Equip 2017, BMC, and a Personal Update **[1]**

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After having been quiet on Siyach for a while, I have decided to roll up my update on this year's Equip conference (and Boland Men's conference) with a personal update to shed some light on why things have been so quiet.

Equip

Over Easter weekend I was blessed to again attend the annual young adults Easter convention, Equip [2]. Equip is an opportunity for Christian fellowship with young people from churches all over the Cape, as well as a time for some intensive Bible study and training.

This year our speaker was Andrew Sach, who had been a speaker at Equip before [3]. I had enjoyed his teaching before and was excited to hear him again. I was not disappointed, as he took us through an insightful study of Elijah and Elisha, and guiding us through the parallels with the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus.

I was again privileged to lead a group of students through one of the "strands" (that is, "grade", where a different aspect of Bible study is taught depending on how many times one has attended Equip). This year I led a Strand 2 group, which is Biblical Theology. With a focus on a seemingly arbitrary passage from the Old Testament, I was quite excited to teach this group, as there is so much in the Old Testament, yet people are often apprehensive about it. With the tools taught in this strand, I do hope that the students will be more open and eager to delve into studies of the Old Testament (especially after Andrew's excellent series of lessons as well).

For the elective this year I attended "Gender and Sexuality", which focussed particularly on the question of how to respond to transgenderism. Good conversations were had, but I also fear that many deficiencies in our understanding were exposed; or, at least, despite our initial best efforts, that we were approaching the topic from very different perspectives. We, as a greater church body, need to do more careful, and prayerful, thinking on this topic.

For more information on Equip, and to access previous years' talks, visit the official website at http://equip.crossword.org.za/ [4].

It has been interesting to see in which ways Equip has stayed the same over the years, and in which

ways it has changed. I eagerly look forward to what the future holds for this initiative, and pray that God will bless it and the people who pass through it!

Boland Men's Conference

The following weekend I attended the Boland Men's Bible Conference (BMBC). The speaker was Ray Galea from Australia and the topic was "Love Mans Up!" The focus was on various aspects of love: how love defines God's characteristics and His relationship with us, what love really is (and is not), how we should relate to Him because of His love towards us, and looking at the role of husbands and wives in marriage. There was encouraging fellowship with friends and brothers from the Boland (and beyond).

Personal Update

The year started strong with my series on the Bible, looking at Why You Should Read the Bible [5], What the Bible is [6], How to Read the Bible [7], and a case study of The Myth of Good King Solomon [8]. This mostly concluded what I wanted to write for this particular series. Before I could move on to something else, life simply got busy. Everything has been building up to April and May, with the conferences, and a trip which I need to take soon to attend friends' wedding in Namibia. After that I am scheduled to attend some seminars, which may lead to me pursuing a diploma in theology. I have also been occupied with administrative tasks and undertaken some additional side projects. And, I must admit, that I have been going through a difficult time, personally, since the beginning of the year, which has been exacerbated by the aforementioned busyness.

This has all impacted writing time. As such, the blog has been suffering, but I have certainly not given up on it. Indeed, I have several articles which I do want to write (although they are on difficult subjects and will take even longer than usual to research and write). I do hope to return to some degree of normality in the middle of the year.

For now, thank you for your continued readership and support!

Grace & peace.

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