

## School of Theology

15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> July 2013

One can get curious looks when you mention that pastors are gathering together for five days to study the doctrine of God. What's behind the raised eyebrows? It is possibly due to the assumption (and rightly so), that these men have studied, explored and learnt to apply these doctrines previously over many years. It would however be a mistake to think that pastors and Christians ever reach a stage where they no longer need to be reminded and challenged afresh with who our God is. We do, our congregations do, and the communities we minister to need regular exposure to the doctrine of God. *"And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the true and living God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3).*

As a "first timer" to the School of Theology, I was impressed by Diversity, Unity and Service.

**Diversity:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> July, fifteen gospel labourers arrived in Palmerston North for the Seventh School of Theology entitled "Our Great and Glorious God". These men represented a dozen different nations ranging from the British Isles, countries in Africa and throughout the Asia Pacific. The participants hailed from small and larger churches labouring throughout New Zealand, Canada, Fiji and Australia. Each had unique personalities, different life experiences, ministered in diverse situations and yet all were united. The fellowship between the attendees was genuine, warm and deep. It was especially encouraging to see older men investing in younger ministers, and passing on hard won lessons for pastoral longevity. A spirit of unity amongst diversity was clearly present during the week.

**Unity:** Dr. Raymond Perron from Quebec, Canada, prepared a spiritual feast for the attendees of our great and glorious God. We explored and applied the knowledge of God, His character, historical development of Trinity and God's decrees to our lives. Questions from the floor were helpfully addressed and demonstrated that this was not dry theology but much needed in our churches. It was a treat to have insights and perspectives from Bavinck, Calvin, Frame and Van Til. These theologians built upon each other's shoulders to develop great doctrines, which undergird the unity in the fellowship we experienced during the School of Theology.



**Service:** As great as the teaching was, some of the best moments were enjoyed informally as we ate and shared together. This was made possible by the generosity and labours of the local church at Palmerston North who served so lovingly with their time and talents. The Conference was also generously supported by the IRBS Continuing Education Program, and most notably the labours of Dafydd Hughes who coordinated the week.

I was humbled to be a part of the School of Theology. It was a great privilege to be invited. I am very thankful for all the participants and those who arranged the School of Theology.

**A report by Michael Prodigalidad**  
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