

Unification Theological Seminary: Congratulations to the Class of 2022!

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May 28, 2022



On Saturday, May 28, 2022, Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) held its forty-sixth Commencement in New York City. For the first time since 2019, graduating students, alumni, faculty, family and friends gathered in person to celebrate the graduating class of 2022, as well as the classes of 2021 and 2020.

Dr. Chung-sik Yong, Regional President of Family Federation North America and UTS board member, gave the keynote address. "Now you are going into the world. The present war in Ukraine is a terrible reality, but it's only one example of conflict and disharmony at every level of human life," he told the some 130 attendants.

"The seminary is inheriting [UTS co-founder's ministry of peace-building]. This year UTS became one of the first seminaries in North America, if not the only one, approved to offer a Master's Degree program in Peace Studies."

Dr. Yong challenged the graduates to be spokespeople for God, to witness and speak for God's heart towards humanity: "Beloved graduates, what about you? Jesus said, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' Will you be peacemakers? In John 15:3, Jesus says, 'There is no greater love than this: that a person would lay down his life for the sake of his friends.' Jesus set a high standard with his words, yet even before laying down our lives for our friends, should we not first share with them about God's heart towards them and God's love for them?"

God has infinite love and a longing heart for all humankind, yet God is muted unless we act as God's

spokespersons. God wants humankind to recapture the most basic human right: the right to stand with absolute certainty as God's true son, or God's true daughter."

Two Honorary Doctorates were conferred in this year: to Bishop Mounib Younan, and Kathy Rigney, who both gave recipient remarks. Bishop Younan spoke about discipleship: that it's not just about grace, but it's actually about the completion of one's responsibility. "We each have received different gifts and talents. We may think our gifts are insignificant, but when joined together with the gifts of others, they can heal the world and further God's kingdom of love and justice.

"What I have come to understand is that it is not about me. It is not important that I am the best at anything. What is important is that I am following the Risen Lord. What is important is that I am seeking to serve my God and my neighbor with the gifts I have been given. I am grateful that throughout my life the Lord of love has guided me, strengthened me, and encouraged me. For I always believe when Christ calls, He equips and qualifies."

Kathy Rigney was recognized for her 47 years as a missionary in Africa. In her remarks, she expressed humility and gratitude to receive this honorary doctorate, and offered her love and thanks to the founders of the Unification Theological Seminary.

"I always feel that my life has been so rich and filled with abundant blessing while living in many countries and regions of this treasured continent that we call Africa. I have experienced the heart of Heaven in Africa in a way that I never expected. I have learned from Africa about love; about family; about endurance; and about living with heart. I've often wondered how I could be so lucky, and so fortunate to be asked by God to live amongst the incredible people of Africa. Africa has pushed me to overcome my greed. To overcome my desire to be recognized, to overcome my self-centeredness, for to bring any result on this precious continent of Africa, one must find one's heart, and one must center that heart on God."

The class of 2022 included about 25 graduates, including two Doctors of Ministry. The commencement speakers from the class of 2022 was Jinil Fleishman, who received a MA in Religious Studies, and Cirilo Jagopa-as, who received a Doctor of Ministry.

Following the conferring of degrees and the graduate responses, ten students and five faculty and honorary recipients were inducted into Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honors society for the field of religious studies.

Congratulations to the class of 2022!

You can watch the full recording of the commencement [here](#).