

Unification Theological Seminary D.Min - Education in a Changing World

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Rev. Gregorio "Greg" Agulan and Rev. Silas Kanyabigega during a short recess at the UTS D.Min. intensive in August.

BARRYTOWN - In a world that is constantly changing it is necessary for people and programs to keep pace with the forces of change in order to avoid turmoil and stay relevant and topical.

If there are two words that could sum up the theme of this summer's Doctor of Ministry intensive, held at UTS in Barrytown from Aug. 1-12, they would be "change" and "community." The vision is firmly based in the future of community; not just the future of one's religious community, but also the global community that seems to shrink and grow closer every day.

Changes in religious communities, as well as the global community, are occurring at a breakneck pace. If a group or institution is unprepared to meet these changes head-on with strength and purpose then it may soon be relegated to the dustbin of history.

The DMin program at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS), directed by Dr. Kathy Winings, prepares students to take on the challenges of today's ever-changing world, and readies them to respond to future possibilities.



Dr. Winings, who taught the class "Changing Face of Society" in the first week of the two-week intensive, recognizes the changes and the importance of staying current.

The class focuses on how congregations are changing, how we can anticipate change; how to deal with issues of age, gender, culture, ethnicity and globalization. No change is too small to talk about."Dr. Kathy Winings, UTS Director of D.Min.

She has also experienced the importance of the DMin program in her capacity as the director selecting instructors with the practical experience and the best academic qualifications to teach the two week intensive at Barrytown. One such professor is Dr. William Selig, a hospital chaplain, who taught the class on "Spiritual Formation and Integration" to the first year DMin students.

"I value the DMin degree," said Dr. Winings. "Two of our DMin graduates, Dr. Michael Balcomb and Dr. William Selig, have taught here. Two more adjunct professors with DMin degrees from UTS will be teaching this year at our 43rd Street NYC campus. And, Dr. Jacob David, who also teaches our first year DMin students, has a DMin from Drew University."

Rev. Andrew Compton, who was appointed in 2015 to the position of Director of Education for the International Peace Education Center (IPEC) in Las Vegas, Nevada, sees the DMin degree as a necessary qualification for his new position.

"As the Director of Education I'm going to be representing Unification to the world and people are going to ask, 'well, what kind of credentials does he have'? That was my main motivation."

In Professor Luonne Rouse's class, offered in the second week of the DMin intensive, students were asked to focus on working for the sake of their congregations while at the same time encouraging those in their circles of influence to see a larger vision in the world around them; a world filled with different faces, different voices, and different beliefs.



Dr. Luonne Rouse leading the cohort of 2nd year D.Min. students.

Rev. Silas Kanyabigega, who found UTS through an online search, is originally from Rwanda but now has both a radio program and a congregation in Dayton, Ohio. His goal is to better serve his own people as a result of his studies and also to gain a greater understanding and knowledge of the world.

"I found that this school was just what I was looking for," said Rev. Kanyabigega. "I'm very interested to know the different beliefs of different religions. This school is giving me the opportunity to know more about exact religions so I can work in my way with more knowledge. With this knowledge and through my radio program and ministry I can help many people."

"I'm Christian, but I want to know about other religions. We have one God, but many beliefs."

Fellow classmates Ambroise Katundu and Gregorio "Greg" Agulan, also expressed similar goals for their ministries. Katundu, originally from the Congo, works extensively with three Congolese community churches in Bridgeport, Connecticut and hopes to explore ways to bring those churches together for the sake of the wider community.



Dr. Jacob David leading the cohort of 1st year D.Min. students.

"I want to apply the lessons I learn here and make my ministry more efficient," said Rev. Katundu, who teaches math at both the high school and college levels.

"I then want to use that model and mimic it with other churches. It's important for the community to work together. Not everyone has the same beliefs even though they are Christians. Most of them are from Congo, but others come from all over Africa. If we are united we can be successful."

Rev. Agulan joined the Unification Church in 1984 in his native Philippines and held several leadership positions during the past three-plus decades. Recently he was the pastor of the Family Church, Elizabeth, NJ. He found that his experience as the church's pastor re-ignited his desire to continue his education. This became more relevant with his latest job in the national Office of Asian Affairs of the Universal Peace Federation (UPF).

"I really believe that if we are going to be effective in fulfilling our mission as a pastor or religious leader in this era of globalization you need a credential," said Rev. Agulan. "This program (the DMin), my education here, is essential for me to be effective in my mission at UPF or whatever else I will do in the future."

The Doctor of Ministry (DMin) is an advanced professional degree taught over two years and students meet twice a year in the classroom - in February and August - for two weeks in an "intensive." During this last summer session, students in Dr. David's first year class completed their first intensive, while Dr. Rouse's students completed their third intensive.

When students have completed their fourth intensive they are then required to complete a dissertation within three years to receive their doctorate degree.