study entitled **Women of the Bible you Need to Meet**. You can access the Bible study here: <https://bible.com.au/plans/women-of-the-bible-you-need-to-meet/#series>.

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