



Hikari!

from Kevin & Kaori

Hikari means "light"

Church Planting with the Lavernans in Japan

Light up the Darkness!

February 2009 Japan Partner Newsletter



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Guest Musicians, the Living Waters, leading our church into worship

Living Water for Thirsty Japan

I get excited anytime I see Japanese people worshipping God! It's the purpose of why we're in Japan! We want to transform Japanese into worshippers of God, not the idols in their hearts, homes, shrines and temples. A music group called "Living Waters" came to our church plant recently and led us in a time of praise and worship.

Speaking of living water, the bottled water fad had its beginnings right here in Japan. More research has been done on drinking water in Japan than anywhere else. One company produces a bottled water called "Kangen." Its name means "return to the origin." The idea is that this water is a return to the origins of true water as found in nature before it was polluted by man. The claim is that it will also help your body to return to its original condition when you were young.

That's a pretty big claim. I seriously doubt it can live up to it. Good thing Japanese

have access to a source of water that works better. The supplier is none other than Christ himself who makes a really big claim as well: "The water I give will become a spring of water welling up in him to eternal life." Jn4:14

That's the kind of water the thirsty Japanese soul needs! Use us, Lord, to

lead Japanese people to its source! Pray for us (everytime you see a Kawasaki motorcycle -- or any motorcycle) to be used that way! "Wherever this water flows everything will live." Ez47:9. ■

A Small Tokyo Miracle

It was a privilege to have attended Okachimachi Baptist Church's building dedication a few weeks back. This is the church that we interned at during our first two years in Japan. It took some 25 years, but the church now has its own piece of downtown Tokyo property. Given the cost of land in downtown Tokyo (way too many zeros involved), it truly is a work of God. The pastor (center below) reminded the people that God is still in the business of miracles.



The whole group at the dedication

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www.lavernansinjapan.org

This Week in Prayer

PRAYER FOCUS Thru-the-week:

Like other parts of the world, Japan has hit a deep recession. But with a largely export-driven economy, it is even more severe. These are times that God can use to cause people to re-examine their life support structures. Japanese have depended on their bank accounts. In the middle of this crisis pray they would now turn their attention to the one true God.

Monday Christmas Outreach

Praise God for a good Christmas outreach. We had 70 people crammed into our tiny underground meeting room turned sanctuary. Pray now as we continue to followup. One young woman has continued to come regularly to church since Christmas and is in an evangelistic Bible study. Pray for E-san.

Tuesday Future Pastor

See our comments on the back of this letter. For now, pray that God would lead us to the man of his choosing to work with us in finishing the work at Denen and planting more churches throughout Kawasaki!

Wednesday Financial Stability

Pray for financial stability in our support. The dollar continues to weaken against the yen, off 20% from its level last summer.

Thursday Justen's Schooling

Justen's school will be moving deeper into Tokyo next month. It will be a longer and more crowded commute for him daily. We have some mixed feelings about this change. Pray for his safety each day.

Friday Physical needs

We both had physicals done last week and, strangely enough, Kaori is in better shape physically than Kevin. We can ignore these needs in the middle of our busyness. Kevin's hit the gym. Kaori's hiding the snack food.

Additional Support Needed: \$576 per month



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"The [Japanese] people walking in DARKNESS have seen a great LIGHT." Isaiah 9:2

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Denen's Next Step

We'll be sharing more in our next letter, but we'd like to enlist your prayer support for our church plant, Denen Grace Chapel. We're taking a big step in our growth toward maturity by looking very seriously at calling a pastor by this summer. There is a tragic shortage of pastoral candidates in Japan. But God has introduced us to someone that we feel would be a good fit.

Over the past few years the church has slowly but steadily grown, and we feel that they are ready for this new challenge. It will be a big stretch in their finances, and their faith. Please remember us in prayer as we move forward in the process in the months ahead. ■

The Great Skate (and the not so great skater)

It seemed like a good winter break idea at the time: take some kids from church along with Justen and go ice skating. Our area of Kawasaki has a nice outdoor rink and the temperatures here in January are just cold enough to support a short season of ice skating. The only problem: I don't ice skate as well as I remember. In fact, it



Justen and Rito-chan. Semi-pro ice skaters preparing for the 2020 Olympics.

was two hours of sheer terror for me. The kids' skating was like semi pro. Mine was more like disaster management.

But God gave me a little grace. While tottering around the rink with the kids skating circles about me, a few of them would frequently come behind, say, "Let's help Pastor Kevin," and then take my hand to steady me. It was a mini lesson in salvation. I was rescued from meeting the hard, cold painful ice. Somehow in the middle of that we accomplished our goal of building some relationships. ■

The Laverman Blog Spot

Japan's Gone Bananas

posted on January 30, 2009

It seems that bananas have been in short supply in our grocery store these days. I wondered why at first. As it turns out, foreigners are the last to pick up on pop culture trends. I overheard a conversation at church that brought me up to speed. Stated simply: Japan's gone bananas!

It all started with a pop Japanese singer claiming she lost more than 20 pounds on a banana diet. There was no stopping it after that. Every Japanese young woman who felt she was a kilo or so overweight had to try it for themselves. It is the diet for the undisciplined. The protocol is:

- 1) Eat 1 banana with room temperature water for breakfast.
- 2) Eat whatever you like the rest of the day within reason.
- 3) A small sugary snack at 3pm is fine.
- 4) Get to bed by midnight.

Japan is a homogeneous unit of people, not individuals. When compared with their western counterparts, Japan is far and beyond a copycat culture. If something becomes hip, it takes the country by storm in as much time as the 150million cell phones can get the word out. (A side note: I pray for the day that revival sweeps through Japan in the same fashion!)



Rough translation of this sign:
"Yes, we have no bananas."

This isn't the first diet to sweep the nation. There was the tofu diet and the fermented bean curd diet crazes not long ago. I didn't mind the grocery store being low on those. I suppose in time this diet will also go the same way, but in the meantime if you want a banana in Japan get in line early! ■

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Thanking you for 2008

I shared in a message last Sunday at Denen about the unique way (manna) that God demonstrated faithfulness to the Israelite people wandering in the wilderness. For 40 years the "bread truck" never failed to pull into the Israelite camp in the morning.

In this business of faith missions, Kaori and I experience a similar wonder from the hand of God. We have no power to generate giving to support our daily needs, yet each day God supplies through your generosity. The days add up to years (12 years now since we were appointed in 1997) that God demonstrates his faithfulness. And we learn to depend on Him more. Thank you for supporting this work in Japan through us!

My partnership

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