

Tom Bowers recounts his numerous experiences with Rev. Sun Myung Moon

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Dr. Tom Bowers speaks to the GPA workshop

BARRYTOWN, NY - In the midst of their workshop being held at the Unification Theology Seminary (UTS) in upstate New York, members of Generation Peace Academy (GPA) were alternately enthralled and entertained by a speaker who happily recounted his numerous experiences with the Seminary's founder, Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and the wisdom received from him.

The speaker, Tom Bowers, a 1981 graduate of UTS and the librarian there from 1995-2000, delighted the crowd as he spoke of the many times he was privileged to be with the man he proudly and affectionately called "Father."

Tom, a practicing Mormon since 2000 with both a Bachelor's and Master's from the Mormon-affiliated Brigham Young University (BYU), spoke to the group for thirty minutes about his time in the Unification Church (UC), now the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU), his time studying at UTS, and later his tenure as UTS library director. In that time, for 24 years, from 1976 to 2000, he had many experiences listening to and being with Rev. Moon, in both formal and informal settings.

Following an enthusiastic welcome from the nearly sixty 18-21 year olds who had gathered to hear him speak, Tom emphasized the value of what Rev. Moon embodied and what that meant for him. It was the understanding of this value that he wanted his audience to take away from their time together and why he agreed to speak to them.

"What I want to do is to connect you to Father's heart," he said. "When I reflect upon how much love Father Moon gave, just completely pouring out his heart and soul day and night to those of us who were gathered to listen to him, I couldn't refuse the invitation to speak to you. Father somehow managed to get living my life for the sake of others into my DNA.

"He (Father) experienced himself as the center of the cosmos, as the decisive element," Tom explained, "and he was a living example of that. That's what he wants us to take on. He wants us to take on that experience of being the center of the cosmos. And if he can see the center of the cosmos in himself, he wants to see that in us."

Many of the lessons that he learned from Father Moon Tom has continued to practice in his work within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS Church) and the Boy Scouts of America, two of the groups with which he is currently most active.

"Father kept talking about being a leader and how wonderful it was to be a leader, and finally he got through to me and I decided I wanted to be a leader. It took many years before my heart softened; now I look for opportunities to lead."

With that in mind, Tom has spent several years working with his local council of the Boys Scouts of America, and last year became the District Chairman in Ulster County overseeing approximately 1000 scouts and 50 scout units. One of his main responsibilities is fundraising, something with which he has had lots of practice.



“It’s like being ‘back in the saddle,’” said a laughing Tom, recalling both his time with the UC, fundraising during UTS vacations, and also organizing telethons for UTS. “We (Boy Scouts) do a lot of fundraising. We sell a lot of candy to raise money for camps and trips.”

In addition, Tom is very active in his work for the Mormon Church. With a new temple set to open later this fall in Farmington, Connecticut, near Hartford, he is serving on the regional invitational committee for the open house and dedication. The open house will run from September 30 - October 22, and the dedication will take place on November 20, preceded by a cultural celebration on November 19.

He is also a coordinator for one of the temple shifts in Manhattan, where he and his wife, Alice serve. Tom and Alice, a Brazilian of Japanese descent, were blessed in marriage in 1992 in Seoul, Korea and are the parents of two adult children; David 22 and Patricia 21.

Tom sees his work in the LDS Church as a continuation of what he learned during his time in the Unification movement and what he experienced working with and listening to Father Moon.

“It’s not as important who he (Father) was as much as it’s important who we become as a result of who he was,” said Tom in his closing remarks to the GPA audience.

“You are his legacy. As that legacy you cannot evaluate who he was or what he did until you take a look at the lives of those he touched and how they live their life as a result of having been touched by him.”