Equip 2016 **[1]**

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Over the Easter weekend of 2106 I again attended the Equip young adults Easter conference [2]. The speaker this year was Glenn Lyons [3], the current presiding bishop [4] of Reach SA [5].

Bs. Lyons took us through the book of Judges. Judges is quite a sordid book and the stories taken from it and placed in children's Bibles are usually very whitewashed. The stories in it are not really happy or inspiring and shows Israel's gradual decline into idolatry and superstition in the pre-kingdom era. In this sense it reminded me of the talks on Kings which Nathan Lovell gave us in 2012 [6]. The lessons to take to take away from Judges, broadly speaking, are the warnings against self-reliance and pride (Judges 21:25). The world can be ensnaring and corrupting. The believer needs to remain faithful to God and obey His commands. However, we are unable to do so by ourselves due to our sinful nature. Therefore we require the Holy Spirit, made available to us as believers through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to make us faithful.

I was again privileged to lead a strand group—this time strand three, which is a short introduction to systematic theology. This year the topic was racism. It was a pleasure working with a group of people who had already done two previous strands and understood the process. The topic is a difficult and sensitive one, however, and four days is not sufficient to cover it and the principles of systematic theology. That said, I was proud of each one of the group for what they came up with and presented, and I hope that all went away with much to think about. Again the speaker was deeply impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm shown by the attendees for their studies. It is heartening to all of us to know that there are so many people who are passionate about the Bible and want to be able to read and teach it faithfully!

For my elective I chose "Evangelism". It immediately challenged us by asking "what is our motivation to do evangelism"? The discussion and subsequent self-evaluation was perhaps more valuable than the given answers themselves: I remain challenged and still have much to think about on this question. The rest of the elective focussed on the skills required to be effective at evangelism, and being cognisant of good opportunities for evangelism.

A personal highlight of the camp was having good one-to-one discussions with friends on important topics. I do not have them as much as I use to and have missed them. During one of the Q&A sessions, the topic of Christian singleness [7] (and, by implication, loneliness [8]) was raised. It became apparent that this resonated with many of the attendees and that there was much struggling, confusion and hurt around this topic. I hope that the leaders and organisers will be more sensitive in their churches from now on to adequately address these topics. But bringing this out into the open did facilitate discussions between small groups. I hope that going forward we continue to

listen to and support each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

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