

A Letter from the President: The Status of UTS

Michael Balcomb
December 18, 2014



There have been recent concerns about the financial situation of the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS). The following is a letter from Dr. Michael Balcomb, Chair of the UTS Board of Trustees and FFWPU USA President, addressing these questions and concerns.

Dear UTS Alumni and students, and all members of the Unification Community,

Greetings from Las Vegas! Over the next few days, True Mother will very busy with God's providence here. Tomorrow she will deliver a special message to the clergy of the ACLC. On Saturday, she'll meet with almost 200 young people from Korea, Japan and America who have come at her invitation to inaugurate the Cranes Club. The following day we have a wonderful Sunday service and Christmas Party with True Parents for over 1200 people. We are so grateful for these blessings from True Parents.

In recent days, a number of you have written to me, and to all the UTS Board of Directors, asking "What is going on at UTS," especially after the publication last week of the President of the Alumni Association Robin Graham's appeal to the alumni, "*HSA's Financial Gun to the Head.*"

Robin has pointed out a number of real concerns about the challenges that lie ahead for UTS, including its ability to maintain accreditation, to secure access to needed Federal financial aid and other public funds, and to meet the academic and spiritual needs of current and future students. These are all very important issues that need to be and will be resolved with cooperation and goodwill.

As a graduate of UTS—twice—I have a deep appreciation for the priceless education this school has provided. I also remember many occasions when Father and Mother visited and spent time with the students, loving, scolding, cajoling and encouraging us to see the big picture. It's always been my desire

to preserve True Parents' vision in a sustainable way for generations to come.

The key word is "sustainable." We are not looking to close UTS, or sell the property, but we must find workable solutions that keep True Parents' teachings and vision alive in our seminary whilst dealing with practical realities. Throughout most of the last 40 years, UTS has survived only with the help of continuous and generous funding from a variety of organizations created by True Parents. For many years, the main source of that support was from overseas, but in recent years, that funding has come from HSA-UWC in the USA.

The source of most of that recent funding has been bank loans, secured by other key HSA properties in New York City, and the HSA-UWC Board has concluded that it would not be prudent stewardship to simply continue to invest at the same level in a program and institution that is in need of some fundamental changes. Even so, the HSA-UWC board has already conditionally approved 2015 UTS funding of almost \$1m.

Most recently, the central focus of UTS has been the establishment of an undergraduate program, which is now in its second full year. Unfortunately, the program has run into a number of difficulties, including much lower than anticipated recruitment, delayed access to Federal financial aid and numerous other challenges. This has all contributed to a real and pressing question about the viability of the program.

Indeed, UTS' accrediting body, the Middle States Commission of Higher Education, (MSA) recently placed UTS on probationary status. While still accredited, much work needs to be done to rectify a number of shortcomings the commission identified. I went to MSA Headquarters in Philadelphia to learn more about the issues that need to be addressed.

Most importantly of all, we need to understand our Founder's vision for higher education and the spiritual, intellectual and academic growth of our young people. She has expressed that the best model is one that places our fine young students out in the public arena, investing time equally in both academic and outreach activities, including witnessing, and has provided scholarship help to develop that dream both in the USA and overseas. If UTS is to prosper, we must be attuned to heaven's will.

Here in Las Vegas, there is an exciting CARP program going on at the University of Las Vegas, Nevada (UNLV) True Mother chose former GPA leaders Akira and Makiko Watanabe to launch this program, and they have been leading a team of young people who are studying on campus and at the same time making a total commitment to witness to God and True Parents. They've established a flourishing study center just a block from the UNLV student union, and are reaching out to dozens of fellow students. Last Friday the center was packed for the Christmas party, and today they finish their end-of-semester Divine Principle workshop. It's so exciting to see True Mother's vision growing and developing.

We all want and hope to see UTS survive and flourish. We would like to see the preservation of the beautiful Barrytown Campus for future generations. We want to maintain the foundation of an accredited theological seminary for the education of our current and future pastoral leaders, and I hope and pray that will be able to do so. I invite all members and all alumni to step up to assist UTS with your prayers and your needed financial support at this hour of need.

Sincerely,

Michael Balcomb
Chair, UTS Board of Trustees
President, HSA-UWC USA