

**REACHING THE OTHER 99**  
church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

**JULY 2015 NEWS**

**Kevin & Kaori Laverman**  
**CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN**



**➔ Disaster Prep Mission**

Here's the way we see it: Church Planting is disaster prep for Japan. When might Mt. Fuji blow its top? When might the Nankai megaquake cause fires or a tsunami in Tokyo? We see our mission as preparation for such disasters.



Pastor Kurihara of CRASH Japan (a local Christian relief organization) shares at Denen Grace Chapel on disaster readiness

on the faultline along Tokyo. On 311, tens of thousands walked miles home. Trains were stopped. Streets were jammed. Cell phones were useless. Alerts never got out. Panic buying and blackouts occurred. As God's children, we needn't panic, but we should make plans!

Only two things are for sure in Japan: earthquakes and taxes. "Justen, did we replace the water and batteries in your emergency pack at school?" asks dad. "If we Lavermans get separated after a major quake, our meetup is this evac center" says mom. Such is the nature of little conversations these days. Among the things the 311 disaster taught us is one every boy scout knows: be prepared!

Because we're responsible for a family of believers, Denen Grace Chapel, this means taking leadership to help our church prepare, too. Things like making a list of church families and their evac locations, stocking some water and first aid kits, networking with area pastors, and practicing disaster response protocols. This past June, we had a Christian disaster relief ministry give a disaster prep seminar at Denen.

Yes, this is part of church planting in Japan. Another major quake is expected

In post-311 Japan, we see our mission, in part, as a sort of disaster prep. Ahead of any major disaster, we're preparing people spiritually, pointing them to the source of hope in life, the cross of Christ. And we're creating pockets of Christian communities (churches), that can care in the wake of a disaster.

We saw the importance of the latter after 311. Where local churches existed, volunteers were able to stage relief work and share Christian care and witness. Afterwards, the church continued to build upon these relationships.

So, thanks for being part of church work with us here in Kawasaki, a disaster prep mission for post-311 Japan! ☺

**Lady Liberty Goes to Tokyo?**

Tokyo has a Statue of Liberty (photo), too, a replica from France. She stands against the backdrop of the Rainbow Bridge and Tokyo Tower (center). Yet the tablet in her hand reads, July 4th, 1776. Things sometimes seem mixed up in Japan (see back: Life in Japan).

**PRAY with us thru the week**

**SUN** Pray for Kevin's evangelistic Bible studies with Mr. S, Mr. S#2, Mr. N, and Mr. T#2. Pray for our early discipleship studies with Mr. T, Ms. O, and Miss H.

**MON** Pray for Kaori's re-entry permit to be granted by Homeland Security. We've been working with an immigration attorney on this lately.

**TUE** Pray for us as we look for partnerships for a new church planting work in the area.

**WED** Pray for wisdom and time use as we lead our tiny flock in Kawasaki, and wear multiple hats within ministry and our mission team.

**THUR** Pray for the provision of a Japanese pastor for our church. We need God's man in place to enable us to move onto new church work.

**FRI** Pray for Kaori's good health with hepatitis B. Pray for Justen to catch up with homeschooling studies. Pray for Kevin to maintain routines of diet, rest and exercise.

**Could you help us upgrade some gear? We learned a few things in the 2011 disaster that would help in an emergency. A consumer-grade satellite phone (Cost: \$325) would enable communication (landlines and cells were useless), and an electric-assist bicycle (Cost: \$525) would help getting around in our hilly area (streets and gas stations were hopelessly clogged or closed).**

## ➔ Your mission investment graduated



Together with our two graduates from Tokyo Christian University, Yusuke & Blak

Kawasaki. We're proud to be part of their development for future service. Our Japanese church members always grow very fond of these student interns. It's hard to see them return to their home countries, but we feel we have made an investment in another part of the world. Two of these interns (photo) graduated from Tokyo Christian University this past June and are going into teaching careers. Kevin spoke at their commencement.

You're invested in world missions through us in more ways than you might have realized. As a Kawasaki church plant, we have been receiving, grooming and sending out full-time Christian workers from the Philippines, India, and other countries these last 10 years!

We've had a good relationship with Tokyo Christian University. They've sent their international students to serve and be trained in our church environment here in

We've also had two missionary couples that we support visit recently. One couple serves in Japanese ministry in Turkey, and another in Peru. Yes, even as a church plant in Japan -- and mission ourselves -- we commit a portion of our budget to world missions. Some countries are more accessible to Japanese. Supporting them enlarges our world vision as a church, and keeps our local mission passion fresh. Thanks for your double investment in world missions through our work! ☛



John Lucas leads a gospel music concert and workshop for our Kawasaki church

## Gospel Outreach Grows

Fifty-nine unchurched people showed up at our church on June 26th for a gospel music workshop, and many attended our worship service, too. We needed to bring the chairs from our house (No small effort, mind you. I'm still taking Tylenol for the backache.) to create extra seating!

## Bible Studies Bear Fruit

Last month, Ms. O trusted Christ for forgiveness of her sin in our living room. She is one of many that we meet with for seeker Bible studies. This is really the heartbeat (and the most thrilling part) of our work in church planting work. It's also the toughest spiritual battleground! Read the prayer list (front), and remember these people that we meet with regularly.



JP from Liberty U. Our living room table gets a lot of traffic through the summertime

## Short-term "Eaters"

We have a lot of people eating, meeting, and sleeping in our house. I know this because I need to keep restocking the fridge. Short-term workers (many of them college students) come through during the hot summer months to get a taste of mission work in Japan. Once again, we were blessed to host several STMers in June/July. We feed them, but we also put them to work! 2 Thess. 3:10 in action!

## LIFE IN JAPAN

### Fourth of July? Relearning Holiday Celebrations

July 4th went by without a single boom or bang. No hotdogs or patriotic concerts. Can you imagine July without a fireworks show? What about Labor Day without BBQ, backyard or beach? Or Thanksgiving without turkey or family gatherings? Something would be missing, wouldn't it? What if Christmas or Easter weren't even holidays? This is life in Japan. Yes, it does feel incomplete at times to this American expat.

True, Japan has its own holidays. But to be honest, many of them lack appeal to me. I know I could probably learn a few things from Japan's "Respect for the Aged Day" and "Physical Fitness Day." But many holidays like "Sea Day," "Mountain Day" and "Setsubun" (google it) have distinct Shinto values and make poor substitutes. And don't get me started on Japan's swapping of the Baby Jesus' birthday with the emperor's birthday in late December. That's no celebration!

So, after 16 years here, we recognize that some things will remain a loss in our lives. I (Kevin) probably mourn this loss more than Kaori or Justen, both raised in Japan. But just when I start to feel like a martyr by settling for the skinny Japanese porkdog, in a top-cut bun, with the seaweed sprinkles and the horseradish mustard that clears my nose, I sense God asking, "How long will you mourn these small losses, Kevin? Whose kingdom's celebration are you living for?" And I remember that I'm not at home in this world anyway, and look toward the eternal celebrations out of this world. Thank you, Lord, for good things to come!

(But next time we're in the States, treat me to a decent Chicago hotdog.)

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