Kevin, Kaori & Justen

The Lavermans in Japan

Church Planting with you in Kawasaki, Japan

www.lavermansinjapan.org

Presentation of Vision and Ministry

June 2011

Dear Friend in Christ,

We'd like to share with you something we are very passionate about! It is a church planting ministry in Japan as career missionaries with WorldVenture. Although we've been in Japan nearly 14 years, it's only recently that we have felt God opening closed doors by bringing people one-by-one to us, and to Himself. After the triple tragedy of 311, Japanese people need the hope and freedom Christ gives more than ever.

Would you take a few minutes to read through this presentation book that we've prepared? We think it will help you gain a good perspective on the work God has called us to in Japan, and possibly challenge you to consider your part in mission work: locally through your church, in Japan through us, or around the world.

It is our pleasure to share these things to you. And we need your good partnership in this ministry. If you already support our work, please know that we treasure the relationship that we have with you and would like to do everything we can to cultivate it even further.

After reading this material, if you have questions, or if there is some way can be an encouragement to you personally or to your church, in your mission vision, please let us know.

Together in the Harvest,

Kevin & Kaori Laverman

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The Lavermans in Japan

Kevin, Kaori & Justen

MINISTRY:

Church planting and evangelism in the Kawasaki and Yokohama area. Developing a church planting network. Currently planting a church-planting church, Denen Grace Chapel in Kawasaki.

SENDING MISSION:

Thirteen years of service with WorldVenture (formerly CBInternational) in cooperation with the Conservative Baptist Association of churches in Japan.

SENDING CHURCH:

Commissioned January 1999 by First Baptist Church of Lansing, Illinois (CBA)

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"I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant.'"

Isaiah 41:9

Our Vision

What gets Kevin and Kaori excited and moving?

We envision the people of Yokohama and Kawasaki transformed by the love of Christ!

Japan is a country of tremendous spiritual need exceeded only by the size of the tremendous spiritual opportunities. A great harvest is ripening, but there remains a tragic deficiency of workers.

Crowded downtown Tokyo

In Yokohama and Kawasaki (suburbs of massive Tokyo) alone there are nearly **5 million** people. Statistically, **4.98 million** of them are without Christ! How will they know of God's love and forgiveness in Christ?

Japan may be an economic power, but it is spiritually bankrupt! Of its 127 million citizens, 99.5% are not believers, only 0.15% attend a church on Sunday. This makes Japan one of the most unreached countries in the world, exceeding even almost every Muslim country! But these aren't just numbers, these represent real people that God loves and Jesus died for!

Where are they all headed?

At the beginning of the 21st century, the spiritual scene in Japan began to change. The country is undergoing significant social upheaval. The nation's economic "bubble" has burst, and it has slipped into years of recession and economic uncertainty. Banks continue to fail or merge. The jobless rate continues to climb, with college graduates in part-time jobs becoming more normative. Along with this economic crisis is the increase in social problems: divorce, juvenile delinquency, crime, suicide, domestic violence and abortion rates have all skyrocketed exponentially! In 2009 alone, nearly 38,000 people committed suicide in Japan! On the political front, Japan has had seven prime ministers in the last decade. The government has been troubled by corruption and the public has increasingly lost trust. North Korea, with its nuclear threats, has also become an unsettling force in the Japanese psyche.

In this context, Japanese in increasing numbers have begun to seek out the church's help in restoring social wellbeing. Many churches have reported a significant increase in adult conversions. A new window of opportunity has opened for the church to reach its nation for Christ!

The spiritual opportunity is tremendous! Let's work in the Land of the Rising Sun while it is still day, because "the night is coming when no man can work." John 9:4

Our Story

Who are the Lavermans and why are they in Japan?

Kevin, Kaori and Justen

Both Kevin and Kaori grew up in Christian homes and attended Baptist churches from a young age. However, Kevin's home was in the suburbs of Chicago, while Kaori's was in the mountains of Yamagata, Japan. In 1988, during a missions conference at Moody Bible Institute where he was attending, Kevin committed his life to serve the Lord in overseas missions work if He should so call. As he prayed through this commitment in the months to come, he felt the Lord leading him to take the next step. Kevin went for two summers with Asian Access to Japan while a student at Moody. He worked at Zao Baptist Church and assisted the church's English outreach ministries. God broke his heart for the deep spiritual needs of the Japanese people, and at the same time brought someone very special into his life on staff at the church where he served. Kevin and Kaori were married in 1993.

Justen in Japan

After being appointed by WorldVenture for career service in 1997, and spending two years in support discovery, the Lavermans moved to Japan in early 1999. Kevin spent the first two years in language and cultural study at the International Christian University. Meanwhile, Kaori watched their son and began Bible study groups for young mothers whose children attended a local kindergarten. After Kevin completed his studies, the family moved to the Yokohama/Kawasaki area to begin a church planting work. The Lavermans are working with a group of believers to start a church-planting church, a church with a strong missional vision to reach its area of Yokohama/Kawasaki through multiplying leadership and small groups using believers' homes.

JAPAN: Mission Impossible?

"That house is a lost cause!" I thought, and hesitated in putting a church flyer in its mailbox. The home was literally in the shadow of a powerful Buddhist temple next door. Who could have known that a couple weeks later a woman would walk into our worship service and say, "I'd been thinking about Christianity when I received a flyer from this church." Yes, as we'd later find out, she lived in that very house! Coincidence? No! God? Yes!

Mrs. Nakamura examined Christianity with us seriously, but seemed to be troubled by things. Then one day a breakthrough: "Kevin, I've been trying to understand Christ with just my head, but I know now that I need to accept Him with my heart...by faith." From the house I assumed was lost to the clutches of Buddhism, God had been calling His child, Mrs. Nakamura for a long time. In our living room September 2007, He welcomed her to himself as she placed her faith in Jesus!

Kevin, Mrs. Nakamura, and Kaori

"Humanly speaking, it [missions in Japan] is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God!" Mark 10:27 NLT

Our Ministry

What in the world are you doing?

Denen Grace Chapel in 2010

Our ministry focus is the planting of **Denen Grace Chapel in Kawasaki**. We began from zero, but through salvation decisions, good followup and disicipleship, God has been slowly growing our tiny group to maturity.

Our family joins a long line of missionaries to Japan that have given blood, sweat, tears, and much prayer to the work of reaching Japanese for Christ. But Japan remains a stubborn nation for the Gospel to penetrate. When WWII ended, the defeated emperor declared that Japan needed the values and hope that Christianity offered through Jesus Christ. The Japanese rebuilt their country after the devastation of the war with a speed and energy that amazed the world. Defeated Japan's sole ambition was to catch up to the west and establish their country as an economic leader. They applied remarkable resources and effort to the task and succeeded in ways that are a testimony to their ingenuity, skill, and determination as a people.

Ladies Ministry

Our core Christian women have opened their homes twice monthly for Bible study to which friends are invited. They also do outreach activities like cooking classes.

But they made a critical mistake in the process: they left God out of the building process. In fact, the Japanese have succeeded in establishing a whole society built on humanistic and secular worldviews. Today less than one percent of the Japanese people are reached for Christ. And the foundation on which Japan has built its country is falling apart in large pieces. Japan needs Christ!

Gospel Music Workshop

Twice monthly we offer a Gospel Music Workshop to the community. Currently about 20 come to sing in English and prepare for a seasonal concert. Along the way we share the real Gospel with these people.

In 2001 the Lavermans took over a small group Bible study that a fellow missionary had been leading. The group took on the name Denen Grace Chapel and began meeting regularly on Sundays in the Laverman home and a local community center. Evangelistic events and small group Bible studies were launched. The group joined the Conservative Baptist Association of Japan in May of 2002. In January 2003, Denen Grace Chapel moved to private rental hall near Mizonokuchi station in Kawasaki, Japan. A strong core group had developed, new believers were baptized, and these core members began to reach their friends for Christ.

What could God do through a group of committed Japanese Christians who would plant a church with a missional focus? What would happen if these people worked through their web of relationships to reach people for Christ, who would grow up spiritually and reach still others? Denen Grace Chapel wants to be a church that reaches, grows and redeploys Japanese to reach Japanese for Christ: to become a church-planting church!
Would you pray for us as we seek to fulfill this vision?

What are some ways as a church that we can build bridges in Japan for the Gospel? In addition to our family and friends, how can we best reach our community for Christ as a church? As a church we have prayed over and wrestled with these questions, and then began to act in accordance with the opportunities God was providing us.

Japanese people love to sing. They are interested in English. They work well in groups and seek strength from a network of relationships. They value the education and upbringing of their children. These are some areas of felt needs that Japanese have. The possibilities of building bridges and responding to these felt needs are limitless. We have worked to create some targeted outreach events and ministries that we feel best fit our vision and direction as a church.

Denen Grace Chapel is unique in that it is composed of individuals who are "returnees," that is, Japanese who have spent time overseas for work or study related reasons and have now returned to their own country. Coming back home, they are often overwhelmed by the reverse culture shock, and find it difficult to fit back into their home culture. Our hope is that we can connect with more returnees as a church and reach them for Christ. Would pray that God would use these ministries, multiply and grow them, and work through us as a church to effectively bring in unbelievers, lead them to salvation, grow them up in Christ, and empower them for service? Would you be willing to partner with us this ministry?

Kids Outreach

We have begun to attract some younger families, and Kids Ministry with Sunday School and outreach activities is a part of this.

Youth Ministry

Our youth enjoy "hanging out" through a lot of fun activities (camps, bowling, Youth Live, etc) as well and growing in their new faith with each other.

Mens Ministry

Men ministry is being run by one of our core Christians with our coaching. They meet (above) in a restaurant to discuss the Bible.

English Bible Classes

English is a draw for many Japanese. We offer Easy Bible English classes at different times.

Our Team

Who are the Lavermans working with in Japan?

WorldVenture

Our sending mission is committed to powerful partnerships and transforming lives with the Gospel, to the very frontier of the harvest.

We know that the work God has called us to in Japan is going to require good partnerships to multiply and support our effort. Together with the Holy Spirit's power, we value cooperating with other people to get the work done!

We are missionaries with WorldVenture (formerly CBInternational), an evangelical mission with Baptistic roots and a progressive attitude. WorldVenture was birthed in prayer in a Chicago YMCA in the uncertain days of WWII. Based now in Littleton, Colorado, its missionaries and staff number over 700 working in over 60 world areas, including many with restricted access, through evangelism, church planting, and compassion.

We are also a part of the Conservative Baptist Association of churches in Japan. WorldVenture church planting work in Japan began in 1947 in the northern part of the country, and has since spread south throughout the Tokyo region to include a network of some 53 churches, a seminary, a campground, and other ministries run by national workers. The association is forward-looking and, in cooperation with WorldVenture missionaries is actively starting new church works in critical spiritual locations throughout the country as God provides the workers.

CB Association in Japan

From one humble church in 1947, the CB family in Japan has grown to over 2900 baptized believers, and has a vision for reaching its country, and world, for Christ.

JBF Missionaries

Twenty-one adults and many kids make up the fellowship of career and short-term missionaries that we cooperate with in Japan.
A great family network for us!

We're also a part of Japan Baptist Fellowship (JBF), which includes WorldVenture and Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists International (FEBI of Canada) career and short-term missionaries in Japan. We enjoy good fellowship, strategy, and support from these fellow workers in the harvest in Japan. We have a variety of ministry skill and wide range of work in Japan that includes: church planting, evangelism, discipleship, teaching and education, compassion work, administration, and music and creative arts. It is an exciting team to be a part of and an invaluable part of our support team.

We are convinced that the future of the church in Japan depends on strong national leadership. We want to be careful that our church work does not have a missionary dependency. So we determined to involve a national pastor in our church plant as early as possible. In January 2010, Denen Grace Chapel formally called Pastor Izumi and Mikiko Kondo. We now work in partnership with the Kondos in this church planting work. Other missionaries and short-term workers also come to help in specific ways from time to time.

Kevin and Pastor Izumi Kondo

We are partners together and share a burden for church planting! Pastor Kondo and his wife spent 13 years in Conneticut starting a Japanese church there.

Layworkers

Layworkers like this core of ladies in the church are a tremendous support to multiplying our work in church. Great partners for us!

But our real work force are the church members themselves. Our philosophy of ministry includes raising strong leadership from within the church and allowing God's people offer their time and talent to the Lord. Within the church we determined to do nothing that a national layworker cannot be equipped and coached to handle. We see our role as initiating and vision-casting, caring and encouraging God's people to do the work of the ministry. In this way, we believe the church is to be a training ground for equipping and sending future workers into the harvest fields. This has been a great struggle for us at times, but slowly new believers in Christ are growing up and increasingly assuming greater roles of responsibility. Our core of church leaders meet regularly to pray and discuss the problems and potential, growth and future of the church. We don't want the church work to end with the planting of Denen Grace Chapel. We want it to be a springboard to many more chapels birthed through us and connected in a network for the salvation of many Japanese and glory of God.

Our Most Valued Team Player.

That's you! Without God's people back home "holding the ropes" for this ministry through giving and prayer, this would be "mission impossible." You are the encouragement of our heart in this work!

Our support network includes 19 churches and 42 individuals investing monthly in this church planting ministry. This includes many friends in the New York and New Jersey area, Midwest states of Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, and even Utah with a burden for Japan. Kaori's own home church in Japan also supports our work in the Kawasaki area as she is a missionary that has been sent out from northern Japan! It is a diverse, widespread and unique group of people that care for and partner with us!

Our Support Team at Home

You reading this presentation are the people that empowers and enables us to serve in Japan as missionaries. The BEST partners for us are definitely YOU!

Our Partnership Needs

How can we be of support to your work?

We need you. One reason for sharing this presentation book with you is to invite your partnership with us in the work in Japan. We have sensed God's hand at work in Japan, and particularly through this ministry of ours. Yet after 13 years of service with WorldVenture, and at a critical point of ministry, we find ourselves with new partnership challenges and needs. Could you be a part of what God is doing through us in Kawasaki and Yokohama?

Kaori and Justen

We are confident as a family that God's work will never lack God's provision, so we trust Him as we see the cost of living and support figures flux. And God always steps in, demonstrating his power over people and resources, and humbling us one again by the generosity and interest of others in our family and our work. We are grateful for you!

Supporting world missions

If you or your church are a part of our support network, we want you to know that you are cherished by us, and that your support of our work in Japan (actually YOUR work in Japan with us) is making a difference in changing lives. We wish that we could personally introduce you to the people that are changed for eternity. Perhaps in heaven we can (meanwhile watch the DVD).

I've always been told that if you need help, it's okay to ask. So here goes: We need your help.
As a church or individual, if you are not a part of our support network in giving just yet, could we invite you to prayerfully consider that possibility? In this way we would love to take you with us to Japan! And while we can't throw in a set of Japanese ginzu knives, we do want to make certain commitments to you (see next page) and assure you that your partnership in this way is making a difference for eternity.

Besides financial support, we have other partnership needs as well. The next page gives you a few other ideas. More ideas are listed on our website at www.lavermansinjapan.org/howtohelp.html
We know you're busy and that your resources are limited, but we also know that God's blessing can empower and sustain you.

Bringing Jesus to the Japanese

Partnership Opportunities:

Invest in the Work

We are currently undersupported by $5,640 annually or $470 monthly*. Might you prayerfully consider committing a small amount of support monthly and joining us in this work? It's really easy. A response form is included at the end of this presentation book to get you set up. * as of June 2011

Pray with Us

See our website www.lavermansinjapan.org/howtohelp.html for tools to guide your prayer support of our work. Read our regular prayerletter, cut out the section on prayer and keep it in your Bible. And please send your email address to lavermansinjapan@mac.com so that we can send you regular updates.

Educate Others

Tell others about what missions is all about, particularly the younger generation! Perhaps you can adopt Japan as your class! Perhaps you can adopt us as missionaries as a class, or as a family. You can help build awareness of missions and inspire a future generation that might just come and serve too!

Encourage Us

We're real people and miss home and friends very much. The work is often hard and discouraging. We need your encouragement! This reminds us of our support network and blesses us greatly. How? Letters, care packages, emails, and, when we are home and visiting with you, a lot of TLC! See our website for more.

Network for us

The grapevine can be a good thing. Do you know someone in Japan (Japanese or other) living in the Yokohama, Kawasaki, Tokyo metro area that might be of assistance to our ministry, or that you would like us to follow up on? By all means tell us! We've included our Japanese church brochure at the end to pass along.

Come to Help

Yes! You can come! We can use individuals and short term ministry teams with a burden for helping the work in Japan? Come join us! Don't know what you could do? Take a look at our website at www.lavermansinjapan.org/howtohelp.html Or read through the short-term ministry brochure toward the back of this book.

You might call these "bridges of partnership" with us in Japan. We know that much of the year we are separated from you by 8000 miles or more. We want you to get to know about us, our work in Japan, and the country in which that God has given us a desire to plant churches. You will feel a part of what God is doing here through some small ways like those above. So come join us in Japan! We are grateful for your part with us!

Bridges of Partnership with us in Japan

Our Commitments to You

How do you plan on keeping in touch with us?

Missionary Correspondence: ***not just about letters anymore!***

We are committed to you! We are committed as your missionaries to using resources God gives us -- time, talent, and treasure -- with diligence and integrity. It is our desire to be accountable before God and to you, as our supporters, with the way that our time and energy, as well as our support dollars are utilized. Our commitment to you is to stretch and reclaim resources He gives us as best for kingdom purposes in Japan as possible.

We also make a commitment to do our best in reporting to you. We want you to know what is going on in YOUR ministry through us in Japan. We want you empowered to pray intelligently and share intelligently about what God is doing here.

First, when we are back in the States on home assignment, our desire is to visit with you personally. We make a point of visiting with all of our supporting churches regularly. We are glad to share in a way (message, presentation, short update, Q&A time, Powerpoint, video, skit, Sunday school lesson, round-table discussion, etc.) and with a group (worship service, Sunday school class, adults, kids, youth, missions team, men's breakfast, ladies luncheon, leadership team, etc.) that is helpful to you.

Visiting a church Sunday School

How can we serve you as a church? Our desire is to help your church understand and be energized in their mission vision.

We also do our best to visit (or when not possible because of distance at very least call) our individual supporters. Many have become our friends and valuable part of our lives.

Visiting with supporters at home

Our supporters are a valuable part of our ministry. We thank God upon each remembrance of you!

Second, when we are not in the States, we know that you value hearing from us as frequently and creatively as possible. We want you to feel connected with things in Japan. We commit good communication! On the next page are some ways we try to do this.

Communicating with You:

News & Prayer

We send out a 2-page newsletter with recent events, photos, and prayer needs 4 or 5 times a year. A not-for-profit postage rate helps make this really affordable. Just give us your address if you would like to be added to our mailing list. The B&W newsletter is easily reproducible for giving to larger groups.

Website & Blog

Our website presents an overview of our work here, personal info, newsletters, video clips, information on Japan and helps for churches. See **www.lavermansinjapan.org**
Our blog is a new addition that gets updated more frequently with recent events and things of interest in ministry in Japan. See **www.lavermansinjapan.blogspot.com**

Presentation Material

We know that churches and groups sometimes need material to present. Some items are downloadable from our website. We are glad to send photos, powerpoint presentations, biographies, ministry clips, or other items that may be of help to you in educating people.

Email Updates

We often send out email updates to our supporting churches and individuals of prayer needs or praise items so that others can see God at work here easily. Please send us your email address to **lavermansinjapan@mac.com** to be added. We promise to use your email address discreetly and not "spam" information.

DVD & Videos

Every year or so we put video clips our work into a DVD and send it to supporters. We have a few available now that we'd love to give you for use with groups or just you. We've put together one that is included with this book. We hope this will give you a closer, more personal look at the face of the mission work that you are supporting.

Skype

Technology keeps opening up new ways of communication. Now you can "skype" us and have us chat live with your missions team, small group, Sunday School class, or congregation (let us know ahead of time and don't forget the 15 hour time difference). Our address is **lavermansinjapan**

The spiritual need in Japan is tremendous. But in our ministry we have seen people one by one, led to Christ, baptized, and growing strong in their faith. The spiritual opportunities in Japan are tremendous as well. And we are excited to be part of what God is doing in Kawasaki and Yokohama in people's lives. We need your help. Would you partner with us and come join us in Japan?

Come step into Japan with us!

Support Response Form

How do I commit to a portion of your support?

In order to have adequate resources to work and live in Japan (the world's second most expensive country), we really need to receive full support that pays for housing, salary, medical, transportation, ministry and education costs. When support sags, we can't really take on extra hours at work, or find a part-time job to make up the difference.

We are currently undersupported by $5,640 annually or about $470 monthly *(as of June 2011)*. Breaking down this monthly figure into bite-sized chunks, this is one *possible* way to look at our need:

	1~2 new churches to pledge from $100/monthly (collectively totaling $200)
	3 new individuals or families to pledge $50/monthly
	4 new individuals or families to pledge $20/monthly
	4 new individuals or families to pledge $10/monthly

Two Ways to Give Support:

1) Of course, any amount you are able to pledge to our support is of great encouragement. You may use the form below and enclose with your gift payable to WorldVenture. WorldVenture, a non-profit faith mission, is part of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (EFCA). They will receipt your gift and send you an envelope and contribution slip for next time.

2) Or, if you prefer you may give online using WorldVenture's secure online portal. Simply go to their website (www.worldventure.com), type "Laverman" in the keyword box and hit enter. Then click on "make a commitment" at the top of the page.

Questions? Email us at lavermansinjapan@mac.com

We deeply appreciate your partnership with us in Japan.

Our Pledges to You:

1) to work hard as God's ambassadors to Japan
2) to regularly keep in touch with you
3) to use funds carefully as wise stewards
4) to report back to you when we return for furlough

I want to share in the ministry of Kevin & Kaori Laverman #381

❏ ***As God enables, I plan to commit $_____, which will normally be sent:***
❏ Monthly ❏ Quarterly ❏ Other _____.

This support will begin (month/year) _____ .
❏ Please send me their regular prayerletter and updates.

❏ Please send me a form for automated monthly giving.

❏ Mr. ❏ Mrs. ❏ Mr. & Mrs. ❏ Miss ❏ Other _____
Name or Church/Group _____ Date _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (____) _____ Email _____

Make checks to: WorldVenture, 1501 W. Mineral Ave., Littleton, CO 80120-5612

Clip and send to WorldVenture

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