

## **GOD CALLS AN UNWORTHY SINNER TO BE A MISSIONARY FOR JAPAN**

Key verse: Romans 1:5

**"Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith."**

### **1. Before meeting Jesus.**

My name is Ray Grondin. I was born in Windsor, a Canadian city just across the border from Detroit. My family is Catholic and I attended church with them every Sunday. At the age of four, my parents gave me a Rubik's cube. I loved my Rubik's cube. With the help of my father, I learned to solve it before even entering kindergarten. Every time my relatives came over, I was so excited to show off my new skill. My parents encouraged me academically, and I won several regional science fairs in elementary school. In high school, I did well especially in math and sciences and in grade 12 my calculus teacher even told me to stop coming to class and just write the exams by myself in the library. I was a proud person and hung around the cool crowds, went to wild parties, and participated in two fashion shows. I started to drink alcohol, take drugs, and engage in lustful relationships with girls. I thought I had the dream life: popularity, good looks, cute girls, and good grades.

In 1995, I entered one of Canada's top engineering schools -- the University of Waterloo - - to study Computer Science. I expected University life to be a continuation of my fun high school days, but school became harder for me and I did poorly in some classes. It was my first time to live away from home and I became lonely. I sought comfort from my girlfriend, but my sinful life only made my condition worse. I should have repented my sin, but instead I didn't think it was a big deal because other people were doing the same thing. Over time I began to feel guilty and self-condemning. At the peak of my depression, I even grabbed a jar of pills and was ready to commit suicide. I wondered how all this had happened to me. I was such a promising young man who had everything. But Satan's hold on my life was strong and I learned that the consequence of sin is real and scary.

### **2. God saved my life through 1:1 bible study**

Soon after, God led me to meet several Christians on the Waterloo campus. I was invited to the Waterloo Christian fellowship, the Korean Christian fellowship, and the Chinese Christian fellowship. It seemed like every month I was being approached by a new Christian student and began to feel like I had some kind of bible-magnet in my backpack.

In 2000, I met Joshua Yoon in Waterloo, and we began 1:1 bible study. After attending the ISU conference in 2001, I moved to Japan to work as a computer programmer, and we continued 1:1 bible study through long-distance phone calls between Canada and Japan. Through studying God's words and the love and prayers of God's servants, God convicted me that I was a sinner who needed forgiveness in the blood of Jesus. After

calling me back to Canada to study a Master's degree at the University of Western Ontario in London, God gave me his words through Acts 22:15-16, "**You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.**" Through these words, I received Christ as my personal saviour and accepted God's personal calling to be a witness of His work to precious students on campus. Although I was once filled with a guilty sense and lost hope for my life, God's one sided, redeeming grace rescued me from the pit of sin and gave me a new living hope in the eternal kingdom of God. Amen!

### **3. My shepherd life**

Amazingly, God's grace didn't end with my salvation. He also called me to grow in holiness and share the love of Jesus with the young people of this generation. I accepted Romans 1:5 as my life key verse: "**Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.**"

In 2004, I began co-working with M. Isaac Sung, the director of London, UBF in Canada, his family, and two other missionary families. Tsukasa came to Canada to study English. After the death of her mom, she had desire to study the bible. We studied the bible together in Japanese and M. Rebecca, M. Isaac's wife, studied with her in English. She faithfully wrote Japanese and English bible testimonies each week and at our spring retreat in 2004, she accepted Christ as her personal saviour. She had a Buddhist background in Japan but when she saw that only Jesus died for her sins, she was moved by Jesus' love and also accepted God's calling to serve campus ministry. In 2005, God established a Christ-centered house church between us and I became the happiest man. Now we have two lovely boys: Hikaru which means "light" and Nobuto which means "man of faith."

God also blessed us with some spiritual children. Cuong Nguyen studied bible for 2 years and then moved to Ohio State University to study pharmacy where he continues to study bible with Dr. Henry Park. Nathaniel Reisenberg studied for 3.5 years and is now in Korea where he joined the Hangang centre. Eric Hammond studied for a few years and is growing faithfully as a disciple of Jesus and 1:1 bible teacher for students in London. Delano is growing as a disciple and Enxin is growing in personal relationship with God. God's work has been growing steadily in London UBF over the past five years. By God's grace, we became a sanctioned club on campus and now two second gens, M. Isaac and Rebecca's daughters, Anna and Teresa, along with one other student, are serving our student-centered Friday meetings on campus and also serving one-to-one students themselves and attending our early morning prayer meetings.

Through prayer and studying bible, God gave me a personal world mission vision. Jesus commanded, "**Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.**" (Mark 16:15) God did so many wonderful things in my life, saving me from my sins, and giving me a blessed life to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. I am a complete debtor to God

through Jesus. God planted a desire in my heart to share this love with the people of the world. As Tsukasa and I prayed about this, one word of God came to us from Mark 5:19. After healing the demon possessed man, Jesus said, "**Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.**" Through this word of God, we became convicted of God's calling to return to Japan to serve the work of God. By the help of God's servants, we are praying for the pioneering of a new church in Oita, Japan -- Tsukasa's home town.

At first, I wanted to secure a good job before going, but when I remembered Abraham who left his country and people to go to the land God would show him, I was encouraged to live as a missionary by faith and trust in God's provision first. In October, our family came to Chicago to receive missionary training before going to Japan in January. We learned many things through God's precious servants and I believe are much better equipped now to go to Japan as missionaries.

Japanese people seem to be noble, hard working, wealthy, and loyal. But they are suffering deeply in their sins of idolatry and sexual immorality. It is estimated that only 1% of the Japanese population is Christian; the rest is a mixture of mostly Shinto and Buddhism. God loves Japanese people very much and so is sending our family there to bring the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ and change the gospel history in Japan. May God transform Japan to be a Christian nation in our generation.

One word: Grace and apostleship