

Mari Curry and Gerin Mi Young Eaton: New leaders of Unification Thought USA

Thomas Ward
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Two Young Female Unificationists and UTS Alumnae assume the Leadership of the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought

UTS Doctoral Candidate Mari Curry and UTS MA Graduate Gerin Mi Young Eaton are the new President and Secretary-General respectively of the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought.

new generation of motivated female leaders.

This past weekend marked the "graduation" to this

Not familiar with the Research Institute?

It was founded by UTS Co-Founders Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han Moon on July 10, 1999. In Korea and Japan, Rev. Moon established the Unification Thought Institute to promote lectures and conduct research on the philosophical dimension of Unification teachings. In other words, RIIWT would be the American home to Unification Thought. The Research Institute's focus, he specified, was to be somewhat broader than Unification Thought per se. It was also to encompass Religion, Philosophy, and Providence. True Parents appointed Dr. Jung Chang Choi, representing Korea, to serve as the RIIWT Chair. Dr. Hideo Oyamada was appointed Co-Chair representing Japan and Dr. Thomas Ward was appointed Co-Chair representing the United States.

The Institute has been active for twenty-one years. Over that period, it has produced five books, including the entire 2001-2002 edition of Unification Theological Seminary's Journal of Unification Studies. In addition to those five books, plus scores of academic articles, including a 40-page article in the Fall 2017 Professors' World Peace Academy's International Journal of World Peace on the work of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon in addressing communism.

The Research Institute has also helped to organize and participated in more than one hundred Unification Thought-related conferences and programs over the past two decades. It has taught credit-bearing undergraduate Unification Thought courses at the University of Bridgeport and also graduate Unification Thought and Unification Worldview courses at Unification Theological Seminary. It has offered web-based courses through its own website.

This November Dr. Choi, Dr. Ward, Dr. Oyamada, and Dr. Perrottet are stepping down from their leadership roles and passing the Research Institute leadership on to two capable second-generation leaders, Rev. Mari Curry and Rev. Gerin Mi Young Eaton. Rev. Curry, who has served as a Vice President for the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International is completing her doctoral degree at UTS and Rev. Eaton hold a Master of Arts in Religious Studies from UTS.

This Conference recognized second generation who had completed the Unification Thought Certification course taught by UTS alumnus Professor Gerry Servito, Recipients of this honor included Jennifer Pierce, Gerin Mi Young Eaton, Heather Thalheimer, and Carol Pobanz. Eleven of the students who successfully completed Dr. Ward's Unification Worldview class were also recognized with CAUSA and VOC Theory Lecture Certification. Recipients of the latter certificate included Gerin Mi Young Eaton, Jinil Fleischman, Roland Platt, Margaret Repke, Christina Lange, Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed, Tasnah Bercy, Yoshie Manaka, Rev. Demian Dunkley, Sungmi Orr, and Grace Kellett,

Participants in the Conference enjoyed academic presentations from several Unification Leaders who have been students in Dr. Ward's UTS Unification Worldview course this year. Yoshie Manaka, on the opening evening, shared her powerful Manifesto representing second generation leaders and conveyed her strong determination to follow the direction of True Parents and to save lost second-generation members. Jinil Fleishman, President of CARP, presented a well received critique and counterproposal to the ideology related to the LGBTQ Movement. Christina Lange spoke about the Millennials, their alienation from religion, their search of self and of the potential role of Unification Teachings in the search of self. Grace Kellett spoke on Feminism vis-à-vis the example of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and the Heavenly Parent Holy Community. She offered insights into a Unification-based critique and counterproposal to feminist views on gender in light of the life and work of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Mi Young Eaton spoke on the attitude and approach that second generation must take as they navigate a world fraught with ideological

confusion. Participants also enjoyed hearing from Heather Thalheimer on approaches to teaching UT and from UTS Dean Steven Boyd who shared his experience in introducing Unification Thought to high level leaders in Uruguay.



(Left) Rev. Mari Curry, (Right) Rev. Mi Young Eaton

Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, long-time major envoy of True Mother Moon to America and also responsible for the World Clergy Leadership Conference, congratulated Dr. Choi, Dr. Ward, and Dr Perrottet on concluding their tenure as officers and warmly welcomed the new leadership of Mari Curry and Mi Young Eaton. He expressed his interest in hearing UT taught by the newly certified young UT lecturers. Dr. Chung Sik Yong, North American Regional President, thanked Dr. Choi for his many years of leadership and highlighted the heartfelt devotion that Dr. Choi had demonstrated in his leadership. In his presentation, Dr. Thomas Ward introduced participants to the internal dimension of the Research Institute and Dr. Perrottet traced the chronology of activities and accomplishment of the Research Institute from its founding until today. Prof. Gerry Servito who has dedicated his life to the research and teaching of Unification Thought shared photos and spoke on his many experiences with sharing this message around the world and particularly with second-generation. Prof. Servito was recognized by many for all of his hard work. In his presentation, Dr. Hideo Oyamada reflected on his many decades of leading Unification Thought activities in Japan and his pioneer work in Latin America. He spoke of his experiences in sharing UT with Brazilian leaders during his eighteen years of service as a National Messiah to Brazil. Research Institute Chair and President Dr. Jung-chang Choi emphasized the need for the study of Unification Thought and he recommended that those interested begin with the Research Institute publication *An Introduction to the Thought of Sun Myung Moon* and, after, they could move on to the more challenging text *New Essentials of Unification Thought*. He also explained the role that suffering played in internalizing the truth. He explained that it is through suffering that one can fully internalize the truth that resides throughout Unification Thought as well as its full implication.

The program concluded with Rev. Mari Curry, the New RIIWT President, and Rev. Mi Young Eaton, the new RIIWT Secretary-General. Together each expressed gratitude and their commitment to carry on the Research Institute's legacy and responsibility. Rev. Curry, a second-generation leader and the new Research Institute President, and her husband Richard Curry are already a Cheon Bo Couple. Dr. Ward reminded participants in the program that Dr. Sang Hun Lee had been chosen to serve as President of the Unification Thought Institute worldwide because he was the most serious of anyone about Unification Thought. He said that he could see a very, very high level commitment to UT and its further development in both Rev. Curry and Rev. Eaton.

So many positive comments and statements of support were posted by bloggers regarding the Conference. Here are a few:

Gregory Davis, a UTS alumnus and a long-time business leader: "Let me offer my congratulations on this excellent program with these awesome BCs RIIWT 2020. This is by far one the most hopeful and inspiring program/presentations I have seen coming out of UTS in a long time. You may have very well created new and relevant "life" to our hallowed institution. Keep up the good work, and please share mine and I am sure, many others' sincere appreciation

and joy, yes joy, for this wonderful program. God bless!

Margaret Herbers, an 1800 couple, who worked directly with both Dr. Bo Hi Pak and with Dr. Michael **Jenkins and Dr. Rouse**: "Thank you for a most meaningful event tonight from RIIWT. Among other things it was an opportunity for those of us outside the UTS orbit to hear from these new people, our own second generation. Thanks for all you are doing."

Mr. Bill Lay, Director of the University of Bridgeport's School of Public and International Affairs: "Where can I get that Manifesto that Yoshie wrote? So amazing!"

Bill Stoner, a senior Unification Church leader in Indiana after hearing the Manifesto by Yoshie Manaka on the responsibility of the Second Generation: "Thank you very much. Such a beautiful testimony. Let it be the rallying cry for the 2nd Generation."

Pierre Beauregard, Leader from Canada: Happy to watch from Canada. Wonderful powerful and hopeful RIIWT 2020 Opening Session

Dr. Michael Kiely, UTS Alumnus, 1800 couple and long-time missionary to Africa: "This was a wonderful, articulate conference full of love. Is this Unification Thought or Unification Heart?"

Katrina McCarthy: "Thank you, Prof. Servito, our son Ryan loved your presentations" and, expressing her appreciation to Yoshie Manaka, she wrote: "Thank you, Yoshie, so heartfelt and well spoken. Thank you for your courage."