

UTS holds 38th Commencement

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May is here and that means it is time for graduation! This year, the Unification Theological Seminary celebrated its 38th graduating class on Saturday, May 24th at its New York City campus. The graduating class this year featured 12 Master of Religious Education (MRE), 3 Master of Arts in Religious Studies (MA) and 3 Master of Divinity (MDiv.) candidates and one Doctor of Ministry (DMin.) candidate.



One great feature of this year's graduation was the large number of alumni who had graduated before the Seminary received its permanent charter and formal accreditation and had therefore received only a diploma but not a degree. The New York Department of Education allows its schools to provide the means for such graduates to "upgrade" their diploma to a formal degree. Traditionally, there have only been small groups of candidates at graduation who had upgraded their diploma to the degree. This year, however, 11 of our graduates completed this process.



This year's graduating class is a miniature United Nations. We have 3 graduates from India, 2 candidates from the Philippines, one student from Nigeria and 2 from America. Edwin Ebenezer comes from India and has been studying how to reach the unchurched population through a program called "Target-Oriented Evangelism." Abegail Bomalay, a newlywed last year, was able to support her husband as he graduated from UTS in 2013. Hazel Brillantes has been studying marriage and family issues across diverse faith groups for her thesis. Both Abegail and Hazel are from the Philippines. Bob Mansur, one of the 2 students from America, has been studying new methods of adult religious education that supports personal life change focusing in particular on Landmark, Dale Carnegie and Recovery International. Manoj Jacob, the recently hired pastor of the New Jersey Family Federation Church and also from India originally, is busy finishing his thesis project in which he is developing a Lectionary based on Unification themes. Mathew John's focus is on the pastoral counseling needs of senior adults. Timothy Mbiaki from Nigeria is tackling a very important topic – interfaith peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria with an emphasis on Muslim-Christian conflicts. Our DMin. graduate is Michael Kiely who completed his dissertation project on Unification Faith Parenting. Michael studied diverse families within the Unification Church – parents and adult children – and came up with 13 characteristics for successfully passing on the faith in Unification families.

