

Westrock Family Church picks Drissa Kone as their new Pastor

Cabot W. Peterson
September 2, 2015



BARRYTOWN - As the summer slowly turns to autumn and change is felt in the air, UTS is proud and happy to announce that change is also coming to Idris (Drissa) Ena Kone, who has been chosen as the new pastor of Westrock Family Church in Tarrytown, NY.

The installation ceremony introducing Drissa and his family to the congregation will be held Sunday, September 6 at the church.

Drissa will be leaving his position at UTS, where he has been employed in the graduate school's recruitment program. Previous to that, he served as the chaplain of Barrytown College for two years.

A native of the Ivory Coast, Drissa's journey to his new post sounds very much like a "pitch" line for a Hollywood movie. Growing up as a Muslim in a country split in half between the Islamic north and the Christian south, he was caught in the crossfire. Travelling from the

north to the south during the time of civil war (2002-11), he was arrested and thrown into prison. While contemplating his revenge against his Christian captors he had an encounter with Jesus, who told him he must follow Sun Myung Moon.

Following his release from prison he sought out the church, and upon hearing Father's life course in 2003, he became a member. From 2004-08 he was involved with Universal Peace Federation (UPF), becoming a Divine Principle lecturer and Vice President of the Youth Federation for World Peace (YFWP) in 2006.

Good fortune continued to smile down on Drissa when, in 2008, he won a green card lottery, giving him the chance to come to the United States legally and receive a resident alien card.

"There is no doubt in my mind this came from God," said Drissa. "This is not something that is just for the Ivory Coast but the whole world, and only about one percent are chosen."

The year 2010 would be another turning point for Drissa. He was Blessed in Marriage in February of that year to his Mongolian wife, Tsedvee, and enrolled at UTS later that year. He and Tsedvee are the parents of two girls, Miae Malaika, age 4, and Yahmichelle, 18 months.

Drissa holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from the University of Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, a Master of Divinity from UTS, a Master of Diplomacy from Norwich University in Vermont, and has completed his class work in the Doctorate of Divinity Program at UTS, and plans on finishing his dissertation project on Peace and Justice by 2016.

Chosen over two other candidates for the job, he has asked both of them if they would be interested in working with him in the community. "I think I was chosen because they believe I could be the right person for the job," said Drissa. "I'm a people person, and I think being a pastor is a public thing. Serving God and True Parents first is the most important thing, and serving people is the most important. Serving people is serving God and True Parents every day."