

UPF International: UPF Leadership Transition Ceremony - Chang Shik Yang replaces Thomas G. Walsh

Chang Shik Yang
May 26, 2023



Tarrytown, New York -- The UPF worldwide community celebrated a new chapter in its history with the installation of **Dr. Chang Shik Yang** as the new international chairman.

UPF also bid farewell to **Dr. Thomas G. Walsh**, who stepped down after 17 years as UPF international chairman to focus his energies as the president of the Unification Theological Seminary. He will continue as Senior Advisor to UPF International.

The online ceremony was held on May 26, 2023, at the International Secretariat in Tarrytown, New York, and was live-streamed around the world.



UPF International President **Dr. Michael Jenkins** served as the MC for the event. The opening prayer was offered by **Dr. Katsumi Otsuka**, the regional co-chair and *Cheon Eui Won* chair (spiritual advisor) for UPF in Europe and the Middle East. **Mrs. Won-ju McDevitt**, recently appointed as director of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon's Second Secretariat, delivered the Founder's Remarks.

"We are here to congratulate Dr. Thomas Walsh for his dedication and work since the founding of UPF and to welcome Dr. Chang Shik Yang as the new UPF international chairman." Dr. Moon emphasized the need to promote an interreligious culture and work for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Expressing her deepest gratitude to Dr. Walsh for his "devotion and hard work in absolute unity with the True Parents from the founding of the UPF until today," Dr. Moon also thanked Dr. Yang and wished him "heavenly fortune to bring about great victory."

Congratulatory remarks were given by **Dr. Yong-cheon Song**, the newly appointed international president of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU). Dr. Song said that UPF has "played a leading role in preparing the social environment and foundation for establishing Heavenly Parent's ideal of creation -- namely 'one family under God' -- and fulfilling the hope of all the world's people." He described Dr. Walsh as "a man of true character who practices living for the sake of others." He also congratulated Dr. Yang as someone who will "faithfully nurture the seed of love and peace that UPF has planted."



Special Remarks

Professor Yeon Ah Moon, newly appointed as director of Dr. Moon's First Secretariat and the chair of the Sun Moon Educational Foundation, thanked Dr. Walsh for "working selflessly and tirelessly for decades at the helm of the UPF."

Dr. Robert Kittel, the regional co-chair and *Cheon Eui Won* chair for UPF in the Asia Pacific, expressed appreciation for Dr. Walsh's "extraordinary leadership of attendance to our Heavenly Parent and our beloved founder and for your steady leadership at the helm of our UPF family despite often stormy seas." Dr. Kittel recited lyrics from "Danny Boy," one of Dr. Moon's favorite songs, which Dr. Walsh often has sung to her at celebrations.

Dr. Katherine Rigney, the regional co-chair and *Cheon Eui Won* chair for UPF in Africa, offered heartfelt words: "It is with mixed emotions of gratitude and also nostalgia that we express our deep appreciation for Dr. Walsh's invaluable contributions, his impressive journey and his invaluable legacy in the management, coordination and leadership of UPF." Dr. Rigney emphasized that the growth and success of UPF in Africa were greatly due to Dr. Walsh's support and strategic guidance.

After the presentation to Dr. Walsh of a beautiful bouquet of flowers by **Sun-Ae Patterson**, UPF's graphic designer and web manager, Dr. Walsh offered his farewell address and many appreciations.

He recounted the recent successful events in Korea -- Peace Summit 2023, the celebration of Dr. Moon's 80th birthday, the dedication of the Cheon Won Gung temple, and the Holy Blessing ceremony -- "despite so many challenges swirling around and the difficulties that still seek to put roadblocks in the providential path."

He expressed his respect and love for Dr. Moon, as well as for the UPF leaders and staff. Dr. Walsh recalled the many experiences with the founders and especially the blessing to accompany them on world tours. "True Mother always made sure I was well taken care of and invited me often to have meals with them. I felt like family."

Dr. Walsh conveyed best wishes to Dr. Yang as the newly installed international chair. "He's really a special man. He's been at the peak of our movement. He's also been in the valleys. Now he's taking this central position at a central time."

Quoting the founder's statement that a "New Era" is opening up for UPF and Family Federation, he said, "We are about to launch a growth initiative that has been regrettably lacking, but we are about to take off and we are now on track to fulfill Vision 2027."

Dr. Walsh closed with warm words of gratitude for the UPF regional leaders, secretaries general, and staff. He especially thanked his dear wife, **Professor Lynn Walsh**, the director of the UPF Office of Marriage and Family, who "sees not only my performative side but the other sides of me as well. This she does beautifully and gracefully."

Plaques of appreciation were presented on behalf of UPF's co-founder, and leaders and staff around the world by Dr. Jenkins, UPF International Vice President **Dr. Tageldin Hamad** and UPF Vice President for Regional Relations **John Paul Hong**.

Next came the ceremony to welcome UPF's new International Chairman.

Dr. Yang was introduced by **Thomas McDevitt**, who serves as the coordinator for UPF's International Media Association for Peace (IMAP), and the International Association for Peace and Economic Development (IAED) as well as the chairman of *The Washington Times*.

Mr. McDevitt highlighted Dr. Yang's impressive credentials. After earning a master of divinity degree from the Methodist Theological Seminary in South Korea and a master's in religious studies from Unification Theological Seminary, Dr. Yang earned a doctorate in ministry from the New York Theological Seminary.

Before inviting Dr. Yang to give his inaugural address, Mr. McDevitt also passed on precious words of praise for Dr. Walsh from Dr. Moon. When announcing the new leadership assignments on May 9, she described Dr. Walsh as a "true American gentleman," as she also reminisced about his qualifications and many experiences leading the UPF organization.

Dr. Yang, who will serve simultaneously as the chairman of UPF International and UPF-Korea, then delivered his inaugural address. He thanked Dr. Walsh for his key role leading UPF since its establishment in 2005 and for creating a global foundation in almost all of the UN member states. He offered words of gratitude to Dr. Moon and all the leaders.

In working towards Vision 2027, the "providential organizations will transition from charismatic leadership into a teamwork system," Dr. Yang said. "UPF and FFWPU will be the two wheels of our providential vehicles." There will be a greater focus on developing UPF's six associations and on organizing events at the local level rather than large-scale international events, he said.

Vice President Tageldin Hamad offered the closing benediction, and Vice President John Paul Hong led three victory cheers of *mansei*.