

The 40th Anniversary of the Unification Theological Seminary

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BARRYTOWN – On Sunday, September 20 the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS) celebrated the 40 years since it was founded under the guidance and leadership of the True Parents, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The commemorative event began with a retrospective walk through the history of UTS by Dr. Hugh Spurgin, current president of UTS, and finished with a focus on its future under the leadership of True Mother, as noted by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim.

Members attending from the original class of 1977 were Dr. Michael Jenkins, Dr. Michael Mickler, Dr. Dietrich Seidel and Dr. Theodore Shimmyo, as well as Dr. Spurgin.

From the opening welcoming comments by Dr. Kathy Winings, UTS Vice President for Academic Affairs and Mistress of Ceremonies, to the closing congratulatory cheers from Dr. Jenkins, the celebration held in the historic chapel in Barrytown filled the room with the spirit and pageantry of its founding in 1975.



Following an invocation by Dr. Christine Hempowicz, a short film was shown that highlighted the Inaugural Convocation and True Father's Address. Through the film, the audience was reminded of the special guests and dignitaries who were there to inaugurate the first class of students as well as the installation of the first UTS President, David S.C. Kim, and the first Academic Dean, Therese Stewart.

In his Inaugural Address, True Father memorably stated, “I strongly believe that the Inaugural Convocation of the Unification Theological Seminary today is laying the cornerstone of the earthly Kingdom of God.”



Rev. Gavin Hamnett, pastor of the Mid-Hudson Valley Family Church, read several more passages from Father’s inspiring address, followed by a stirring rendition of “My Tribute,” by renowned vocalist Seiko Lee.



Dr. Spurgin began his message by recalling the seminary’s founding and the historical significance of September 20, 1975. “The spirit of our True Parents is here today!” said Dr. Spurgin. “Exactly 40 years ago in this chapel, UTS was founded by our True Parents, the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.”

“The significance of the number 40, as we know from the Bible and Divine Principle, marks the completion of one era and the start of another era. This new era seeks to fulfill the vision of Cheon Il Guk – of the kingdom of heaven on earth — centering on our True Parents.”

Dr. Michael Balcomb, Chair of the UTS Board of Trustees, followed with an inspiring message that came to him while walking the grounds of UTS on Sunday in the early morning hours. He chose a passage from the book of Isaiah, chapter 43, verses 18-19 which reads: “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

“I was thinking about the importance of today and the history of our church,” said Dr. Balcomb. “Today,

God said forget about the past, let's do a new thing.”



The main speech, the Anniversary Address, was given by Dr. Ki Hoon Kim, Continental Chairman, FFWPU North America, who spoke about his experience as a student at UTS, his desire to have a career as a pastor in the Unification Church, and the teaching of the True Parents, which must play a central role in our lives.



“The fundamental works of human life are filial piety, fidelity and loyalty,” said Dr. Kim. “Filial piety is our relationship with True Parents; fidelity is the relationship between man and woman, husband and wife; and, loyalty is about the parent and child relationship. All of these relate to the purpose of creation, the four-position foundation, which is the fundamental purpose of life.”

Dr. Kim shared that he had an extraordinarily deep experience, having stayed the night before in a room on the Barrytown campus. Dr. Kim said that had been his first time staying over night at UTS, since his graduation in 1996. His experience left him inspired to discuss plans with UTS trustees and administration for the positive role of UTS and Barrytown in the future.

Dr. Kim concluded his remarks by encouraging the UTS staff, alumni and guests to think of their responsibility for the continued work of UTS. “We must have a plan for the next 40 years,” said Dr. Kim, “Let us take ownership of UTS.”

Mrs. Lee followed Dr. Kim’s talk with the song “Amazing Grace,” and everyone assembled joined her in singing the last verse and the chorus of the moving Christian spiritual.

Dr. Jenkins recalled after the event how he was chosen for the first class even though he had been in the movement for only one year. “Everything was new. My first year here was really exciting. I really loved the elder members – Dr. Spurgin, Mr. Matsuzaki, Dr. Masuda – and David Kim was just tremendous. I was a strong Christian when I joined the church so it was a moving experience for me to meet these Christian teachers — Dr.Matzak, Dr. Boslooper and Dr. Warren Lewis.



“Studying Christian history I learned our tradition came out of the 2,000 year history of Jesus’ course, Moses’ course, and that we were following the same course. The foundation of my UTS education to be a pastor and the role of religion gave me the confidence to talk to any theologian. The other thing it gave me is that I made a lot of lifelong friends, friends that I am still close with today.”



Dr. Shimmyo’s course took an almost opposite direction before he arrived at UTS that first year. “I called UTS and told them don’t select me. I’m not coming. I enjoyed being in the field in New York City, so I wasn’t included in the first 50. Then True Father had pictures brought to him, and he chose me, so I had to come.”

Upon graduation from UTS, Dr. Shimmyo went on to receive his Ph.D. in Christian Theology from Drew University in New Jersey. Then, following David Kim’s retirement, he was appointed by True Father to be the second president of UTS. The current president, Dr. Spurgin, received his Ph.D. in history from Columbia University in 1985.

