

## UTS Helped Me Open Doors in Montreal

Serge Brosseau

October 7, 2015



*Serge Brosseau with his wife, Melissa, and daughter, Rebecca*

I am a graduate of the UTS class of '98; my wife, Melissa, and I were blessed in marriage in Korea with 6000 couples in 1982; and our daughter, Rebecca, is turning 24 in a few weeks. I have been the pastor of the Montreal community for the past sixteen years.

I was already 38 when I went to the seminary, and I didn't come from a traditional church leadership background. My background was with the fish business where I had worked for ten years. After working on the East Coast of Canada in the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia for eight years, I ended up in New Jersey. This was in the early 90's when True Father (Rev.

Moon) started doing public speaking tours again. It was an exciting time; I was involved in the church as a community leader. But also, working at the fish plant, I got to know some of the night-security people who happened to be UTS students. They encouraged me to follow their example and pursue further education.

When I first visited the Barrytown campus, I fell in love with the whole Mid-Hudson Valley area. It was so refreshing compared to the Newark neighborhood. At first, I travelled back and forth taking a class per semester. Then, eventually, my wife and I moved into an off-campus apartment.

The three years that we spent in the area were some of the best years that we had as a family. My wife got a job on campus while I fundraised on weekends. We got to know the families in the community as well as fellow students and professors. At that time, there were many Japanese students, some Korean students, a number of African students who came on scholarship and a few westerners -- quite a melting pot! Dr. Shimmyo served as the UTS president. He was quite personable. Since he lived at UTS during the week, he would often come to eat breakfast with the students and he shared many stories. One of my favorite classes was church history taught by Dr. Michael Mickler. For me, learning about historical periods such as the Reformation was fascinating.

When my class graduated, we received the direction to return to our home countries, so our family moved to my hometown of Montreal. Franco Famularo was already pastor there after graduating in 1994. I became the new kid on the block while he moved "upstairs." Right away, we started going together to visit ministers every week, and those contacts became the core group of an interfaith prayer breakfast.

When 9/11 struck, the interest of Montreal religious leaders in religious harmony rose quickly. My seminary classes made it easy for me to converse with faith leaders with different backgrounds. We continue to hold monthly interfaith meetings to this day under the Universal Peace Federation banner. My family also adopted the church of Rev. Darryl Gray, a well-known minister and civil rights leader. We attended his church service every month. At first he kept his distance from us but eventually he attended a ministers conference, and since then has participated in numerous events in the United States, Korea and in the Middle East. Twelve years later, I continue to visit his church every month.

Because our community is very international, most of our services are conducted in English, but since Montreal is a bilingual city, we have one French service each month with translation provided for those who need it. I often give the French sermon. Our community is really a team effort. We try to work harmoniously, with Rev. Famularo supervising activities as senior pastor. I am still involved part-time in the fish business since none of us here are fully supported. This allows me to keep my feet on the ground. I feel the seminary prepared me to go back to my hometown and play a role there. I have been able to make a contribution. We are now starting a UTS alumni chapter in the Montreal community, which has six UTS alumni.

It was great to be able to attend the 40th anniversary of UTS on Sept. 20. Friendships were renewed, and we were able to bask in the beauty of the surroundings. But above all, I felt that the vision of the founders is still alive and that its educational purpose is still relevant in our troubled world. And, while our kids have grown up and are becoming more involved in the activities of our movement, it appears that there is still a role for us to play.