



Annual Meeting of UTS Graduates in the UK

Derbyshire Dales, UK, May 26, 2018

The annual meeting of UTS graduates and friends took place in the Derbyshire Dales, part of the Peak district in central England. This was the 15th such occasion, and brought together 20 first and second generation Unificationists, from a range of academic and professional backgrounds, to present and discuss a number of topics under the theme of 'Truth or Authority'. The six presentations given were entitled 'Truth and Authority in Scientific Development and Implications for the Religious Quest', 'The Relevance of Divine Principle Today', 'Moral Discourse in a Post-Truth World', 'Truth in a Post-Relativist Age', 'The Principle and Life' and 'The ontological roots of gender fluidity and a response'. Two presentations were given in each of three sessions, followed by a question and discussion period. The sessions were punctuated by refreshment breaks, a magnificent buffet lunch and a post-lunch walk,

during all of which the discussions continued unabated. The last session included two points of forum business: one of the committee members recently withdrew and a long-standing participant was proposed and unanimously elected as a replacement. The other point was a proposal to initiate a similar forum for interfaith participation with a focus on social issues (rather than internal Unificationist concerns or issues of faith). The rationale for this was twofold: True Father's admonition to Unificationists to be outward-looking and engage in the transformation of society; and the original mission of UTS to be a truly interfaith seminary. Again, there was unanimous support for this idea, with enthusiasm to sound it out through our network of contacts. There may be the opinion of some that the forum is just an occasion for empty academic talk, out of which nothing substantial emerges in terms of

concrete proposals. This is to undervalue the importance of ideas and discussion as a source of inspiration and challenge. We always say, 'if you haven't been offended by at least one thing you've heard today, then you haven't been listening properly'. But the forum is always carried out in a spirit of respect for different opinions and collegiality, providing an opportunity to air thoughts and, as much as possible, to bring to bear the thoughts of renowned scholars and writers to add depth to the analysis. Members have been coming back for fifteen years and some second-generation participants have been following events closely. They are the key to the future of such events. There is a strong feeling that it is more than a talk-shop; it embodies a tradition of intellectual discourse vital to the engagement of spiritual wisdom with the real world of human affairs, and vital too for the continuing relevance of religious insight.