

My Godly Path Took a Big Turn at UTS

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Raised by devout and practical Presbyterian parents in Oakland, California, I naturally developed a keen interest in eastern spirituality and served society as a rock musician after graduating in math from the University of California at Davis. I met my spiritual mother, Christine Libon, guided by the Holy Spirit a couple blocks from my house in October of 1972. The Oakland family gathered me up and Mrs. Onni Durst sealed the deal, introducing me to Rev. Sun Myung Moon, my Lord, Guru and God, in January of 1973.

After three and a half years of missionary life in Oakland, New Hampshire, New York City and MFT in the mid- to deep-south, I attended Unification Theological Seminary (Religious Education Cert., 1978) and Vanderbilt University (M.A., Ph.D., Religion). I served as National Director of Ocean Church (1983), Assistant National Director of CARP (1983-4), Director of the Common Suffering Fellowship and the Interdenominational Conferences for Clergy (1984-5), and then a series of positions in the interfaith world: Assistant Director of the first Assembly of the World's Religions, Director of the Religious Youth Service, founding editor of Dialogue and Alliance, and Acting Director of the International Religious Foundation (1985-6).

At that point, True Parents brought me back into the church mainstream as Regional Coordinator of the Unification Church New England Region (1987-8), and Vice-President and then President of HSA-UWC (1989-2000). This led to my appointment as President of Unification Theological Seminary (2000-2010), and from there God's hand guided me back to the American headquarters' ministry and education team (2010-13). By True Parents' grace through all these things I edited God's Warning to the World (volume 1, 1983) and Assembly of the World's Religions 1985, and authored the True Family Values Ministry curriculum (1996), Family, Church, Community, Kingdom (2000), The Believer's Responsibility (2010) and numerous sermons and articles including my favorite project, the monthly UVViews.

For the past two years I have served on the editing team for the new Holy Scriptures, developed the Center for Education at UTS, and taught online courses in Spiritual Formation, the Life and Legacy of True Parents, and Unification Apologetics. These courses led me to delve more deeply into True Parents' life course than I ever had a chance before to do. This chastening and edifying experience, an amazing immersion in the Word through the Holy Scriptures, has served to open my mind and heart more and more to God's work in True Parents. This has naturally led to current projects—the Victorious Gospel of True Parents video series, thoughts on Sanctuary and Succession, and Family Federation FAQs. Beyond this horizon, I am looking forward to responding to True Mother's request to “teach True Parents.”

I'll close with an anecdote about a turning point in my life: from UTS to the Ph.D. In 1978, the UTS protocol for choosing graduates eligible for post-graduate scholarships at other schools was that the faculty and administration produce a group of second-year students they deemed qualified for True Father to assess for doctoral studies. I had submitted my name for the list, but as Dean Theresa Stewart read the names on the morning of Father's visit, mine was not called. I was, yes, a disconsolate about that, but this changed that afternoon. I was cleaning out a barn with a fellow seminarian who also was not on the list, and we began to day-dream about what we would do after graduating UTS. Our dreams took us into the mission field of Africa, gaining greater and greater heights of hope, and I found myself thanking God that I had escaped ending up on that list! At that very moment, another seminarian ran into the barn, shouting that the administration had decided that everyone who had submitted their name would get to meet Father, and I had to put on a suit immediately because he was about to arrive. Obedient sort that I am, I suited up. There you go.

I find that the more I get to know, the less I need to know. I aim to achieve St. Paul's state of mind when he wrote, “I know only Christ, and him crucified,” in the form of, “I know only True Parents, and them victorious.”

My wife, Hyeyong, and I live in Red Hook, New York, and have five children and six grandchildren.