

FFWPU USA: Generation Peace Academy Class of 2022 Graduation

Naokimi Ushiroda
June 11, 2022



Photos courtesy of Graeme Carmichael

"GPA changed my life," shared a first-year graduate from the Bay Area. "It may sound cliché ... but internally, I can say that I am changed forever."

On June 11, 108 members of Generation Peace Academy ([GPA](#)) graduated in the Class of 2022 during the commencement ceremony held at the Unification Theological Seminary ([UTS](#)). Three Young Adult Missionaries who participated in the program for a portion of the year also graduated on Saturday. A handful of this year's graduates shared the defining moments that shaped their experience during the past year.



"Before GPA, I dealt with anxiety, panic attacks, and intense worrying," recalled the Bay Area graduate. "Spiritual distress was a part of my daily life - day and night - throughout high school. Reflecting back,

it's a miracle completing this year of GPA. God led us all here for a reason."

Another first-year graduate, from Ohio, said GPA helped him recognize his identity as a child of God. "I was initially resistant to GPA," he said. "But I'm so grateful to God for guiding me here. I was lost in life, and coming from high school was one of the lowest points in my life ... I had a secular value system to protect myself ... but GPA made me realize how blessed I am."



Graduates shared how, through fundraising and witnessing during GPA, they learned various important lessons that will stay with them a lifetime, including understanding and experiencing how much God loves every person.

"This year was really unlike any previous year," said Roland Platt, who has been the director of GPA for the past 16 years. "Every year is so unique; the quality, character, and hearts of our brothers and sisters makes each year special, as well as seeing how God works each year in a very different way."



"I'd coin 2022 as the year we bounced back and rebounded," Platt continued in his remarks. "If we can endure through challenges, God just wants to shower us with blessings. GPA went out and broke all kinds of new records in every single way this year, going throughout America giving hope and inspiring people."

In fact, as Platt pointed out, 2022 was the first class where missionaries were sent to Africa, in addition to teams in Europe and the Caribbean. From Albania to Benin, Zambia, and the Dominican Republic,

members of GPA, Cheon Il Guk (CIG) missionaries, and Heavenly USA embraced their mission in their newfound communities. "This year, we went all over the world," said Platt. "We really shook up the world!"

The Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 posed numerous challenges for GPA at the time, with waves of lockdowns and restrictions. Still, participants persevered through difficulties from a world rocked by such upheaval, said Platt. "Covid brought fear and a lot of confusion and division," he said. "But our graduates kept faith and pushed through it all."



For a second-year graduate from New Jersey, being part of GPA's Heavenly USA team was an eye-opening and soul-touching experience unlike anything else.


"I have so much gratitude toward the GPA program," she said. "God woke me up. I went to church and did all those things, but I couldn't find joy in my life ... I was lacking in my relationships, and sharing God's love was so difficult."

"I realized that the state that we're in makes it hard for God to relate to us," she continued. "But I could feel throughout this experience God saying, 'Wake up, this world needs love' ... and I realized I had to change, and it was so humbling."

The commencement ceremony featured guest speakers including Dr. Chung Sik Yong, Regional President, FFWPU North America, and Rev. Naokimi Ushiroda, FFWPU USA President. A special cake cutting and year-in-review video montage were also part of the celebration.

You can watch the full 2022 commencement ceremony on GPA's Facebook page [here](#).





Building a world of *peace* and *unity*

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WHO ARE WE

Encouraging, Empowering, *and* Enabling

GPA is a full-time, year-long program for high school graduates to receive life of faith education and leadership training, serve developing countries, and become global missionaries.

Objectives



Embark on a Spiritual Journey

Forge a deep-rooted relationship with God and establish habits for a strong life of faith.



Cultivate Character

Exercise universal spiritual principles to drive and strengthen character.



Enroot Lifelong Friendships

Learn to lead oneself and others to create a culture of heart.

TESTIMONIALS

What Donors Say

“The young ladies representing this group today were so friendly and personable. I enjoyed chatting with them. :)”

– Mary F., Nov 5, 2019

“A girl came into my job in beavercreek selling 3D pictures and was one of the sweetest girls I’ve ever met. Just wish I would have caught her name.”

– Michael W., Nov 5, 2019

Giving to GPA

Your tax-deductible support helps our current and future participants cover the costs of workshops, travel, and service projects. Thank you!

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A Big Thank you to Robert Pumphrey and a Warm Welcome Ken Sohn!
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46th

GRADUATION COMMENCEMENT

Saturday, May 28 | 2 PM EDT

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UTS NEWS



[Spiritual Connections: Living in the Flow of God's Love](#)

UTS Communications

This is an engaging spiritual autobiography of Nora Spurgin, who joined the Unified Family in New York in 1967, and served in many central positions as the movement led by Reverend Sun Myung Moon developed...



[Congratulations to the Class of 2022!](#)

Yoshie Manaka

On Saturday, May 28, 2022, Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) held its forty-sixth Commencement in New York City. For the first time since 2019, graduating students, alumni, faculty, family and friends gathered in person to celebrate...

Announcements

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- [Dr. Drissa Kone Named Director of Doctor of Ministry Program](#)
- [Steven Boyd to become Director of Enrollment Management and Student Life](#)
- [Dr. Ward's letter to UTS Alumni](#)

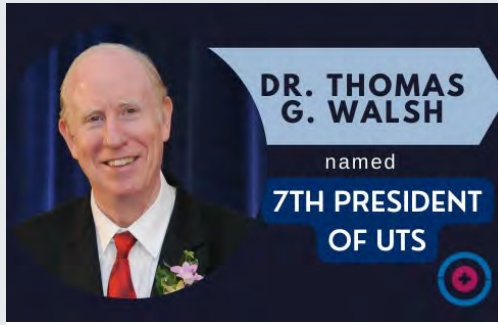
Other News



Faculty Roundtable: The Victory of the Cross

UTS Communications

On Tuesday, April 19, Unification Theological Seminary held a virtual Faculty Roundtable event where Dr. Andrew Wilson, Director of Scriptural Research and Professor of Scriptural Studies, spoke on "The Victory of the Cross."



Dr. Thomas G. Walsh named as the 7th President of Unification Theological Seminary

UTS Communications

The Unification Theological Seminary Board of Trustees met on Thursday April 28, 2022 and unanimously elected Dr. Thomas G. Walsh as the seventh President of Unification Theological Seminary.

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