

Michael's Story...

As a young boy my dad and mom were not at all interested in being a Christian family, probably for a lot of reasons that had to do with their legalistic upbringing. But my father was interested enough in his son being in Sunday School that he would get up early Sunday morning, get me dressed, and drive me to a Nazarene Church in Abbotsford for Sunday School.



At the age of seven I invited Jesus to lead my life, after my Sunday School teacher explained that Jesus wanted to live in my heart if I would invite Him to. Two years later my mom and dad also received Christ as their Lord and Savior. We became a family who was fully engaged in the life of the church, seemingly making up for lost time by going to church twice on Sunday and usually mid week as well!

My father was a musician and had a band that would travel around to churches, prisons, missions, anywhere to lift up the name of Jesus. I was his rhythm guitar player and so I got an excellent taste of ministry at the very young age of ten through to my mid teens. I was also involved in Boy Scouts with a Christian emphasis.

I soon realized, even as a young guy of twelve years old, that I was a leader; I remember my Boy Scout leader coming to me and making me one of his key leaders. I can recall how this really helped me understand how God had wired me, and maybe being a leader was what it was that God wanted me to do. It was at this time that I wanted to do what it was that Jesus had asked and that was to be baptized. I gave a very short testimony and was baptized in the Pentecostal church, my home church in my growing up years.

But as I moved through my teens it seemed that the Christian life had a huge DOING side. Doing music with my dad's band, doing leadership with Boy Scouts, doing my bible reading (because my leader strongly requested that I make a vow that I would) and too many other "have to's" to mention. What I concluded was that these "have to's" were not what I considered Real Life. But at the same time I believed these "have to's" were required for God to be pleased with me. But the problem was that it was tedious and boring.



Being involved in athletics from young into my adult years gave me a taste of life that I enjoyed far more. Team sports and individual sports were my favorite past-times. And so, like so many people's stories, I walked away from the faith of my youth.

Through a series of personal encounters with friends that gave me the truth about myself, I began seeing following Jesus differently. At the age of twenty-five I was brought face to face my sin in a very realistic way that impacted me so strongly that I came to understand "Amazing Grace" in a way that I had never before. And this experience bombarded me so strongly that I saw that living my life without Jesus would be a huge mistake, and I realized living life God's way is anything but boring.

Within a year of fully surrendering my life to Jesus I met Teresa and we were married a year later in 1988. We have had a great marriage and have four fantastic kids – our family is filled with great moments of fun and laughter; I'm a very thankful husband and father.



Shortly after being married, Teresa and I felt God's calling on our lives to be involved in some way to make the "Amazing Grace" of God known. I had been an electrician for several years by now and was planning on preparing for ministry by attending seminary at ACTS. After graduating from seminary I was called to the church that I was volunteering in. Mountain Park Community Church was started 1991 in Abbotsford, and in 1994 I was hired as an Associate Pastor of Adult Ministries.

In 1997 I was further stirred along with Teresa to plant a church. After receiving a very clear call we moved our family to Kelowna to fulfill this calling. We are coming up to our ten year anniversary and all I can say is that God has been faithful in so many

ways. These are exciting days for us at SunRidge as we see much fruit and many more opportunities for us to trust Jesus for.

In my community I am also an Auxiliary constable with the RCMP. This has been a tremendous avenue to reach out to our police officers in our area and to get to know the community we love and care for.

I also serve as the Chairman of our church planting board in our denomination, the Mennonite Brethren (BOCE). I enjoy my work on this team because truth is that, down to my toes, I am a local church guy who believes that church planting is the most effective way at lifting the message of "Amazing Grace" to people that are far from God just as I was at twenty-five.

I am now forty-six years old (2007). It was twenty-one years ago that Jesus met me in a very powerful way and I am still moved by "Amazing Grace" today! I am so grateful to be used in any way that God calls me to make the message of "Amazing Grace" known.



Michael's family (from left to right) -- 2006

Mom-in-law, Vi, who moved up with us in 1997 and lives with us.

Nathan (9), Joshua (11), Alecia (14), Mikaela (12)

Michael and Teresa

Molly the dog.