

Deputy Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Archbishop, leaders of churches, distinguished guests, staff, fellow graduands, family and friends.

What a gift authentic, accessible higher education is. I live in a country where it is still common for people to “buy” their diplomas. The community suffers from this corruption, particularly in the medical and education fields.

But lecturers at Whitley College, including Ian Dicks, Mark Brett and Darrell Jackson, made me work hard for my award and I will always be grateful for the way they challenged my study, research and writing. And to my husband David, who held the space for me to study.

I work for an organisation heavily invested in a contextual approach to sharing the good news. My Master of Theological Studies became a vehicle for in-depth anthropological enquiry, focused on the oral tradition of wish-blessings.

Over the past 10 years of living in Central Asia, my husband and I have been invited to give wishes at various celebrations, and, through that experience, I was moved by the idea that if I understood wishes and blessings more deeply, perhaps I could offer words that appropriately conveyed divine blessing.

I’ve heard that anthropologists have traditionally been ahead of workers and academics from my field and, once we catch up, the anthropologists have already moved on.

My hope is that we could close that gap – that anthropologists and those sharing the good news amongst least reached people groups could work together to develop more fruitful practices, for the sake of the Lord’s kingdom and his glory.

So, according to the traditions of my Central Asian friends, may I bring a blessing for us all, in our work, our study and our efforts to expand the kingdom:

- May the galloping horses bring good news to those who are yet to receive it.
- May we walk righteously before our Creator God.

Amen.

