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About the author

I have always had a love for the Lord and wanted to learn more about Him and the Bible. Over time this has led me to (informal) studies in the Bible, theology and apologetics [2]—so much so that I have been confused by some for a seminary student. I have preached sermons [3] as a lay preacher, led Bible studies and other kinds of small groups, and been involved in mercy ministry [4]. As a child I attended the Dutch Reformed church of South Africa, since the time of my post-graduate studies I have attended REACH SA [5] and baptist churches.

See also my declaration of faith [6].

I have lived in the South Africa all my life, mostly in and around the Cape Town area. Professionally I am a software developer. I studied at the University of Stellenbosch, earning a Master's degree in Computer Science.

Otherwisel enjoy tea, writing, history, science fiction, jogging, cats, photography, small DIY projects—none of which I am going to claim to be particularly good at.

Brief bio

I was raised in a home of reformed (Calvinist) Christians. From an early age my parents took me to church and I enjoyed going with them. For the first part of my life I was very sheltered, living in a

small town in the country. After moving to the city when I was 10, I attended the local church within the same denomination in which I was raised. That is where I found the Café on the Rock coffee bar. Early in high school, in-fighting within that church caused the collapse of the youth ministry there, much to my distress. However I kept growing in faith through group Bible studies and an initiative at my school. It was at this time in my life when I was introduced to Messianic Judaism. But a couple of other incidents led to a breakdown of my faith in organised religion as I finished high school and started university. That was the beginning of a passive era in my spiritual life—what I call my "desert wandering". I however kept reading the Bible but, eventually, stopped even doing that, and only continued to pray. Five years later, feeling spent and empty, God called me back to church. I realised that not having fellowship with believers (coupled with some bad personal choices) was what had drained me. I knew of a church a cousin of mine attended and I cautiously and suspiciously approached one of the morning services there. I received a warm welcome from the members of the congregation, but it was the solid Bible teaching—the strongest criteria by which I was judging churches—which convinced me to stay. Today I can proudly say that I am part of a Bible teaching, and loving and caring church family.

About this website

This blog is where I write on matters regarding a Christian lifestyle lived with an acute understanding of what it is that Jesus have called us for. The intention is to challenge the *status quo* on how we (as Christians) should think about being in the world and the things with which we are confronted, and to guide non-Christians to understand the reasons and intents of those who love Jesus of Nazareth.

About the Name

The Hebrew word "siyach" (שִׂיחַ) is found in the Old Testament. It means deep reflection, a meditation, a groaning, and symbolises an internal struggle with one's inner thoughts and prayers to God. This way of deep contemplation is perhaps disappearing from the Western world as we bounce from one task to the next, fill the gaps with social and entertainment media, and lose ourselves in amusement and escapism.

In the Hebrew, the word "hagah" (הָגָה) has a very similar meaning. They are used together, although hagah usually precedes the use of siyach. Both of these words have are homonyms. Hagah also means to purge, to clear out the dross. This is the first step that needs to happen in the process of deep contemplation: clearing our the things clouding your thoughts: your pains, your struggles, your presuppositions etc. Siyach can also mean to grow, as plants do. Once purged, one grows by coming to God, seeking His will, and asking Him, rather than accusing Him.

History of the Website

This website has evolved from the one which I started in 2009. It was originally intended to be a place where I gather, collect and organise the various things I learned about the Bible and the Christian faith, following a revival of my faith the previous year. My idea was that, it is easy to get caught up in the fervour of a good Bible teaching, but one runs a real risk of losing the significance which that sermon or lesson had for you in the long run if you do not return to the notes and the passage. So I decided to rework and gather some of those notes to a single place. The decision to have such a repository on-line was that other people might come across it and find encouragement and inspiration in what I had learned.

However this proved to be too ambitious (perhaps ironically). I was never able to satisfactorily post the resources I wanted. The next direction I took in was to try and create a community of people who want to discuss matters of faith and apologetics. This also did not happen as expected: while numerous people have commented on my blog posts, that often happens off-site (such as on Facebook or in person). I therefore eventually scaled down the scope of the website to only the blog [7] and a few other pages (some legacy content remains in the depths).

In 2015 I changed the name from (Café) On the Rock to Siyach. The reason for this is that I wanted

to move away from something which was intended to be community focussed to something which is more personal. The reality is that over the past few years, my musings over Christianity and current affairs have had the most impact on my audience. I therefore wanted to reflect this (hopefully final) change.

Previous names

This website was previously known as *(Café) On the Rock* (I eventually dropped the "café" part).

In 1996—when I was still a pre-teen—I was invited by a friend to attend a coffee bar which was held on Friday evenings at the local church for children and Saturday evenings older youths and young adults. This coffee bar was named "Café on the Rock". During the years in which I attended this youth initiative, I met good people whose teachings were invaluable to my growth and understanding of the faith.

Around 2000, Café on the Rock was closed down. The idea was to go back to the drawing board and rethink priorities, missions and think about a general revitalisation. Shortly after this, in-fighting within the church caused the youth ministry (among other things) to collapse. What followed was a series of lies and cover-ups. For many years afterwards, long time members of the congregation did not fully know what happened. I left the church a couple of years later while still attending confirmation classes and have never returned.

I do not know if that church has since restarted the tradition of having a coffee bar, but the last time I was there, the mural still had the name "Café on the Rock" painted on it.

This website never had any affiliation to any institution, whether it be an organised church body, a coffee bar or anything else. I chose this name (and the tag-line, "*Let's Rock with Yeshua!*") because it has great sentimental value for me. The good people I met in that church I effectively met through the coffee bar. The spirit and devotion with which most of the various youth workers (who were associated with that coffee bar over the years) worked within that ministry was an inspiration and I am thankful to have had such faithful teachers.

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Further information on copyright related matters

See also the following pages relating to legal and copyright information:

- Quoting the Bible [18]

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