

## Opening Doors

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*Education today is focused on creating a winner-take-all society where those who finish first are rewarded with a monopoly on happiness... Educators must not teach how to live selfishly but instead impart the wisdom needed to resolve the myriad social problems we face today. The role of religious scholars is even more important. Religious scholars do not need to be teaching complex theories and the superiority of their own religions. Instead, they need to give their students the wisdom to love humanity and build a world of peace. They need to teach the principle of selflessness.*

*As a Peace-Loving Global Citizen, p. 293*

UTS opened two big doors for me—one from behind and one in front, and a lot of windows too.

### BACKGROUND



Robert Kittel

I joined our unification family in 1973 just six months away from getting my bachelor's degree in mathematics at the University of Utah. After three and a half years of studying in Salt Lake City while on a swimming scholarship I decided to leave school and join the Unification Church. I have never regretted that offering.

However, I did yearn for more education and the prestige that comes with having a higher education degree so that I could be more effective in my work and outreach. But without an undergraduate degree, the door to higher studies was bolted and locked. Two years after joining our movement, in 1975, I was sent out as a missionary

to Pakistan (on a one-way ticket, no less!). I stayed there for eight years and over the past 40 years have spent most of my life in South Asia. Our two children graduated from high school in Nepal where my wife, Theresia, and I currently reside.

Last year I and my wife were appointed as special Envoys to this beautiful Himalayan nation by True Parents. Recently Theresia stepped down from six years as a voluntary principal and English teacher in a school that True Mother started here. She wanted to be more involved in national restoration. The enrollment at the school during her tenure grew from 50 to over 400 students.

### ATTENDING UTS

After nearly ten years of being blessed, my wife and I were diagnosed with “unexplained infertility.” We then asked to take a temporary leave and returned to the US to seek medical expertise not available in South Asia at the time. Naturally, I thought it would be a good idea to attend UTS too.

After returning to New York I applied to the Regency College of the State of New York, took one graduate entrance exam and one English CLEP test, then received my bachelor's degree with credits transferred from Utah. The door behind me was opened and I entered UTS. Three years later, in 1993, I earned a M.Div. from the seminary and a new door opened in front of me.

Around this time True Father was in the process of restoring the University of Bridgeport (UB). I applied there and was admitted into the only doctoral course they offered, in education. In 2004, I graduated with an Ed.D. The education I sacrificed to join the movement came back a hundred fold. Sacrifice is never lost if we just keep moving forward.

### BENEFITS OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES



UTS helped me in other ways too, for example, meeting UTS alumni. Just last week Koji Masuda, President of YFWP-Japan, was here in Nepal heading up a free health clinic with four doctors and seven nurses from the Isshin Hospital in Japan. At the same time, he led a service project with 14 volunteers from the Youth Federation for World Peace – Japan. They conducted programs in three cities of Nepal.

Jin Hun Park (both of us are from the UTS class of 1993) sent his daughter Shinji Moon to Nepal last summer. This was based on the friendship we made

during our time at UTS which has grown stronger over the decades. Shinji came with two other blessed children spent nearly two months here in Nepal and even attended an Asian Leadership Conference in Thailand. It was a life-changing experience for all of them.



Ginger Nicholls, a fellow UTS grad whose couple was appointed the National Messiahs to Nepal from the United Kingdom, lived here for many years and helped lay the foundation that is now in full-bloom in this nation.

UTS gave me confidence to know that Father's teachings can solve the fundamental theological problems which the greatest minds in history have struggled with for centuries. It also gave me the key, the strategy, to know how to teach the Principle effectively. We have applied this here in Asia. Rather than teach Divine Principle as a theory or a philosophy, we apply the Principle to solve major

social problems.

If the Principle is taught as an ideology then it is immediately and unconditionally challenging. Everyone has some philosophy that leads them (however well-defined or ill-defined it may be). So, instead of teaching from the our-truth-is-better-than-yours mentality, we simply show how Father's teaching can effectively address the big problems, such as: corruption, gender prejudice, resource depletion, environmental pollution, sustainable development, trafficking women, rape, family breakdown, suicide, communism and democracy, and how to build political consensus between these competing global isms—including religions.

In my current position as the Education Director for UPF-Asia I'm constantly teaching True Father's Principle. Here in Asia, the audience is inevitably multi-religious. Among the religions we need to respect and build bridges with are: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Taoism, Confucianism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism.

We have taught heads of state, political leaders, religious leaders, military generals, professional educators, women leaders, and students from 20 countries. Our Regional President, Dr. Chung Sik Yong, has given us the freedom to teach to such audiences and the responsibility to be true to the Principle. It's exciting!



Equally important, my experience at UTS helped me understand that post-graduate education is almost entirely based on language proficiency, essentially reading and writing skills. For this reason, I felt so much sympathy for the non-English speaking students at UTS. It must have been a very, very difficult course for them to do post-graduate studies in an unfamiliar language! Language plays an even more important role in doctoral level work. Infamous is the acronym "ABD," meaning All But Dissertation. In doctoral studies, the classwork is almost a given; it's the extensive, rigorous, creative writing that is the stumbling block for most doctoral students.

UTS definitely helped prepare me for these studies and I'm very thankful. The acquisition of knowledge and the prestige of a masters and doctoral degree boosted both my self-confidence and clout. When speaking I'm able to stand with unshakable conviction and assurance born out of my education and experience, all rooted in Father's teaching and lifestyle.

Personally, UTS brought the greatest joy and fulfillment for me and my wife in a deeply personal way. With the help of Lady Dr. Kim and our desperate prayers, we were given two beautiful daughters during my time at UTS. (I guess we were more relaxed.) Anyway, both girls are studying at Dutchess Community College in NY and our eldest daughter, Rosia, was blessed in marriage this February.

## CONCLUSION

Higher education is meant to support your professional career. In my case, both my UTS and UB education helped clarify my thinking, organized my mind, and provided updated information while researching and writing my thesis and dissertation. The thesis topic for my M.Div. degree was, "The

Principle of Creation in a Multi-Religious Context.” For this I drew from my field experience of having lived in South Asia for 15 years prior to attending UTS. It was interesting that having come to America directly from India to attend the seminary I was the first student to have my own personal laptop computer. The seminary had public computers but no one had their own laptop. (For those who remember, mine was a Toshiba T-100.)

In 1996, I co-founded the Pure Love Alliance, a youth-based program which utilized service-learning and character education in month-long national and international tours continuing over six consecutive years. During this time, the program was rolled out in Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, England, France, India, Nepal, Germany, the United States and other countries and still continues in many nations today. The inspiration for my doctoral dissertation was from my experience leading these passionate, powerful young people. My Ed.D dissertation was, “Abstinence Education: Creating Evaluation Criteria and Evaluating Curriculum.”

Two of God’s three headaches, according to True Father, are: 1) interreligious conflict, and 2) immorality of young people. (The third headache is communism.) My post-graduate studies provided the background for me to speak on these topics with authority. I’m immensely grateful.