

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, staff and fellow graduates.

Thank you for the opportunity to address those gathered today. It has been a long path to this doctorate through the various travails normal to life and particular to women in ministry.

My thesis was born out of a desire to see the expression of church I grew up within become more self-reflective and effective for the gospel. As the daughter of a Baptist minister and academic, I have lived within the heart of Australian evangelicalism for fifty years.

The thesis also arose from my particular context within Sydney evangelicalism, in which evangelical tensions are writ large, and in which female and other alternative voices have often been unheard. And yet I love both Sydney evangelicals and the wider Church dearly and I am therefore very glad today to be here with people from so many different traditions.

My hope is that the research I have done and my continuing ministry will contribute to a healthy evangelical movement which is able to serve for the sake of the Church rather than for the sake of itself. My central concept, building on the work of Stanley Grenz, is of generous orthoholism. That is, I call my fellow evangelicals to a wholistic righteousness which arises out of a gospel-centred grace.

I was a shy child who developed a full-blown case of imposter syndrome. Yet, echoing 2 Corinthians, Christ's love compels me to act and speak for transformation within my communities. So can I encourage you likewise within your own traditions to hear these words from Presbyterian woman Maggie Kuhn: "Stand before the people you fear and speak your mind - even if your voice shakes. When you least expect it, someone may actually listen to what you have to say."

Megan Joy Powell du Toit, PhD 2024

