



VALEDICTORY ADDRESS | Friday 16 March 2018

Thank-you for the honour of sharing on behalf of my fellow graduands.

We have only just finished and yet we are aware that there is more to do—not just more books to read, more skills to hone, and relationships to develop, but appetite to nourish; our appetites have been whetted by something inexhaustible, a living word that continually opens us to what is new and creative – an impetus toward the ever-new reality of Christ.

For family and friends who love and encourage us, staff who attend to and organise us, and teachers who challenge and inspire us, we, tonight’s graduands, thank you for your commitment and efforts that have made our studies and achievements possible. Your dedication has been an integral part of our formation.

Most importantly, you have helped us to hear God speaking in Christ in new and creative ways, perhaps where previously there may have been silence or tired clichés.

I was struck by this just recently in Zanzibar, Tanzania, which was the main hub of the East African slave trade. Where people were once torn from their families, bartered for coin, and frequently beaten to death, God’s presence appears in a surprising way—now empty slave chambers witness to the faithful efforts of Christians who bravely fought against these practices. The reality of Christ’s life and activity rings from these empty tombs.

And walking through Stone Town, named after David Livingstone, where for many women, traditional symbols of religious identity conceal personality, a dignifying word weaves through the scene; a single woman walks in public, uncovered and unadorned, her witness expressed simply in who she is—Christian, living by the grace of God who is for us, in the dignity of being human.

This is the world that, for me, has opened through my study at Stirling—and similarly for fellow graduands—a world in which God continues to speak life through Christ.

So there is always more to do, in responding to this reality, and in service, speaking good news that intermingles with and transforms the rambunctious human family of culture, history, language and ideas.

May we all continue to grow in faith, encouraged by those who challenge and support us, with a continuing hunger to be transformed by the word of Christ.



ABOUT THE SPEAKER

**Dr Samuel John Curkpatrick, Graduate Diploma in Theology, Stirling Theological College
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Samuel has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and skilled communication. He embodies faithful response to God's vocational calling and critical engagement with Christian theological traditions by encouraging and facilitating relationships between churches and mission partners; tutoring at Stirling Theological College, and curating the historical archives of Churches of Christ in Australia.



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