

Resonate

ISSUE 32

:: THE
CREATIVITY
ISSUE

Created
to be Creative



GLOBAL
INTERACTION

Australian Baptists
together in global mission



Hello...

from the editor

Do you consider yourself a creative person? Hopefully after a good read of this edition of Resonate you will recognise that you are (no matter when you last picked up a paintbrush!). This edition explores the many and varied expressions of our God-given creativity. From problem solving and innovation to writing and using our imaginations, creativity is so much more than just the arts.

Creativity and doing things differently are essential to cross-cultural mission and effective ministry locally. While we hold tightly to the core of the Gospel, we hold loosely, or even let fall, all the other 'stuff' and qualifying measures that may form barriers around the Gospel. Among many of the communities our teams serve, people perceive Christianity to be tied to particular clothes, music, language and styles of worship. All this other 'stuff', separate to the core of the Gospel, are not compatible with their own culture, so most are not able to see how they can follow Jesus and remain within their community. Think of the community you live in, is the story so different within your context? Globally and locally, effective sharing of the Gospel requires people and faith communities to creatively respond to the context of those they are engaging with.

In her article 'Created to be Creative', Sue Tanner explores this idea, challenges us to break creativity out of the box we have put it in and live our lives as people created in the image of a creative God... all of us. Also in this edition, we continue to adventure with Craig and Kim Barnes who are finding their feet in Cambodia after arriving six months ago, and Dan McGrechan, WA State Director, offers some answers to the question of why God pushes us to take risks and try new things. Plus... for those of you not sure how to start embracing your creative DNA, check out the simple guide to creative thinking on page 9.

A big thank you to everyone who responded to the Resonate survey (and a shout out to the person who let us know they only filled out the survey because they were procrastinating exam study ☺). Honestly, we are blown away by your positive response to the publication and your genuine engagement with the issues, ideas and stories that have been covered over the years through Resonate. Take a look at the survey responses on pages 7-8 to see how you compare to the average Resonate reader and get a special sneak peak on 'The Next Step' for Resonate and how you can be involved.

The following pages are filled with contributions from people living out their faith and expressing their God-given creativity in all different ways and in varied mission, ministry and life contexts.

So be inspired!

TEAGAN





ADVENTURES WITH THE BARNES

Episode N°2

Last time we heard from Craig and Kim they were about to jump on a plane for Cambodia. Now, they are fully-fledged cross-cultural workers and quickly realising that life is going to be more than a little different.

Did you know that you can bake moist fluffy cakes in a rice cooker? Neither did I until we moved to Cambodia where I no longer have an oven!

Our family of six has been living in Cambodia for six months now and just like the rice-cooker trick, we are constantly having to be creative in how we do things. We just can't do them the same way as we did in Australia! Having to rest in the heat of the day, buying fresh meat, fruit and vegetables daily from the market and learning exactly when to pick our bananas and papaya so they are ripe enough to enjoy, but before they're completely irresistible to the birds. The list goes on!

And those are just some of the practical adjustments... the cultural differences add another layer of complexity. Learning how to quickly determine if someone is older or younger than you and by how much so as to greet them appropriately, knowing how to sit at a meal and how to get around the room without walking in front of someone.

taking risks, making mistakes, watching others and asking questions.

Recently we celebrated Craig's birthday with a party and decided to invite our neighbour. He doesn't speak any English and our Khmer language is progressing, but conversations are still stilted. A bit nervous, Craig went to his house and they ended up walking around the garden naming the fruit trees. They came to a big lemon tree that had many lemons underneath it, rotting on the ground. Our neighbour told Craig that he had never eaten a lemon and had no idea how to cook one. So Craig asked if he could take some home, which our neighbour was more than happy to make happen. Craig invited him to the party and he said he would come (at least that's how we think the conversation went!).

Quickly I made the lemons into a lemon cake (yes, in the rice cooker). Our neighbour was so happy to try the lemon cake and see a delicious use for his 'worthless' fruit! Since that day our relationship has grown and he often drops over, bringing more lemons or

We are slowly learning how to live here, mostly through

a curry. One day we even came home to a shopping bag of water and live fish hanging from our gate!

Opening our mouth to speak to someone is risky. At this point in our language learning we rely on creative ways of communicating... it's amazing how far expressive hand gestures, polite pointing and lots of smiles and laughter can get you! Most of the time we feel like we won't have the words to say, will say the wrong thing or be misunderstood. Craig's feelings as he went to our neighbour's house that day made me think about being in Australia and the risk it takes to share our hope in Jesus with our neighbours there. Sometimes it feels like we are trying to speak a new language there as well.

Every day, as we immerse ourselves in life in our Khmer community, we are challenged to find new and creative ways of doing things, ministry, relationships and life... and we know this is just the beginning.

Have you ever made a cake in a rice-cooker?

Created *to be* Creative

Sue Tanner,
artist and
National Office
team member,
challenges us to
break creativity
out of the box
we've put it in
and rediscover
our creative DNA.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." GENESIS 1:1

Right from the beginning of time, God demonstrates His creativity. In an extraordinary act, He creates the heavens and the earth. Do you know anyone else who can include that in their resumé? The first chapter of the Bible describes God speaking each element of creation into being. "Let there be light", He said. **"And there was!"** ...Land, plants, sun, moon, stars and creatures of all kinds.

"...In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

GENESIS 1:27

We are the only part of creation that has been created in the likeness of God. Not only the 'talented' ones, but all of us have been created in the image of a creative God.

This aspect of God's nature in us is evident in children. Children love to express themselves creatively, and this is strongly encouraged.

Abstract, splattered painted artworks have proudly adorned family fridges for generations and when at school, children are encouraged to write stories and create worlds from their imagination. However, as children grow, creative expressions become likened to childish behaviour, and only the 'talented' are encouraged to continue to create.

Are we forgetting that creativity is part of who we are and how we're made?

Maybe we are putting creativity in a box. When we hear the word, our definition often starts and ends with the arts. Expressions of creativity that reflect the senses, visual arts (sight), music (sound) and dance/movement (sensory). Creativity is much more than this and we can all access it.

"Creativity is intelligence having fun." ALBERT EINSTEIN

We are the most intelligent of all of God's creation and creativity begins in our intellect. Our thoughts and imaginations, our ability to find solutions to complex problems and to see different possibilities... these are all expressions of creativity.

Dr Edward de Bono (the six thinking hats guy) describes creativity as the mind breaking out of established ways of thinking in order to view things in different ways. This sounds to me like a mind explosion. Imagine the power of a team, of many minds breaking out of established ways of thinking bringing together a kaleidoscope of thoughts and imaginings.

People across all times and cultures have creatively expressed thoughts, ideas and stories through everything from dance, paintings and music, to inventions, technology and literature. If creativity is an innate part of how God made us, and part of all cultures, then it must mean something for our faith communities.

"... Go and make disciples of all nations..." MATTHEW 28:19

It is easy to become complacent about what it looks like to gather as believers. We may even think that the way we do 'church' is the right way and expect anyone who walks through the door to understand and feel comfortable with our rituals.

Creativity in Local Ministry

As church planters, creative thought and innovation have been core to how we connect with communities. After pioneering four church plants, what appeals to us is that no church is the same. What makes the church community is the people who gather together and the unique stories, perspectives and gifts they bring. Right now, we are at the very beginning of building a new faith community in Melbourne and we're asking God to show us how we can use what He has given us to connect with this community.

SUE AND ROB, CHURCH PLANTERS



However, notice that the Bible does not spell out exactly how, but just tells us to.... Go, make disciples, baptise them and teach them (Mathew 28:19-20). Maybe God's design is for us to think creatively about how we fulfil this command within our context.

In Acts 2:42-47, we read that the early church devoted themselves to the Word, fellowshiped together, witnessed signs and wonders, cared for each other and praised God. We are not told what time to hold the morning service or whether to have a two or three song bracket before the twenty-minute sermon. However, we are told a simple list of characterises that form the foundations of a thriving church.

In each community, whether local or global, the 'church' should look different. Our challenge is to not fall into the same old comfortable patterns, but to seek the local people of peace, respond to the needs of the community and to creatively look for ways, new ways, to connect with people and share the message of Jesus.

Creativity in Global Mission

I never considered myself 'creative' when I was younger, but I've had plenty of opportunity in Mozambique to discover how creative God made me. When we build relationships we engage in varied ways – one day we attend a funeral and the next shell beans on a verandah or share a meal. We think about how to craft and share Bible stories so people not only engage but understand. Creative solving of practical problems. Creative collaboration as a team. Creative ways to journey with and empower others. This year we had the opportunity to share during village initiations. We selected, shaped and told stories in order to engage the women and girls, asked questions that connected with their worldview and performed songs and dances to reinforce teaching – definitely some creative (and collaborative) thinking required!

BEK, CROSS-CULTURAL WORKER



Doing Life Together

Tim and Melanie have just celebrated their 10 year anniversary of serving among the Yawo of Malawi and their 21 year anniversary of doing life together as husband and wife. Here they share a bit of their story together.

Melanie

Years ago when we were doing our first Global Interaction orientation training, we completed a Myer-Briggs personality / temperament test. At the end you get labelled as a peacock or a dove or some strange letter combination which allows others to better relate to you.

At the end of this test, it was reported that Tim and I were dangerously close in our results. The test facilitator looked nervously at the readout, according to the statistics we were not compatible.

Both of us have strong personalities and are extraverted leaders with teaching and apostolic giftings. If opposites attract, then we weren't playing by the rules!

Tim and I have just celebrated our 21st wedding anniversary, which just shows that statistics can be wrong. When you get the Tim and Mel combination, you get a double barrel shot gun! We work together side by side in battle. Not a battle against each other, but a battle against all that comes our way to steal, kill and destroy so that we can live life and life to the full.

This has been our story in mission. Innovation, taking risks, thinking on our feet and doing things that haven't been done before.

Tim

Mel and I both come from missionary families who believed that serving God is what life is all about. So often our missiology (theology of mission) and ministry comes out of experience rather than a textbook. God was preparing us to serve in Malawi years before we knew anything about it. Ten years into the journey of sharing Jesus with the Yawo of Malawi, Mel and I realise that as much as God works through you He is also working in you.

We have a richness of life that only comes with knowing we are where God has called us to be. Our highs are high and our lows are very low, but we know without a doubt that He who has called us is faithful.

We have watched our children grow up in a very difficult environment, yet they shine. We have worked through life-threatening situations only to see His angels protect us. We have felt alone, crushed and ready to give up only to see the silver lining of hope emerge in the clouds. Mel loves Jesus more than she loves me, but I'm ok with that because He chose me to be her partner.

God is a good, loving Father who has an amazing plan for our lives and has so much to teach us if we are willing to obey. What a joy to be on an adventure with a wife who believes and lives this as much as I do!





Risk BUSINESS

But God... why can't I keep doing things the same way?

Dan McGrechan, WA State Director, considers why taking risks is just part and parcel of following Jesus.

I am reading *The Lord of the Rings* again. You might remember that Frodo comes into possession of a powerful ring. Frodo comes to realise that he must leave home and embark on a dangerous journey to destroy the ring and save Middle Earth. This is completely beyond his life experience to that point and unlike anything he had ever done before. Frodo's courage inspires me.

He risks everything to set out on a dangerous path with an unknown ending. He risks everything to play his part in the bigger story taking place around him.

This is how I want to live my life. I want to risk everything to join with Jesus as He builds his Kingdom on earth.

But the truth is, I am rarely as courageous as Frodo. I prefer to be comfortable and do things in tried and tested ways. Taking risks feels, well, risky.

I believe that God's pattern is to ask us, His people, to take risks because it leads us to trust Him.

When we do not know what will happen, we pray and trust God with the outcome.

We see this pattern throughout the Bible narrative. "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." Hebrews 11:8. Peter stepped out from the boat and walked on water with Jesus, until his faith failed him, and he began to sink (Matthew 14:22-33).

Jesus followed God to death on the cross, praying, "not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:32-42).

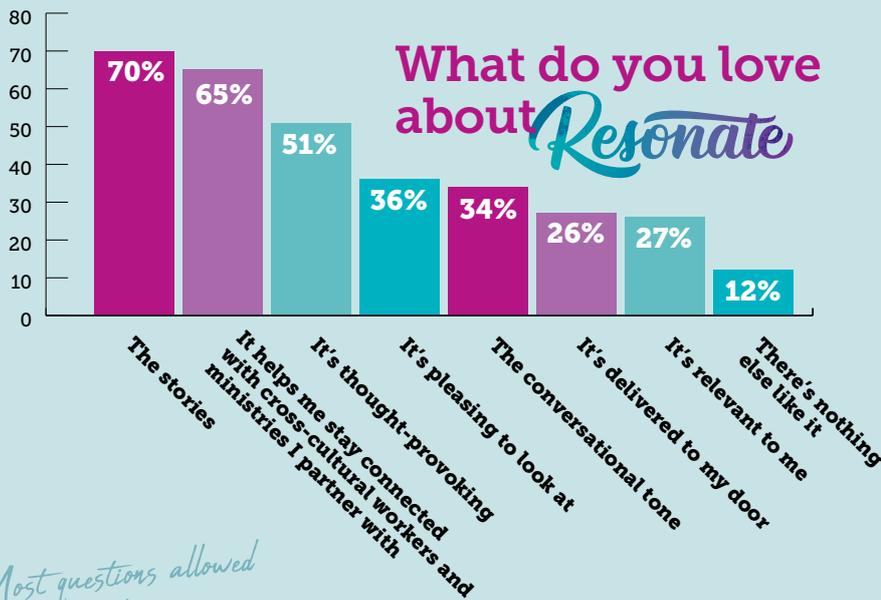
What happens when we trust God with the outcome and take a risk? God delights to show us that He is "...able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" Ephesians 3:20. Sometimes the outcome may not be what we hoped, but we have confidence "...that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" Romans 8:28.

When we take risks with Jesus on mission, we often see that He is already there working in the lives of others. **We are never alone. He might be asking us to do things that are new to us and to break out of what we know... but we can trust in His guidance because He does know.**



Are you the average Resonate reader?

Earlier this year, a survey was sent to all subscribers of Resonate. An impressive 137 responses were received and now we are ready to share the results! See how your responses compare to the average Resonate reader (or at least how the responses you would have given compare, were you a 'survey' kind of person).



How do you feel when you receive Resonate?

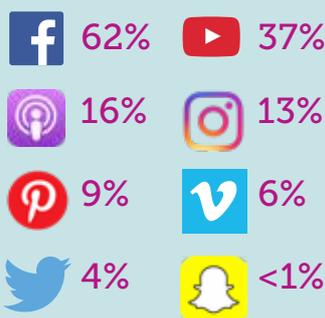


Most questions allowed for multiple answers.

What do you do with Resonate?



Which platforms do you frequently use?



What isn't quite working?



Ideas for Resonate into the future?

- More digital
- Keep high quality print
- Interactive elements
- In-depth Bible studies

What themes would you love explored through Resonate?

- 'Real' stories... the good, the bad and the messy of cross-cultural ministry
- Testimonies from believers
- Mission and ministry in Australia
- What global mission can teach us about local mission
- Evangelism
- How to partner with the ministry
- Then and now... ministry updates from across the years
- Mission questions, issues and exploration
- Culture and what it means to work cross-culturally
- Role of community development in wholistic mission
- Deep Biblical exploration

Don't worry, we've taken you off the list

Comment Wall **Naw... you guys!**

"We have enjoyed Resonate from its beginnings."

JOHN AND BETTY

"I don't necessarily want/need digital engagement. I spend so much of my week on screens, reading a beautiful hard copy magazine is an indulgent break for my square eyes."

KAREN

"Thanks for all you are doing in seeking to share of God's ministry across so many cultures."

HOWARD

"I love to encourage the youth to take them and read it."

LOIS

"It broadens my interest in mission."

JEAN

"It gives cultural insights from first hand experiences."

GLENYS

"THANK YOU for an excellent magazine. It is GREAT."

PETER

THE Next Step



From its beginning, Resonate has been created to share stories of how God is at work, the journeys of workers as they discern, prepare for and practise cross-cultural ministry as well as provoke thought and discussion about mission.

To see these purposes correlate to the highest ranked reasons why you love Resonate, warms our hearts and spurs us on! We are also super encouraged to see that 75% of respondents feel enthusiastic or positive when they receive Resonate. And... 61% of people read it thoroughly, which is no small feat in our short-attention-span and clickbait world.

A common area you highlighted for improvement was to develop Resonate's digital engagement. Well do we have news for you! While Resonate will continue to be available in print and online, we are also adding another key element with each edition.

Launching in 2019, a video series will accompany the magazine.

The videos will expand on the theme of the edition and invite lots of interesting voices into the conversation. It will take you on journey, ask the hard questions, attempt to answer them and make you think. Plus it will have that classic Resonate 'cheeky grin' attitude you know and love.

This is an exciting new venture for Resonate.

If it sounds like something you would love to be a part of (trust us, it will be really awesome), then let us know.

We welcome people keen to:

Star!	We're looking for budding presenters who are passionate about mission, are engaging in front of the camera and interested in exploring the big questions.
Be behind the scenes	If you want to be part of this project, but not upfront, then consider offering valuable support behind the scenes.
Share your insight	Pastors, Bible college lecturers, present and former cross-cultural workers and people living out their faith in daily life are invited to share insight on the theme.
Film and edit	We welcome media students keen to gain real-world experience to be involved in the production of the videos.
Fund	Businesses or organisations keen to get on board and sponsor this project are more than welcome!

Sound like a blast?

Put your name on the sign up list by emailing info@globalinteraction.org.au

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has developed a theory on creative flow and the relationship between challenge and skill. When the challenge is high compared to the person's skill, worry and stress inhibits creativity.

On the flipside, when the challenge is limited and the skill is high, then the lack of stretch leads to boredom and apathy. The trick is to strike the right balance between the challenge and your level of skill. This point of balance will be different for each person. As beings created in the image of a creative God, creativity and the ability for original thought is there for all of us to access and develop.

As we engage in ministry, mission, family, life and work we encounter complexities that require creative solutions. Here are some principles for creative thinking and problem solving. Let's find our flow!



Simple Guide to Creative Thinking

By Teagan Dwyer-Riviere

1. Find your happy place



Create an environment where you can be creative. Remove distractions and give yourself the time and mental space you need. Although some people do their best work under pressure, creativity and the development of original ideas usually flows best in a calm environment.

2. Figure out the 'why'



Work out what the end goal, or purpose, is at the start of the project as this will inform every step along the way. Even if your goal is just to relax through creating something, this is still a purpose. There are infinite routes that can be taken to the same destination, however without the end point in mind, your super creative solution might actually lead you to a dead end.

3. Brainstorm it out



Your first idea is never going to be your best idea, but write it down anyway. Ideas trigger each other and sometimes it takes the getting out of all ideas, 'bad' included, before the creative, interesting and innovative ones flow.

4. Change shoes



Depending on who you are, the same problem might look very different... in fact for some it might not even look like a problem at all. In seeking to think creatively about a situation or develop a new idea, look at it from different angles and put yourself in the shoes of those who will be engaging with the final solution.

4a. Bring others in



When you have run out of shoes, bring others into the conversation. Although it's sometimes painful to open up the doors for feedback on your idea baby, it is an incredibly valuable part of the process. Fresh eyes can push your concept to the next level and open your eyes to the ways in which it isn't quite working. Disclaimer though... yes, listen to others and yes, consider their perspective, but sometimes you just have to go with your gut.

5. Give it time



It's amazing the difference a day or even 10 minutes can make to your creative flow. When you have hit the point of being stuck, then stop. Stop for at least long enough to walk around the block and make a cup of tea. After giving your mind a circuit break, and the space to creatively reset, don't be surprised if the solution jumps out at you the next time you look at it.

6. The wheel is fine as it is



Finding a new solution for something only works when it is actually an improvement. Don't reinvent the wheel or make changes for the sake of it. It has to be *better*.

*Creativity,
here we come!*

15 minutes with... Jared

From a business degree to Bible College, 19 year old Jared Pittendrigh's story reminds us that the best journeys are the ones God takes us on.

1. Take us back to the start of year 10.

When I started at a new school in Year 10 I was angry at God, my parents and life! I had found my place in my first high school and I did not want to move! Over the summer holidays between Year 9–10 a few things happened that affirmed to me and my family that the move was what God wanted – but that just made me more frustrated at God! In hindsight, it was exactly what I needed, but it was still very hard and took a few years before I began to understand why God had directed the change.

2. Growing up in a church-y family, when did your own faith kick into gear?

It was in the couple of years following the change of schools that my faith became more important to me. Joining a beach mission team at the end of year 11 was incredible and life-changing for me! All of a sudden I was surrounded by a bunch of young adults who were not only wonderful and fun people, but who also had a vibrant and real relationship with God.

3. Did you always know what you wanted to be when you grew up?

No! As Year 12 came to an end I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was encouraged to enrol in a Uni course and see what happened from there. Instead of waiting on God's guidance, I applied to study business and was accepted.

4. And then what happened?

Throughout most of my first semester in 2016, I was questioning what I was doing. I never really enjoyed business and I had no passion to work in the business world. (I know... why did I apply?) Just before exams, I walked the Kokoda Trail in Papua New Guinea with my Dad. The many hours of walking gave me lots of refreshing time to spend with God.

Along the way, the walk took us through lots of small villages. It was a profound experience to see how other communities live, in a way so different to my own culture and to witness their ingenuity and incredible capacity for self-sustainability.

I was struck with the understanding that monetary wealth is not required for a life of Kingdom significance. This prompted me to take a break from my studies and earnestly seek God's direction. If He wanted me to return to business, become a cross-cultural worker overseas or anything else then I would do it!

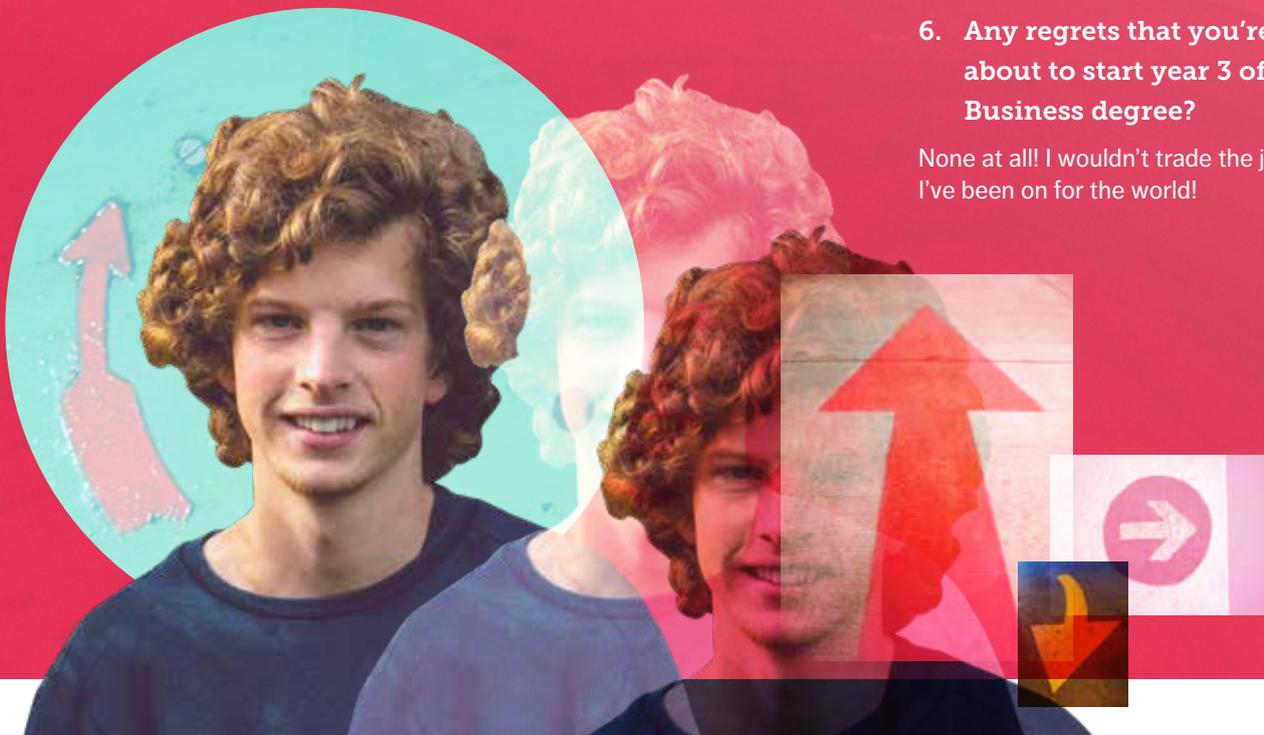
In the end, by God's prompting voice, and affirmed through some unbelievable circumstances, an opportunity came up out of nowhere for me to do a youth internship at Heathmont Baptist Church as well as study part-time at MST (Melbourne School of Theology). These two things have opened up other ministry doors and it's been really exciting.

5. Any advice for year 12 leavers who are in same position you were a few years ago?

Seek God, trust Him and don't be afraid to go against the norm... or what your school's career counsellor says. Yet know that whatever you decide to do, God can and will use you to further His kingdom if you let Him.

6. Any regrets that you're not about to start year 3 of a Business degree?

None at all! I wouldn't trade the journey I've been on for the world!





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