

Unification Theological Seminary Graduation

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Degree awardees from Bachelor of Arts to Doctor of Ministry got their marching orders to go forth and be the light of the world on Saturday, May 26, 2015 at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) in Barrytown, New York.

“Do you know who you are?” UTS President Hugh Spurgin asked the graduates at a capacity crowd of more than 200 well-wishers. “You are the Light of the World. You are the physicians who will care for those who are sick – spiritually and physically. Through you, God wants to realize His will on earth,” he told them.



Spurgin asked a further question: “Are you ready to sacrifice yourself so that others can know the love and the heart of our Heavenly Parent and can be blessed by our Heavenly Parent?”

“Yes,” they answered in unison.

“These new windows in the chapel are not only here to let the light come in, but to let the light go out,” said Dr. Michael Balcomb, President of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification USA who gave the commencement address. Balcomb invoked the vision of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, founder of UTS, quoting from his speech in which the Founder compared himself to a lighthouse keeper. “No one pays attention to a lighthouse during the day, and especially today when the night is thoroughly lit by a false sun. The lighthouse keeper may be mocked and disregarded, but that is exactly why we are here today,” Balcomb exhorted the graduates in the newly renovated chapel lit by 16 new plate-glass windows.



Bill Gertz, an award-winning reporter for The Washington Times, was awarded an honorary doctorate for his extraordinary achievement in publishing books and articles on national security issues. Gertz, who made his mark in the competitive world of national security reporting without earning an undergraduate degree, called upon the audience to harness the power of information technology to build a world of peace.

“Even with today’s technological marvels, we are early in the revolution being caused by information technology which is coming to dominate our lives. However there is a dark side of it. It has changed the nature of warfare. And I believe the next wave of warfare will be driven by cyber, information manipulation and media,” he said.

“China has already infiltrated U.S. networks and can cripple our energy system with attacks. Today China employs thousands of bloggers to plant stories and rumors favorable to its cause. The Russian government used media manipulation extensively to make territorial gains in the Ukraine. ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) is effectively exploiting social media,” Gertz said.

He also argued that information technology is needed to fight the war of ideas at home, especially to revive a sense of morality in the culture. “We urgently need ways to use the blessings of the information age to educate, inform and to spread truths far and wide. We must show the world where the truth is, and I challenge every person in this hall to take up this cause,” he said.

Rev. Man-ho Kim was awarded an honorary doctorate for his contributions to religious, humanitarian and educational organizations in Korea and worldwide. The citation for his award explained that he had organized numerous forums on the Reunification of North and South Korea, the Northeast Asia Peace Initiative, and annual World Summit conferences.

“Through your work in UPF, you were able to contribute to regional and international peacebuilding programs, renewal of the United Nations, and the creation of vital peace initiatives within the next generation through multiple youth service programs that were developed under your leadership. You were able to expand your concern for interreligious cooperation and pass on this legacy to the coming generations as an educator at both Sun Moon University and the Sun Moon Academy,” Dr. Kathy

Winings, Vice-President of UTS Academic Affairs, told the graduates regarding the accomplishments of Dr. Kim.



“Following Rev. Moon’s ascension, many people wondered, ‘Is there a future for the Unification movement? Many predicted that the Unification ship would sink before reaching a safe harbor,’” Dr. Kim said in his acceptance remarks.

“However, despite many challenges, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon stood firm and looked to the future. She told us, ‘We must move forward without stopping. We must raise the next generation of leaders and bequeath unto them the desire to lead meaningful lives of service to humanity’ ” he explained.

Kim cited a list of initiatives announced by Mother Moon that are bringing results. These included the Wonmo Pyeongae Foundation that has awarded scholarships to more than 3,000 students from 80 nations; the Universal Peace Academy, which has sent more than 25 graduates as missionaries to 15 nations and the Cranes Club, launched in 2014 to build a network of young professionals dedicated to serving humanity.

“All of these endeavors consistently point to one common fact: Rev. and Mrs. Moon see humanity as one family under God; they believe that living for the sake of others is the key to a meaningful life,” Dr. Kim said.

The ceremony honored the first three graduates of Barrytown College, an undergraduate program that was started two years ago. These graduates earned a Bachelor of Arts in World Religions and Philosophy.

There were four awards for Master of Religious Education, seven for Master of Arts in Religious Studies, three for Master of Divinity and four for Doctor of Ministry.

On Sunday, May 24, more than 50 UTS alumni gathered for a series of discussions that continued through Memorial Day. On Sunday evening, Dr. Spurgin held two question-and-answer sessions with alumni to discuss options for the future of UTS and of the campus at Barrytown. The results of the discussions will be reported in coming days on the UTS website. Spurgin said, “One organizational proposal that came from that dialogue was general agreement that UTS needs to establish a Council of representative alumni to help to provide guidance to our institution during these turbulent times.”