

## Unification Theological Seminary: Regarding Sale of the Barrytown Property

Thomas G. Walsh  
June 13, 2023



**Unification Theological Seminary**  
Building Effectiveness in Ministry and Public Leadership

June 13, 2023

Dear UTS Alumni and Friends,

Thank you for your steadfast encouragement and support for the mission of UTS.

I write at this time to announce that the Barrytown property is now under contract with a buyer.

As some of you may know, the UTS Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Founder, the Board of Directors of FFWPU USA, and other stakeholders of UTS resolved on February 3, 2018 to place the Barrytown property on the market for sale. See the following [letter from then President Spurgin](#), dated May 15, 2018, and an [article from the \*Daily Freeman\*](#), dated December 9, 2018. It was also in May of 2019 that the main campus of UTS moved from Barrytown to 43rd Street in New York City.

At that time, there were a few offers to purchase the property, but none were considered acceptable, and the property was taken off the market. During the covid period, beginning in 2020, some alternative uses of the property were discussed. As the covid crisis continued, however, neither the sale nor the re-purposing of the property gained traction.

In the summer of 2022, as the epidemic was fading, a discussion about the property's future was re-opened. In November of 2022, a real estate broker agreement was signed, and the property was placed on the market once again. In early 2023 we received several offers to purchase the property.

Trustees resolved to accept what is believed to be the best option for UTS. Following the decision of the Board, a confidential contract for purchase and sale was signed. It is anticipated that a closing on the sale of the property will take place in late August.

The decision to sell the property was made with deep respect and love for the life and legacy of our Founders, and for all those who have been part of the truly remarkable history of the property. Several discussions with our Founder, as well as with the FFWPU USA leadership, both the previous and current administration, took place prayerfully and openly. Before making their decision to approve the current purchase agreement, the UTS Board of Trustees gathered at the *Cheon Shim Won* in Las Vegas for prayer and deliberation.

Our determination going forward is to build on the victorious and providential foundation that has been secured at Barrytown, carrying it forward to ever greater achievements, while also revering and honoring the legacy and history of all that has been accomplished at Barrytown.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas G. Walsh, Ph.D.  
President  
Unification Theological Seminary

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## Latest News

### UTS to sell Barrytown

 UTS Communications  15 May 2018

After considerable prayer, thought, discussion and due diligence, the UTS [Board of Trustees](#) has directed the UTS administration to sell the [Unification Theological Seminary](#) (UTS) property in Barrytown, NY. The trustees, who have fiduciary responsibility for the institution, came to this difficult decision with a heavy heart. UTS is no longer able to pay what it costs to maintain the property, while simultaneously fulfilling its [educational mission](#) in a changing world. In reviewing the financial situation, the trustees determined that it is best to invest the Seminary's limited resources to develop stronger academic programs. Proceeds from its sale will be used solely to benefit the Seminary.



UTS is repositioning itself as an entrepreneurial, urban seminary with courses offered online and in [New York City](#). As the [Founder predicted](#), e-learning is the wave of the future, providing access to courses to a global audience. Technology has opened doors for new ways to learn. It is essential that UTS move forward and utilize interactive, online platforms. We live in an age when the Internet opens the doors of education far beyond the limitations of a brick-and-mortar building, which is expensive to maintain.

Many of us have a sentimental yearning for the love, happiness and friendship that we experienced at Barrytown, having spent quality time there with our Founders and peers. Yet rather than dwell on the past, our Board has decided that our Seminary should move forward toward what God has in store for future generations of students. Without the financial burden of Barrytown, UTS can fulfill its mission of educating future generations of students; with it, that will not be possible.

We are tremendously encouraged by the worldwide response of students to [UTS Online](#). We are inspired that our distance learning courses have resulted in breakthroughs for students in Africa, Europe and Asia. The partnership with [Family Federation](#) (FFWPU) our sponsoring church, remains solid, and we are working closely with the church leaders to provide theological education for a new wave of young leaders worldwide.

UTS is planning to reinstitute a scholarship program to support doctoral studies for a few young scholars who want to become UTS professors. We are also excited to strengthen community relations and to expand our academic programs, by developing ecumenical partnerships and collaborations, launching a Ministry Institute, establishing an Islamic track in our Master's degree program, and seeking to offer joint degree programs with peer institutions. The sale of the Barrytown property will provide the funds that will drive that next phase of our development as a leading graduate school in Unification studies.

If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact either Dr. Hugh Spurgin, UTS President at [h.spurgin@uts.edu](mailto:h.spurgin@uts.edu) or Robin Graham, the Director of Advancement and Enrollment Management, at [r.graham@uts.edu](mailto:r.graham@uts.edu)

Wednesday, June 14th 2023

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LOCAL NEWS

Barrytown property that was once home to Unification Church's theological seminary awaits next chapter

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A view of one of the buildings on the land that was once home to the Unification Theological Seminary in Barrytown, N.Y.

TANIA BARRICKLO - DAILY FREEMAN

By PATRICIA R. DOXSEY | pdoxsey@freemanonline.com, PATRICIA DOXSEY FREEMAN STAFF, PATRICIA DOXSEY PATTIATFREEMAN and PATRICIA DOXSEY | Daily Freeman
PUBLISHED: December 9, 2018 at 2:35 p.m. | UPDATED: July 21, 2021 at 6:53 a.m.



BARRYTOWN, N.Y. - If the rolling hills and forested lands that stretch between the Hudson River and River Road and Barrytown Road and Montgomery Place in this Northern Dutchess hamlet could talk, they would tell the tales of a time before the birth of our nation, when members of the prominent Livingston family were lords of the manor, and of how it was in its meadows and at its waterfront that a young Theodore Roosevelt indulged in his budding passion for nature, collecting the small mammals, insects, snakes and birds that would become part of his "Roosevelt Museum of Natural History," and ultimately end up in the Museum of Natural History in New York City.

They would tell, too, of being purchased by John D. Rockefeller in 1929; of the antics of the high school boys who attended the St. Joseph's Normal Institute, a Christian Brothers boarding school constructed by Rockefeller for them there and how, in 1974, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon chose the bucolic 260-acre property as the home for his young church's first theological seminary.

"It had the right combination of mountain, river field and forrest," Henry Christopher, the seminary's historian and director of admissions and financial aid, said recently, explaining the appeal of the land to Moon. "He said you could walk out into nature and experience God."

Now the property, which contains a number of buildings, including the historic Messina House and several single-family homes, is preparing to tell the next chapter of its story.

The Unification Church closed its seminary there in 2015, although it does still offer

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The Unification Church closed its seminary there in 2013, although it does still offer some courses there, and, earlier this year, the church put the property up for sale.

Originally listed for \$18 million, the seminary recently reduced its asking price to \$16,750,000, according to Michael Mickler, the vice president for admissions.

The sale of the property is bittersweet for many in the church who see the property as the birthplace of the church in America.

But, since 1999, the seminary has offered more and more classes at its location in Midtown Manhattan, where, President Hugh Spurgin said, the majority of its American students reside.

“For 40 years, we had our seminary and our main campus in Barrytown,” Spurgin said. But, he added, since 2009, the seminary has had more students at its Midtown location than in Barrytown, and worldwide, more and more students are choosing to take the seminary’s online offerings.

“In a sense,” Spurgin said, “we’re sacrificing this property for the larger providence around the world and the future of the Unification Theological Seminary.

“It’s not easy, it’s a huge sacrifice for us,” Spurgin said. But, he added, he is reminded that Myung often said “you cannot limit an institution to one property.”

Spurgin said the church will use the money from the sale to establish an endowment to fund its efforts around the world.

In addition to the Messina House, a High Victorian Gothic style house constructed in the late 1880s, the property contains the 90-year old former St. Joseph’s Normal Institute, five houses, two barns, including an historic barn constructed completely without nails, a commercial kitchen, dormitories, a chapel, a 70,000 gallon water tower, trails, woods, riverfront access, breathtaking views of the Catskills, three herds of deer and a variety of other fauna.

“It’s like a microcosm of the whole world,” Christopher said.

The property is zoned for institutional use and has a number of special protective overlays, including designation as being within the Hudson River National Historic Landmark District.

To date, Spurgin said, the seminary has had two written offers and serious interest expressed by two not-for-profit organizations. He added, however, that the seminary isn’t in serious negotiations with any potential buyers.



**Patricia R. Doxsey**



**Patricia Doxsey Freeman staff**



**Patricia Doxsey pattiatfreeman**



**Patricia Doxsey**

More discussion on [Dailyfreeman.com](https://www.dailyfreeman.com)



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