

REACHING THE OTHER 99

church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

DECEMBER 2013 NEWS

Kevin & Kaori Laverman CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN

"My God turns my darkness into light." Psalm 18:28

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➔ My way out of the cold

The greatest day in the life of a church planter is the day a new believer receives baptism. What a joy it was to baptize two just before returning to the States in September. Here's a bit of Mrs. N's translated testimony:



Together as a church at Mrs. N and Ms. O's (center front) baptism celebration

to a bitterness I couldn't shake. I couldn't forgive my sister for causing my father's death. I resented my mother who talked about her. Why did my father have to die while they were spared from injury? I became angry and unkind to them. And I hated myself for my own coldness. My father was a devout

Buddhist and spoke of the Buddha's mercy and love. I could not believe in any such sort of good god! But soon, while working at a nursing home, I would learn of the grace of Jesus Christ.

My job was to go from room to room and check the health and vital signs of the residents. Sometimes they asked me for answers I could not give. Patients, half-paralyzed and bedridden, would ask, 'Nurse, why do I need to go on living with a body in pain like this? It hurts. Please let me die.' I would simply reply, 'I know. But bear with it. This is your final duty in life.' But even I doubted my answer. I felt like a hypocrite trying to give warmth and encouragement out of a cold, unloving heart without belief.

Then I met A-san. This 80-year-old patient of mine had a disease that left her skin thin and brittle. Simple movement would cause her skin to painfully crack and

➔ continued on back

About the photo above

The snow festival in northern Hirosaki, Japan brings warmth and cheer to people who endure a long, cold winter. 200 snow lanterns and 300 miniature igloos light up the dark winter night. Ice sculptures decorate the castle grounds.

PRAY with us thru the week

SUN Pray for safe travel during the winter months as we visit our support network in the East and Midwest. We thank God for the great people and churches behind this work!

MON The show of force continues between China and Japan in the Senkaku Island territorial dispute. North Korea also troubles the region. Pray the situation does not escalate.

TUE Pray for spiritual protection for our church plant during our Stateside absence and for decisions for Christ at their Christmas outreach.

WED Ask the Lord of the Harvest to raise up new workers for the ripe fields in post-311 Tohoku, Japan. Photos and report of our recent fall relief work is on our blog. Take a look!

THUR Watch and pray for Japan's government leaders. A nationalistic group in the lower house are pushing an agenda that will tighten freedom of speech and religion. Some laws recently approved are innocently called "Peace Preservation" laws.

FRI Pray as we begin considering next steps in our church planting work, a daughter church work out of Denen Grace Chapel.

"I was born in Kawasaki and enjoyed a pleasant adolescent life. But at age 28, more than thirty years ago, a violent event shook my world. On January 8, 1980, my younger sister died from a fire she started in our house. My father, running into the house to rescue her, was burned all over his body and later died in the hospital.

My husband and I were living in Sendai at the time with our two little ones. But we moved back to support my mother in her shock. I've lived with and cared for with her ever since. But each New Year is a holiday of painful memories for us.

I loved my father deeply. His loss was a heavy blow. The pain and despair were so great that at times I just wanted to run away and end life. The obligation to my family and need to raise my kids was the only thing that saved me from myself.

I returned to work as a nurse, but things didn't improve. My sorrow turned

➔ Our "Mission Possible" Support Team



With the mission chairman and pastor at Shelter Rock Church, Manhasset, NY

Leaving ministry behind in Japan is never easy. But it's important to spend time reporting to our support team in the States. We have a great group of 23 churches, 60 individuals, and hundreds of praying friends. They make the time here a lot easier. We love being back with you all!

By the time you read this, we will have finished our time in New York and New Jersey where we've lived for awhile to visit with 11 churches. Here's a shout-out to our favorite place to stay: Cedar Lane Missionary Homes. Just off the NJ turnpike outside Camden in Clementon, NJ, these homes are available to missionaries to rent at low cost. A food pantry, library, exercise room and more are available at no charge. The people and scenic setting have made the stay a pleasant one. End of commercial. Thanks,

Cedar Lane! Next up: the Laverman home in Schererville, IN (also a great place to stay). We'll be with family there through late March, traveling to churches in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Utah, Maine, and our mission headquarters in Littleton, Colorado. Then we'll return to our work in Japan, re-energized and ready.

We hope to see most of you in these 6 months. But please understand that it's hard to get around to all of you. But we'll be back again in the future! Thanks for making our work "mission possible!"



Sunday morning with church staff & friends at South Ridge CC, Clinton, NJ

We need your email address!

We send out a separate email prayer update every few months. To receive it, please register your email address here:

www.lavermansinJapan.org/signup

➔ continued from front

bleed. I needed to constantly bandage up her arms and legs. While most of my patients approaching the end of their lives were filled with grief or anger, A-san was always quiet and settled. I found that strange and asked her why she could have such peace in her condition. She replied, 'I know that Jesus is caring for me.' A-san died with real warmth and joy, giving all of her property away. Her strong faith in Christ was the first point of connection for me to church.

In 2006, after receiving a flyer in my mailbox, I first set foot in Denen Grace Chapel here in my neighborhood. From the first time I came, I felt the warmth of church members soothing my heart. Through worship and Bible study, I discovered the grace of God. Through the Bible, I learned that mankind is sinful and helpless. And I realized that I was one of them. I trusted Christ as my Savior." (to be continued)

Mrs. N goes on to describe how she struggled to reconcile her Buddhist family background with her new faith. She also explains how God changed her cold heart to a thankful one. Her favorite verse is 1 Corinthians 10:13. From her coldness, God provided "a way out" so that she could endure.

I will provide a link to her complete testimony in a future email update. Please sign up to receive these (left).

LIFE IN JAPAN

Things I Didn't Know to be Thankful for (before living in Japan)

Living in a different country and missing something for awhile makes one thankful for those little things. Here's a few—in no particular rank or order—that come to mind since we've returned to the States. These are just trivial sacrifices we gladly (usually) do without to serve God in Japan. They pale in comparison to what other missionaries sacrificed for the kingdom of God in history past. But here they are. You won't find these in Japan. So, this holiday season I'm thankful for:

- * Room to get out of either side of the car.
- * The cereal aisle in any grocery store.
- * Christian radio. Christian Literature.
- * Abundant parking.
- * Church steeples on the horizon.
- * A western style breakfast with pancakes and eggs.
- * Corporate worship in English.

- * Coupons. Sales. Easy Returns.
- * Cheap electricity. Cheap gas.
- * Instruction manuals in English.
- * Pie and ice cream. Pizza without mayonnaise.
- * Central heat. Insulated walls.
- * A real shower. Solid deodorant.
- * Clothing big enough to fit Americans.
- * A chance to rake leaves from real trees on a lawn.
- * Conversation in English.
- * Being raised in a Christian environment.

In a future post I'll add some things I am thankful for in Japan, that we miss while in the States. There are many of those as well. How good God is to have blessed us with a knowledge of and experience in both countries!

read online

➔ www.LavermansInJapan.com/blog