

## The Unification Theological Seminary is Growing

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At the beginning of the Washington Monument campaign, the professors of Unification Theological Seminary asked Reverend Moon if at least some of the top students could continue academic work through the summer quarter, but, Professor Warren Lewis told me, Reverend Moon wanted them all to work in the campaign. It was part of the way they should be trained; it was important for them to be able to talk to "real" people, Reverend Moon felt. "He was right," Professor Lewis added. "They need to be people whose hearts throb as warmly as their brains."

Combining study and application is one of the ways that the Unification Seminary is working to fulfill its goal of preparing future leaders. At the second convocation on September 25, 1976, David S.C. Kim, president of the seminary, told the new and returning classes, "You seminarians must prepare yourselves during the two years' academic training and practical ministry within the structure of the Unification Church to be leaders not only in the Unification movement, but leaders of the nation and world as well as builders of the Kingdom of God out of the confused and divided nation of America." Part of the Unification Church's foundation for achieving its goal of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven is that "the followers of Unification are learning practical techniques and skills to deal effectively with the world and all its existing social, spiritual, and other problems, through the academic training like we have here in the Seminary," President Kim continued.

The Unification Theological Seminary opened in September 1975 with a faculty of five and student body of 55. Now, in its second year, the faculty has been expanded to eight and the student body has doubled, with 12 nations represented. The faculty additions reflect the school's commitment to providing a diversity of religious backgrounds, including Protestant, Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish. The school offers a two-year Master of Religious Education program. Accreditation is in the process of being evaluated.

It was the first week of classes in the New Year when I arrived in Barrytown to spend two days talking with students and professors, attending classes, and getting a glimpse of student life. Situated in rustic Dutchess County, 90 miles north of New York City, the seminary is surrounded by 250 acres of field and woodland along the east bank of the Hudson River.

In this bucolic setting, the students immerse themselves for hours a day in studying the origins and texts of Judaism and Christianity, in which the Divine Principle is rooted. To train leaders, why a seminary? Professors and students offered their reasons.

Dr. Josef Hausner, professor of biblical literature -- Judaic studies, told me, "In my view, the Unification movement needs more theological training. The most important thing for such a movement is to have a strong school. Only a school is able to become a spiritual force for a new world. A spiritual institution prepares and strengthens the power for struggle of the members. Judaism lasted for 2,000 years after the destruction of the second Temple mainly because it solidified its spiritual forces to resist attacks from outside. If the Unification movement establishes a strong educational/spiritual institution like a university, it will have a paramount effect on the outside world."

The students themselves feel the importance of their work. While some originally entered the first class with some trepidation at leaving "active duty" at a time when so much was going on in preparation for Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument, once they became immersed in their studies they realized their significance. Walter Gottesman, for example, explained that the study of our Judeo-Christian heritage is fleshing out his understanding of Divine Principle, "putting the walls on after the framework

has been built," as he put it. Knowing what Christians and Jews believe gives him more confidence to work with them, he added.

"We realized that the Divine Principle is not out of the sky," Gottesman said, "but is rooted in the past; even its details have always been with us. It's organic. It springs from the Judeo-Christian heritage. People had ideas about the fall and about the life of Jesus. Only Reverend Moon, though, put it all together, I feel much more appreciation of the revelation he brought in terms of understanding what people have been seeking throughout history.



"Dr. Hausner told us in class today," Gottesman continued, "that to change the world you have to know what has happened up to the present time and confront it. Our job is to confront the practical situations the Church has faced, look at them from many different points of view, and see how they relate to the Divine Principle."

Professor Lewis proposed another point of view. "Scholarship," he said, "is a lonely path. One's individuality is prized. One needs to learn how to initiate in a disciplined way. To be a leader," he went on, "you need to know your own potential and your own depths, your strengths and weaknesses. The seminary brings this out by stressing individual thought."

God, as He should be, is at the center of seminary life. The day begins (after morning exercises, it's true) with a prayer service at which one student gives a short sermon. One or more students can usually be found kneeling in prayer in the chapel. Classes open with a prayer. Internally, too, the seminarians are conscious of the responsibility they have been given to develop themselves to be used by God.

"We feel we are in trust to the other members of our movement and to the world, to not only understand the Word of God but to become examples of it," Walter Gottesman, for example, said. "We ask ourselves, Is what we are doing the best thing for God's providence? How can we become the people Rev. Moon wants us to be? We've been given the opportunity to look deeply inside ourselves and confront our fallen natures. As we are, we are not ideal vehicles for God to use. Here, there's time to reflect on what needs to be changed. Then, through prayer and interaction with the faculty and other students, we can work out those things."

Individual responsibility also takes the form of carrying out assigned duties in the upkeep and practical aspects of the seminary. Cleaning chores are done after the communal breakfast, but other responsibilities include organizing afternoon sports, directing other extracurricular activities like dramatics, putting out the student newsletter, or coordinating the committee that presents a wrap-up of the week's main news items.

There are other ways, too, in which the seminary is much more than an intellectual experience. "I learned this summer, as we were put into different kinds of missions in Washington, that you have to earn the right to position by service and sacrifice, by your own merit," Alice Fleisher said. "Intellectual background is helpful, but the development of heart is not dependent on the seminary. That's our own responsibility," she added.

"We have to learn to unite head and heart," Alice went on. "Education shouldn't separate people. We should be able to relate to all kinds of people, and that comes from learning the heart of God, the heart of service. We must make education useful -- to help us communicate more or understand more. Lucifer was the angel of intellect, of wisdom and religion has tended to suspect reasoning, thinking that it might lead to loss of faith. We have to restore that."

Restore. That's a word on a lot of students' lips at the seminary, which they see as restoring what has gone wrong with education in America -- in student-teacher relationships, in student life, in the very purpose of getting an education. Professors are looked up to for what they have to give. (They are applauded after each lecture and served refreshing drinks during class.)

Group study sessions enable students to share their knowledge with one another, with the emphasis on helping others to do their best as well as striving to do their own best effort. Most of all, the purpose of their education is seen as to serve God and to serve mankind. The American educational system has not fulfilled its responsibility in this area, they feel, in not providing leaders for a Christian or God-centered nation. Especially recently, education has been seen as a way to earn a higher income or more prestige, self-centered goals.

The beginning of the second year for the seminary spells expansion in a number of areas. The library has been built up to a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes, partly through the purchase of several small collections during the past year. Head Librarian John Maniatis' goal is a collection of 60,000-70,000 volumes. Full reference service is available to the students this year.

The addition to the faculty of Dr. Josef Hausner and Dr. Constantine Tsirpanlis as professors and Dr. Herbert Richardson and Dr. Joseph McMahon as part-time lecturers makes possible new course offerings and allows the students to experience a richer variety of backgrounds among their professors. Dr. Lewis explained, "We're proud of our diversity. We want to expand in such a way as to have as broad a range of racial and confessional backgrounds as possible. At least on the intellectual level we hope to unify all religions. I've always felt that for each of us our being here is providential."

Reverend Moon's vision of a unified world intrigues the faculty. While they do not necessarily agree with all of the Divine Principle, they have studied it and include comparison with the Divine Principle in their courses. Dr. Hausner showed me his copy of the book, with numerous notations written in the margins. He still has many questions, he said, but he is studying it.

What will the seminarians be doing with their grasp of theology, philosophy, Church history, educational principles, when they receive their degrees? Mrs. Therese Stewart, academic dean, has a number of ideas. She sees some of them going on for their doctorates, teaching in other colleges, engaging in dialogue with the Christian churches in ecumenical work, teaching in Unification Church training programs, or in other ways acting as spokesmen for the Unification Church. "They are a bridge with great potential to reach people who are influenced by intellectual work and publications. Already, by attending seminars sponsored by other churches, they are reaching out."

President Kim had told the students, faculty and guests in his convocation address, "We are on the threshold of a new world." The 110 Unification Theological Seminary students are preparing to take up their portion of responsibility in ushering in that new world.