



Hikari! from Kevin & Kaori

Hikari means "light"

Church Planting with the Lavernans in Japan

Light up the Darkness!

April 2010 Japan Partner Newsletter

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RJC Conference: Together with fellow laborers in Japan's harvest fields

Together for Japan's Harvest

"Open your eyes and look...they are ripe for harvest." John 4:35b

How grateful we are for YOUR part in reaching Japan for Christ with us!

I'm not much of a conference-goer. Our church planting work is busy enough. I'd much rather be doing, than discussing the doing. Sit and listen has never completely fit my learning style. I'm greedy about how and where I invest time and energy...who isn't?

But when we determined we needed to be in the States briefly, and when American Airlines graciously allowed me to book multi-city award travel, I jumped at the chance to be in Seattle for a few days to be among co-laborers reaching Japanese for Christ. What a great time the "Reaching Japanese for Christ" conference was!

The ideas and resources I gleaned were very helpful. But what made the conference particularly fulfilling for me

was the opportunity to be outside of our ministry and country of service context, and yet to be among people who completely shared my calling, passion, and challenges in Japan. Our times in the States rarely have this dimension.

Thank you, RJC2010 staff, for making this conference such a

worthy investment of time. It was an invigorating oasis from which to return to life and ministry here in Japan.

Thank you, dear supporters, for your ministry of support and prayer that enables us to light up this corner of spiritually dark Kawasaki, Japan! ■

Returnee Partnerships

Japanese churches in the States see many Japanese come to Christ and then return to Japan (such are called "returnees"). Networking between these evangelical churches and ourselves is key to helping these returnee baby believers connect and keep growing in their faith once back home. I was glad to visit a church (Lynnwood Japanese Church) in Seattle recently that has referred returnees to us. We keep working to intentionally create these inter-church overseas connections.



Kevin, together with a pastor and guest speaker at Lynnwood Japanese Church

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www.lavernansinjapan.org



This Week in Prayer

PRAYER FOCUS Thru-the-week:

We will be considering as a church, and as missionaries, what we can do to better welcome Japanese "returnees" (below left) into our church, and help them grow up in their new faith. We expect to have a better action plan in the days ahead. Kevin will be attending a conference on the issue in March, and then networking with Japanese ministry leaders. Pray for an open door to this new component to our ministry here.

Monday Partnership with Kondos

Our work together with the Kondo family has begun (see back). Please pray for unity in spirit and purpose as we put hands together in church ministry in the days ahead.

Tuesday Housing & Employment

Pastor Kondo needs to be bi-vocational at the beginning of his ministry at Denen. He is looking to use his excellent piano teaching ability to help support himself. The couple also need to find affordable housing in our church plant area before they can move. Our area of Kawasaki is very expensive. Pray for God's provision of these needs.

Wednesday Spiritual Protection

We've shared recently that Satan has been particularly active in frustrating God's work in the lives of key church families. Please pray for spiritual protection for us and the church, as the church transitions to a new pastor.

Thursday New Christians

Please pray for a couple of new believers as they move toward baptism. We'd like to have baptisms this summer. Pray for the salvation of four regular seekers in the church.

Friday Kaori's Health

Please continue to pray for the health of Kaori, with hep B. She is doing remarkably well in her body's fight with this disease, and feeling new energy for her ministry in Japan.

Additional Support Needed: \$457 per month



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

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The Laverman Blog Spot

Chicago Forecast: Snowy with a Chance of Re-entry Shock

posted on February 15, 2010

NOTE: We had a great time back home with family for two weeks in February--an unexpected visit to fix an immigration snafu with Kaori's resident status.

Snow and re-entry shock were two surprises waiting for us upon our arrival in Chicago.

We scooted into Chicago on Monday just ahead of the big snowfall on Tuesday. Okay,



Japanese, Polish, Dutch Laverman clan eating Chinese food back in Schererville, IN

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just a couple inches or so. But coming from comparatively warm Tokyo, it's been awhile since we saw this kind of snow! Justen enjoyed sledding with a home church member--what a rare treat for him!

Re-entry shock is something we always struggle with when out of the States for a long period. In essence, the values, dreams, ideals of our host culture of Japan become the ingrained norm for us. We become surprised by how far apart they are from folks in our own homeland. Although we yearn to find belonging and identify completely with our home culture, we have been changed significantly in ways while we were gone.

People, places and things have also changed. Absorbing the many changes all at once is quite overwhelming. It all brings about a sense of alienation and confusion. The strongest feeling is that we have simply missed out on being a part of the journey and lives of friends and family...as if we've been asleep while they've all moved on. This is part of the missionary complexities that we are grappling with, and for which we value your understanding when home.



Pastor Kondo and Mikiko (center) together with church family and area pastors at our March installation service

An "Installation Celebration" at Denen

The cake in the photo has a story. So do the flowers. They were brought together in an "installation celebration" for Pastor Kondo and his wife, Mikiko, March 7, 2010.

Together with other area pastors and missionaries, we officially recognized their leadership of Denen Grace Chapel. This is cause for celebration! Notice the cake is in front of me. The flowers are in front of Pastor Kondo. Hey, we both have our way of celebrating! I'm sure you wouldn't believe me if I said it was made of tofu.

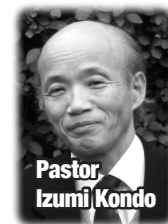
So what's next for the Lavermans now that a pastor has been called to our church

plant? We're glad you asked!

The short-term plan is to help the church in the growth posture it has taken by calling a pastor so early in its history. We will be partnering with the Kondos in this work, working up a strategy, dividing areas of leadership, and spearheading some

specific outreach, returnee and discipling ministries to reach more Japanese for Christ in this area. The long-term plan is to build a foundation over the next few years for a future daughter church plant out of Denen which we would begin. Stay posted and praying! ■

Pastor Project Need



Pastor Izumi Kondo

We have opened a special project with WorldVenture to help our young church plant by subsidizing the **first few years only** of the Pastor Kondo's salary. If you are willing to make a one-time gift as a church missions committee, or as a family, please send in the form below. More info can be found on our website.

My partnership with the Lavermans' work in Kawasaki #381

Additional Support Needed: \$457 per month

Clip & Send

As God enables, I plan to commit \$ _____ ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually.

- ☐ Enclosed is my first gift. **OR** This support will begin (month/year) _____.
☐ Send me their regular prayerletter and email updates (indicate email address below).
☐ Please send a form for automated giving to my address below.
☐ This commitment represents an adjustment in my current giving to the Lavermans.

OR, Enclosed is a one-time gift of \$ _____ for:

- ☐ The Lavermans' Special Project: New Church Pastoral Support Fund #6417-907.
☐ The Lavermans' support needs. ☐ Other:

Name or Group _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

Make checks payable to WorldVenture and enclose this form (address on front). A receipt will be sent.