

GiST Stories: Abortion and Hope

Robyn Bain (GiST)

As abortion becomes more accepted in Queensland and around the world, many of us lament the devastating impact. However, these stories from PCQ members* remind us that God is still seated on His throne and able to work powerfully in the lives of those coping with unplanned pregnancy or the experience of abortion. We hope these stories will encourage you to move towards others with Christ-shaped love and hope.

If you or someone who know has an unplanned or complicated pregnancy, find assistance at Priceless House on 1800 090 777 or 0413 888 613, and contact your minister. If you have a question or a story to share, contact GiST via <http://www.gist.org.au/contact/>

** all names have been changed*

Thijs and Fleur's Story

F: We were both born in Europe but met at church in an Australian country town. We both came from 'Christian' families. I grew up going to church every Sunday and a Christian school. But I never heard the gospel. I wasn't encouraged to read the Bible.

T: I grew up at Sunday School and loved the Lord Jesus when I was little. But when I went to church as a teenager it was different. It didn't connect with me. I didn't understand the gospel and what it meant for me.

F: We got married when I was 18 and moved to Melbourne. I was still studying. My father was very strong on the importance of education as the ticket to happiness. Then we fell pregnant. I was shocked. I was worried about my education and scared of my father. I was anxious about my life. It didn't enter my head that I could have the baby. I thought early termination was all right because it's not really life yet. Underneath I knew it actually was, but I pushed that thought down. I told my sister. She didn't say anything. The doctor just accepted that I wanted an abortion.

T: I thought that if an abortion was what Fleur wanted, I should just agree with her. A baby would be in the way. I also felt uncomfortable, but I didn't want to think about the truth of what we were doing.

F: He came with me to the hospital. We waited a long time. There was a long queue – it felt like a production line. Afterwards I woke up and went home. My life felt like a mess anyway and this was just part of it.

T: It felt then as though the abortion was over and done with. Fleur started studying. I went back to work and tried to carve out a living and a life. I did what was in front of me. What had happened was pushed under the surface. I found life in Australia rough and depressing – my colleagues talked about sex all the time.

F: After that I had lots of questions about life and how it works. I was anxious and depressed. Marriage was hard. I heard about a girl who had an abortion in order to keep her job. At that moment I knew abortion was wrong. It was so obvious. But we just kept going. That's what I'd been taught to do in life. I got into the occult – astrology, tarot cards. I knew there was something out there. I wanted to have some control over my life.

I got pregnant again. My father now helped us and gave Thijs a job. He worked thirteen-hour days. It was very lucrative. But then he was pushed out of the company. That was rock bottom for us. I had a breakdown.

T: Yes, that was the wake-up call. I thought 'stop being a wus and take charge of things.' We were looking for God and we wanted to be serious about the Bible. We had been going to a church where there were very few believers – now we started going to a new church. I realised there I could be born again.

It was a gradual regeneration for me. Under good preaching, the lights came on. I burned all the self-help books my father-in-law had given us. I was challenged to find my true self in Christ. He's the only one who knows me. Forgiveness starts with God. I realised I am forgiven. I have forgiven the family. I can live now.

I wished I'd done things differently and never let Fleur go through the abortion. I can still see her lying there in the hospital. I was a terrible, lousy husband then. I should have made sure she had another way. I realised that doing what is right really matters. I knew I was nothing like what I should be – so I asked God to make me what I needed to be.

F: I started to understand how the gospel fitted together. It was really big to start reading the Bible and praying. I knew I was sinful but now I discovered that Jesus mediated for me so I could be brought back to a relationship with God. I had another mental breakdown at that time and was admitted to hospital. I needed to bring the abortion to the surface. I knew I had killed someone. I deserved the death penalty. I was completely undone. But I also realised I was forgiven. There is nothing He doesn't forgive. My worth is found in God, nowhere else.

I do carry a sadness. I have a soft spot for young women. Having children wasn't seen as good when I was young – career was the best option. I find myself encouraging young mothers to enjoy spending time with their kids and not be lured into the nonsense of the world. I have been helped by God, now I want to help others. I love that people feel they can talk to us and go below the surface. We are all only one step away from doing something terrible or being in a terrible situation. I am so looking forward to the next life.

T: It is so freeing to give control over to God. God provides and He can change a man's heart. People want so much want to elevate themselves and have control. We have discovered that to be Christian is to give up wanting power and to depend on the Spirit of God. We keep pointing our two sons to Christ. We want to encourage people in our family and at church to surrender to God.

Amber and Ellie's Story

I was 17 when I became pregnant. The main thing I was worried about was having to tell my parents. I didn't look ahead and think about having a baby. I just thought my parents would be super mad and kick me out. They're strong Christians and they didn't know that I was sexually active. The guy was shocked but supportive. He was going to church too. He said it was up to you whether you keep the baby or not. Before this I would never have considered abortion. But in the situation, I couldn't imagine either having an abortion or having to tell my parents. It didn't seem real. My relationship with God wasn't good at all. I thought 'how could God be with me in this situation? I've done this to myself, so this is beyond God's forgiveness'.

We went to the doctor to confirm the pregnancy. He gave me a pamphlet for an abortion clinic and told me to call them. He ran me through the different abortion options. It was all very factual.

I didn't connect emotionally. I wasn't thinking about this thing as a baby. It was just something I had to tell my parents.

One day I got home from school and Mum said she had seen an email from the abortion clinic. My mum often checks my emails because I'm slack at it. She said, 'you would never actually consider doing that would you?' I realised then that this was a baby. I thought to myself 'I couldn't do that - I love babies.' Mum cried for weeks and I felt my parents were disappointed, sad and angry. But she said right from the beginning that they'd be there for me and help me. It was now I thought 'I'm having a baby'.

I was in Year 12 at a strict private school. I was really sick with morning sickness and had to take a lot of time off. My parents talked to the school staff who were really supportive, and I switched to distance education. I thought my school friends would be supportive. I told my close school friend and she said, 'you'll have an abortion, right?' Her mum offered to drive me there. When I said I was keeping the baby, she wanted nothing to do with me. My other school friends weren't interested and didn't talk to me about it. I think they just didn't know how to deal with it. I was really upset about that for the whole year. My closest friend later apologised, and the others loved Ellie once she was born. But we are on very different paths now. We're facebook friends.

I was really scared to tell my friends at church. I thought they would judge me. But my church friends were really supportive. They said, 'if there is anything we can do, let us know'. They didn't treat me differently. They asked about the pregnancy and ultrasounds. They accepted it and I could talk about things when I needed to.

I was really happy when Ellie was born. I was in love with her. But I wasn't prepared for how hard a newborn would be. I found the sleep deprivation of the first few months really, really hard. Mum was so helpful. She would sit up with her so I could get some sleep.

I wouldn't call myself a Christian before I was pregnant. While I was pregnant, I thought 'wow I have to raise another human'. I was just so unhappy - fat, pregnant, no close friends, bad relationships. I felt I was all alone doing my life. I felt so guilty. I knew that if I put my faith in God, I would have to own up to all this stuff. But I also wanted to have a relationship with God. I started really listening at church. I began to feel free and know that God does forgive me.

I'm pretty happy now. I've become really close to my church friends. That's been awesome. It's been great to have a stronger relationship with God. Last year I was at home with Ellie full time which was great. Now she loves her child care and I'm doing uni. I wasn't sure how that would go but I prayed heaps and its working out really well. I'm really busy but I love it. Ellie's very outgoing, extroverted, crazy and hilarious - I love her.

You can tell people make their own judgements about us but it's not a big thing. I think I'm a lot less judgemental than I used to be. People often come to me for relationship help knowing what I've been through.