

Unification Theological Seminary Presents Honorary Doctorates in Japan

Richard Panzer
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Three Unificationists were awarded honorary doctorates from the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) at a special ceremony held in Tokyo on September 30, 2014.

Dr. Richard Panzer, president of UTS, presented the doctorates to Eiji Tokuno, president of FFWPU Japan; Chairman Yong Cheon Song of the National Blessed Families Association in Japan, and Gi-man Lee, director of Operations for FFWPU Japan, in honor of the Japanese Unification Church's 55th anniversary.



True Parents were the first recipients of Honorary Doctorates from UTS. Other recipients include Bishop Abel Muzorewa, who served as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, and Dr. Richard Rubenstein, the world-renowned scholar of the Holocaust, who has written about why he admires True Parents' work from the perspective of someone of the Orthodox Jewish faith.

Dr. Song, one of the honorees, spoke about a new era coming to Japan and that these academic awards were not just for him and the two other leaders, but to honor all brothers and sisters in the country who have given so much. Dr. Lee expressed his sense that receiving this award compelled him to do more than before for his country and the world. Dr. Tokuno, a graduate of UTS in 2004, spoke movingly about his time at UTS. He expressed his gratitude for being able to attend UTS in the United States, saying that it helped him to learn English and to understand American culture. He also spoke of the many times he

had tearful prayers on True Father's and True Mother's trails in Barrytown. He said that UTS in Barrytown was a place where True Father sent Unificationists to prepare themselves to become impactful world leaders, and on this day he felt "as if True Parents have given [him] a wonderful honor". Dr. Tokuno also urged others assembled in the conference room to attend UTS if they had not already done so and expressed his hope that "graduates of UTS should strive to become world leaders."



It was a beautiful and moving ceremony, and a way to express gratitude to brothers and sisters in Japan for their sacrifice in supporting the American church and many providential activities for so many years.

Among those gathered in the chapel of the Japanese National Church Headquarters were Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, continental director of North America for Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), and Dr. Michael Balcomb, president of FFWPU USA.



Dr. Balcomb congratulated the recipients and gave an open invitation for them to visit the school: "UTS was established in the United States and founded by True Parents. We hope you have the chance to visit the grounds, so you can feel the love True Parents put into it."

Mr. Song's son-in-law sang a touching rendition of Michael Jackson's "Heal the World" to close the program, and the recipients were joined by their proud spouses and families for a group photo.

It was a moving event for all, and a joy to honor such well-deserving members of the community. Dr. Panzer will be speaking in the next few days about UTS and Barrytown College at church centers in Nagoya and in Tokyo about a new Advanced ESL program that will be offered to foreign students enrolled at the college starting in the Spring 2015 semester.