

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS | Sunday 14 April 2024

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Archbishop, distinguished guests, staff, fellow graduates, and friends, I begin by acknowledging the Whadjuk Noongar people, the traditional owners of this land, and their elders, past, present and emerging.

I was excited to enrol for studies at the University of Divinity, in 2021. Although I knew that studying theology would present a lot of challenges, especially to fulfil the requirements for the Award and for Ordination, the UD program seemed tailor-made to suit my situation as a family man. I quickly adjusted to study life and with the assistance of lecturers and faculty advisers I was able to complete the degree earlier than I had anticipated.

As a husband and father to four children, it was a challenge to balance study and family life, however I committed myself to study and trusted in God. I focussed on each semester as it came. It has not been an easy journey to be here today, it is a clear testament of what St Paul called 'God's power and grace perfected in human weakness!'

I found it helpful to be disciplined, resilient, determined, and open to the diverse perspectives in the lectures and interactions with fellow students. I benefitted from this approach, and this has significantly impacted my life, my worldviews and how I engage in dialogue with people from diverse backgrounds. To have the full UD experience my advice to prospective students is:

- Fully engage with the study program.
- Use all available resources from the university (I found this very useful).
- Participate in all student activities – this helps with integration if you are new to university life or new in Australia.
- Contact lecturers - they are accessible and ready to answer any questions or help if any issues arise with study.
- Engage with other students during and after.
- Discuss assignments with other students.

I feel equipped with skills and knowledge that I need in ministry. The University is a vital vehicle for this and, as I begin a life in ministry, I place my trust in Jesus Christ and pray that God '*who started a good thing in me will see it to the end.*'

Wani Jackson Lisok, MTST 2024

