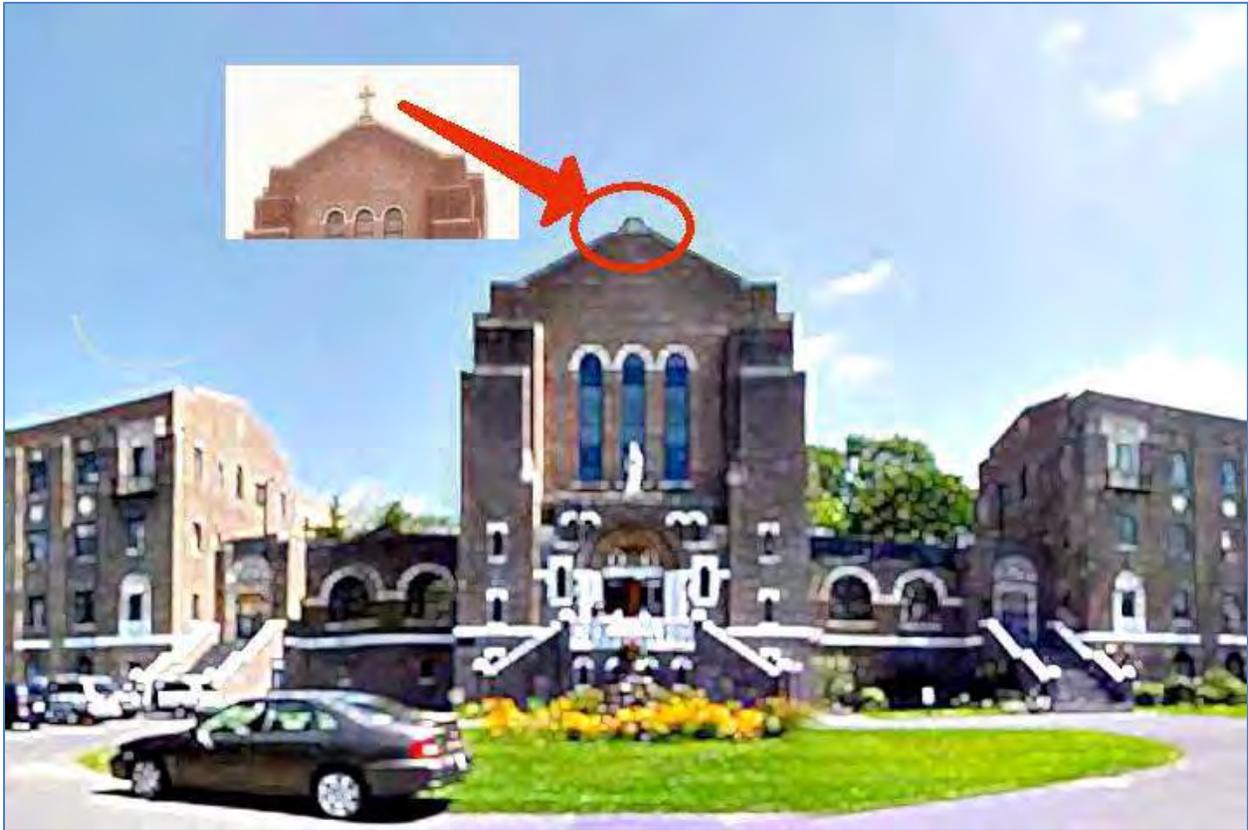


The Unification Theological Seminary Chapel's Cross Blown Off by Lightning

Tyler Hendricks

June 11, 2001



As described by Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) President Tyler Hendricks: "On the evening of June 11, there was a thunderstorm in the mid-Hudson Valley. A bolt of lightning struck the five-foot-high stone cross that has stood at the top of our seminary for its 70 years of existence. The cross is not grounded, so the energy had no place to go but out horizontally. This snapped the cross at its base, separating it from the building, and blew off both arms. One arm fell with the pillar of the cross backwards onto the roof. The other careened forward, with pieces falling upon building parapets and to the ground as far as 60 feet away. No one was hurt, but one car suffered damage."

Dr. Hendricks continued: "As a symbol of Christ's suffering and salvific love for all humankind, the cross is heroic and magnificent. But as a symbol of humankind's malice toward God expressed by crucifying His son, the cross induces pain and sorrowful grief to God. While a symbol of God's victory, it is also a symbol of human sin. In 1974, Father Moon directed that the cross remain atop our seminary. Upon hearing of its demise this June, he said that it is now time for all crosses to come down." True Father's direction became manifest in 2003 when he called upon Christian clergy to take down the cross as a condition for reconciliation among the sons of Abraham. True Father's call became the foundation for the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI) and Peace Pilgrimages to the Holy Land.