

A Calling Beyond Traditional Ministry

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BARRYTOWN - There was a time when attending a seminary meant you planned to become a full-time priest, minister or pastor. However, the traditional concepts about ministry are being turned upside-down. Today's seminaries offer a wide range of studies that can help enrich a variety of careers and professions; students are recognizing that seminaries can provide them with a solid underpinning in preparation for diverse occupations, as well as enhancing their spiritual awareness. This concept of [expanding the vision of ministry](#) is now being explored in established

circles:

Most of us think of ministry as the work done by pastors, missionaries, Christian conference speakers, or evangelists. We rarely think of work done by bankers, lawyers, engineers, or homemakers. We typically believe that those who get their paychecks from a church or other Christian organization are the ones who "do" ministry, while the rest of us are those to whom ministry is "done." In this session and throughout this study, we hope to change this common but faulty way of thinking. We want to expand your vision of ministry so that you come to view all you do, regardless of your occupation, as what it can and ought to be -- ministry that glorifies God and influences other people. - www.bible.org

Among UTS graduates are architects, artists, medical doctors, chaplains, lawyers, teachers, professors, computer programmers, network engineers, town administrators, librarians, writers, journalists, non-profit executives, restaurateurs, fishermen, college presidents, entrepreneurs, realtors, postal workers, retail store management, nurses, bus drivers, counselors, psychologists, public accountants, health administrators, city and state officials, musicians, graphic artists, research scientists, engineers, building inspectors etc. etc. UTS encourages graduates to excel in whichever field they pursue and to take with them the spirit of service to others, upholding their lives with integrity and the embodiment of God's love.

The mission statement of UTS reminds students and graduates alike of the importance of living for others, no matter what one's occupation.

The Unification Theological Seminary offers educational programs in an interfaith context, which cultivate the heart, mind and spirit; bridge religious and cultural divides; promote leadership, service and engagement with the world; and provide tools for success in ministry and professional life. UTS is committed to the Unification vision of one global family under God.

Since UTS was launched in 1975, the UTS founders, Sun Myung Moon and Hak Ja Han Moon, consistently recommended that students take on some challenging mission after graduation, such as: student mobilization, deep sea fishing, print media, or farming in remote lands. They expected UTS graduates to be made stronger through those challenges. Many alumni conversations reflect upon those earlier trials and tribulations with great fondness.

An education that studies God and His work throughout history and how God is working in the world today stays with our alumni/ae and enters their everyday life through their [families and through their professions](#). UTS graduates tend to have a heightened sense of social concern and activism in their communities. They do things like volunteering their time in community events, organizing a food bank, being a Sunday school teacher or a Scout master.

Beyond traditional

Another shift that is becoming increasingly common is that those seminary graduates who do become pastors may [need or may choose to have two jobs](#).

One of the most vital yet understudied streams of church ministers is the bivocational pastor. This is that pastor who, either out of necessity or intentionality, works as both the pastor of a local church and in the secular marketplace. Already, more than one-third of all American pastors are bivocational, and this number will probably grow. - www.christianitytoday.com

In Spring 2018, [Intrust](#), in an article entitled [Bivocational ministry on the rise](#) reported that 30 percent of graduating seminarians anticipate entering into bivocational ministry. Given the 40+ year history of missions after UTS graduation, and the nature of its sponsoring church, UTS is very much in the vanguard of those seminaries adapting curriculum to new economic and social realities.



UTS is affiliated with the [Family Federation](#), its sponsoring church. However, the number of full-time pastor positions in the church communities of the Family Fed are limited; many communities simply do not have enough membership to financially support a full-time pastor. This has prompted UTS to offer more and more courses which provide a broader practical education than only following a traditional theological track.

Students who come to the seminary in 2018, whether from a Unification background or from other faiths benefit from this open educational design. They have the opportunity to widen their focus in ministry beyond a congregational approach, and to gain expertise in real world job-related skills. In the [UTS catalog](#) we can find the following courses being offered:

- MIN 5341 Eco-Justice Ministry
- MIN 5431 Foundations of Interfaith Leadership
- MIN 5702 Ministry of Social Service
- MIN 5722 Cultural Diversity and Conflict Transformation
- MIN 5771 Ocean Ministry and Global Justice
- MGT 5302 Management of Non Profit Organizations
- MGT 5303 Leadership and Organizational Planning
- MGT 5311 Principles of Marketing
- MGT 5312 Entrepreneurial Ministry
- MGT 5331 Human Resource Management
- MGT 5345 Religion and Economics
- MGT 5401 Financial Management for Non-Profit Organizations
- MGT 5402 Grantmanship: Grantwriting
- MGT 5403 Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector
- MGT 5501 Brand Management

Courses like these help students plan for employment beyond a traditional ministry placement. With degrees in [Master of Religious Education](#) (MRE), [Master of Arts in Religious Studies](#) (MA), or [Master of Divinity](#) (MDiv), incoming students can tailor their educational experience and deepen their faith while earning a degree which can open up many new opportunities.