

Unification Theological Seminary: Thomas Ward to resign after commencement

Thomas Ward
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Thomas J. Ward

Beloved Members of the UTS community,

I have been blessed to welcome three entering classes of UTS students. On May 28, 2022 I will preside over my third UTS commencement ceremony. When I assumed the UTS Presidency in July of 2019 I characterized it as a "transitional presidency." I felt that my major responsibility was to bring relevant parts of my professional experience to the Seminary's already solid academic foundation. I calibrated at that time that my tenure should be two to three years.

As we come to the close of these three years, I recognize that it is indeed time to pass the torch on to new leadership. I was the benefactor of the remarkable years of the Spurgin presidency during which UTS earned approval for relocating our main campus to New York City; developed our first fully online Master degree; and successfully attained Middle State Commission of Higher Education re-accreditation.

During the past three years, we have worked to strengthen ties with the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. We have reviewed and refined our UTS Mission Statement and our academic programming. We have added emphasis on faculty and student research and have also witnessed growth in enrollments. Most recently UTS has developed and is now implementing a new graduate degree program in Peace Studies.

Unbeknownst to any of us when my presidency began, we soon after faced a pandemic. UTS moved all of its classes to online platforms that relied on Canvas, Populi, and Zoom. Unlike in many other institutions, the change at UTS was seamless.

During this period, many of our faculty, students and their families were impacted. The pandemic claimed the lives of several respected UTS alumni, as well as Dr. Edwin Ang, one of the founding pillars of our Seminary.

I have greatly appreciated the vision, the support, and optimism of our Board; the talent and devotion of our Faculty; the competency of our Students; the loyalty of our Alumni, and the support of our Sponsors and the many Friends of UTS. I have learned so much from my colleagues at UTS and their experience. It is my prayer that the sincere, if imperfect, offering of these three years helps to pave the way for the next steps of this important, Providential institution, which is inspired by the vision of our Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. We have every reason, I am sure, to look forward to a bright future. Spring has come!

Many thanks to everyone for allowing me to serve and learn from you. As my presidency comes to a close, I look forward to continuing in my role as Professor of Peace and Development Studies, and in assisting the next Administration in any way that is deemed helpful.

With deepest Respect and Gratitude to our UTS Family,

Thomas J. Ward