Report on MYC 2009 **[1]**

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From Wednesday the 15th to Sunday the 19th the annual MYC [2] was held. This year it was held at Rocklands [3] in Simonstown [4]. This was the first time I ever attended MYC and I thoroughly enjoyed it. We were at a wonderful location, had awesome weather, great teachers, old friends to see again and very cool people to meet!

MYC is held yearly and was organised largely by St Paul's, the church I attend in Stellenbosch. This year it was comprised of Bible teachings, workshops and electives. But we still had a lot of time for fun. :-)

Our speaker this year was Justin Mote. Justin is the Director of the North West Ministry Training Course in the UK which seeks to equip people to better understand and explain God’s Word. He is a delightful speaker and guided us through the book of Joel. I'm hoping to incorporate what I learned from him into a Bible study that I hope to put up in the not too distant future.

The conference had four main strands. If you have been to a previous MYC and completed that strand, you may advance to the next strand. As a first timer, I was in strand one, where we learned to write a Bible study from a passage in the New Testament. It was an interesting experience and it was interesting to see how the people in the group I was in grew in the passage over the course of the days.

There were also four electives. As I understand it, the electives is a new addition to MYC this year. They were: children's ministry, youth ministry, serving your church, and evangelism and apologetics. It seemed like the conference attendees had spread themselves rather equally over these four electives, which was good to see. I attended the elective on evangelism and apologetics. While I think we could have progressed a little faster in the first two sessions, we did, to be fair, have quite a bit of open discussion and interaction. But I was glad when, in the third and final session, things really seemed to come to a head. I was left with a lot of things to think about.

One thing that really struck me was the people who attended who came from or ministered in townships, especially Khayelitsha. In South Africa, townships are still a living relic from the Apartheid era of racial segregation. The province where I live, the Western Cape (as with most of the coastal provinces, I suppose), is particularly cosmopolitan. Whites, blacks, coloureds... birds of a feather flock together, even if there is no law which commands it. The bulk of the black population in the Western Cape live in townships. Historically, blacks aren't native to the Western Cape area, so theirs is a melting pot of different tribes and tongues (although most are by far Xhosa). Within these communities, the ways of old are still strong. Witch doctors (sangomas), animal sacrifices and ancestor worship is not all that uncommon (although less so than in more rural parts of the country). So what impressed me on the conference was seeing these people, who were a minority at the conference, who were so concerned for the people of where they came from. Intellectually, one knows that 10–20 km from you a whole different world and culture exists, but the implications of all this became startling real as I listened to where they came from, how their families lived and their prayer requests. Theirs was a fervent concern for people deeply entrenched in superstition, paganism and synchronism. There is an urgent need to reach those people... a need I doubt the rest of us are aware of as we continue to live in a world apart from theirs.

One thing that came out at the end of the conference was that next year there might not be an MYC. The reason is that the management is considering to move the event to the Easter long weekend (which is not mid year) so that more people would be able to attend. This year we were pretty much limited only students and people who work for a church. Moving it to a long weekend would allow for the same content to be fit in, but it can also accommodate more people. Sounds like a good plan to me! I'm just not sure what is going to happen to the Crossword Young Adults Easter Convention...

Categories:

- Conferences [5]

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Links
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[3] http://www.rocklandscentre.co.za
[4] http://www.simonstown.com/
[5] https://siyach.org/taxonomy/term/1