Equip 2018 **[1]**

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From 29 March until 2 April 2018, I once again had the privilege to attend the Equip Easter Conference at the beautiful Rocklands in Simon's Town. Our speaker this year was Richard Coekin from Dundonald [2] in London. Apart from his involvement with Dundonald, he is also the director of the Co-Mission Church Planting Initiative [3], which has done incredible work in some difficult mission fields.

With a clear passion for mission and evangelism, these topics were emphasised by Richard Coekin in his talks. Those of us in the audience were challenged, especially with the harrowing realisation that there are not many of us—faithful, Bible believing Christians in the Cape, with the ability to enter mission and ministry—and that we really cannot defer our responsibility, but need to take it up, should God be calling us. I am excited to see what fruits his talks will produce from this conference!

This year I was asked to again lead a group studying systematic theology, as I had done a couple of years ago [1]. This year many of those who had been in my previous group [4] were there again, which was special. The theme this year was "The Poor". Originally the proposed topic was "Social Justice", but this was considered to be too broad. We found that even the topic of The Poor was very broad and the group members had a hard time pulling all the different threads together. It is important to not only consider the materially poor, but the spiritually as well; otherwise there is a real danger of turning a Bible study into a moralising lesson of do's and don'ts. In the end, as always, the group members produced some good fruit, and I hope and pray that this topic will have given them some food for thought in the coming weeks and months. systematic theology is not easy, especially when crammed into five days, so well done to everyone!

As a veteran of Equip, I have attended many of the electives, having purposefully avoided the ones which I have not. This year I decided to step outside of my comfort zone and attend the elective on youth ministry. I am not involved with youth ministry, nor do I intend to be, and even find teenagers a bit scary, but decided that it would be good to have an awareness of what youth ministry entails. I was pleasantly surprised by what came out of the sessions, and how many of the principles which were discussed are applicable to other ministries as well. The key, really, is to be yourself in a responsible manner, and not someone who you think teenagers expect you to be. It is also important to work with a dependable and capable team. Youth ministry is important, and had a huge influence on my own growth and development [5]. May those who are involved in youth ministry be faithful, responsible, and lead their teenagers to similarly be faithful!

It was also encouraging to see that the mantle of a couple of the other electives were passed on to some of my peers who went through their initial Equip conferences along with me. God is working and preparing the next generation!

A twist this year was that we left the camp site on Sunday evening to join St. Peter's church in Fish Hoek for an evangelistic service (conducted by Richard Coekin). We had a braai and some good fellowship, before returning to the camp site for the delegates to complete their studies. Sunday nights are always a special time; watching the earnest and dedication with which the young adults tackle their Bible studies. It is a particular manifestation of love and the work of the Holy Spirit, and as a leader I am able to take a step back and take it all in. May many more grow and be encouraged by this!

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