

REACHING THE OTHER 99

church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

JULY 2012 NEWS

Kevin & Kaori Laverman

CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN

Shinto shrine carried in summer festival

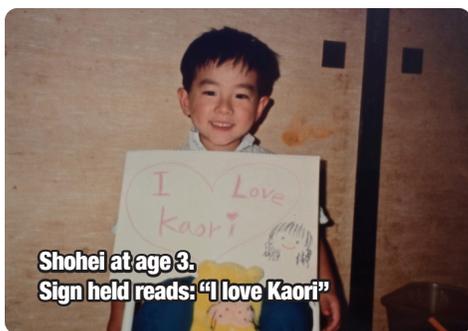


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➔ The tsunami and prodigals

Every so often God pulls back the veil on his work to reveal just a little bit more of his mysterious purposes in the events of a person's life...



Shohei at age 3.
Sign held reads: "I love Kaori"

The scene is still etched on my memory. Little Shohei holding the sign: "I Love Kaori" before bursting into tears. He was boy that Kaori's parents watched while his mom worked. It was the summer of 1993. I had just finished a year of short-term ministry in Japan. Kaori and I were engaged. I had come to her home in Yamagata to help her pack to leave for our wedding in the States. Shohei was there, of course. And he was *not* happy about Kaori moving another country away.

In the years to follow, Shohei grew up under the Christian influence of Kaori's parents, but never made a decision for Christ. Eventually, he wandered away from church. We heard nothing from him.

Fast forward 18 years to the March 11, 2011 disasters in Japan. The tsunami

events softened Shohei. As he searched for answers, God began whispering to his soul. When he heard Kaori and I were coming to Yamagata to preach and share in the church, he decided to come see us. He hadn't been to church in years.

The tsunami was the game changer for him spiritually. After that first visit, he became serious about understanding Christianity. He began to study the Bible with the pastor. He made frequent relief trips with the church team. He finally placed his life in God's hands last fall. This past February he was baptized. We



Kaori's two boys:
Shohei on left, Justen on right

were encouraged to see his heart for God during a recent visit to Yamagata.

God's slow work in Shohei's life reminded me of two encouraging things:

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About the photo above

Summer festivals showcase not only Japan's tradition and culture, but also the challenge of missions here. "Omikoshi" are portable Shinto shrines used to carry gods between shrines. Aren't you glad God offers to carry us?

PRAY with us thru the week

SUN Pray for the short term teams coming to Tohoku this summer to give encouragement to tsunami survivors in temporary housing.

MON Pray for the baptism prep of a young man in church who placed his faith in Christ last week. Pray for 8 more seekers like him.

TUE Pray for our physical stamina this summer in the Tokyo heat. It is humid! But together with all Japan, we are conserving electricity.

WED Pray for decisions for Christ from the three non-Christian ladies attending Kevin's English Bible Class

THUR Pray for faith in the financial challenges of our church plant as this year we fully underwrite the salary of our new Japanese pastor.

FRI Pray for spiritual protection of our church people (many new believers) as they confront the religious traditions of their homes and country during summer holidays and festivals.



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First, God is at work through the ugly circumstances of the tsunami to produce something of beauty. The fact is that there have been *many* prodigal sons and daughters returning to church as a result of 311. Shohei is only one of them.

Second, even though church planting in Japan seems painfully slow at times, and salvation and baptism decisions take years, God's promises are trustworthy and his purposes for this nation will be accomplished at just the right time. ➡

➡ **The "Living Table" Room**



seen a lot of small group Bible studies, a lot of counseling, praying, tears, countless pots of coffee and tea, much laughter and games, and, of course like all good Baptists, a lot of eating with others.

If tables could speak, ours would have quite a story: "I started life in a forest in Sweden, wound up in Ikea, was bought by a missionary, and now here I am in God's service in Japan." Dings and dents are proudly displayed as proof of its good service through the years.

As I reflect on our decade of church planting here, a strange theme emerges: the table. Our church was birthed around our table at home where we held worship services with just 5 or 6 of us for the first few months back in 2002. We need 8 long tables at church to fit us all now. Yet the table in our home still sees the most use.

The man in the photo at left just received his first Bible at the living table. What a great start! PLEASE PRAY for his (Mr. H.) salvation decision as he studies the Bible with us. He is faithful in coming to church, but has some challenges in life to work through.

A lot of ministry happens around our living room table. In fact, the table basically *IS* our living room (think tiny Japan). It's the "living table room." It's

Pray that the many people we meet over our living table will be impacted for the kingdom of God. ➡

"The vision will still happen at the appointed time. If it's delayed, wait for it. It will certainly happen. It won't be late." Habakkuk 2:3

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from the BLOG

"Thou hast shown me through"



ALL THE WAY

Though the way is rough and steep,
 And the caverns large and deep,
 He will guide me through.

Though the night is long and drear,
 And I feel temptation near,
 He will see me through.

Though the powers of sin are strong,
 And I know that Satan's wrong,
 He will help me through.

So I trust Thee by Thy grace,
 Until I see Thy wondrous face,
 And Thy hand I still embrace
 Thou hast shown me through.

by Agnes Ruth Nydam

Heavenly Father who now embraces her in eternity. I was comforted to attend the funeral and conduct the committal on June 6, 2012 in Schererville, Indiana, during a quick turnaround trip to the States.

I last saw grandma in February 2012 when we returned to the States for a couple weeks for an extension of Kaori's permanent residence status. We were invited to share concerning our work in Japan in the chapel service of the retirement home in which she lived.

I will not forget the expression of pride and joy on her face as I entered the chapel. She had seated herself in the front row, center, surrounded by her friends to whom she announced proudly, "That's Kevin. That's my grandson!" Though confined to a wheelchair, she seemed to sit on the edge of her seat and crane her neck forward as I shared.

I felt the love of Father God expressed to me in her loving pride. The same God who declared to the world concerning Jesus, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Mt. 3:17) was now also speaking through my grandmother similar words of affirmation and joy. I will miss you, grandma! Thank you, Lord, for her the impact of her life.

My grandma Nydam passed into the presence of her Savior on May 31st. She nurtured me in my walk with the Lord and encouraged me in my passion for missions. She loved her

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