

REACHING THE OTHER 99

church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

OCTOBER 2015 NEWS

Kevin & Kaori Laverman CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN

"He changes the times and seasons." Daniel 2:21

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➔ Endings and Beginnings

Fall is here. The year is signaling its end with gorgeous color. We've seen a lot of endings, and new beginnings around us lately:



Bola records a final album in Japan in 2015 while still in the middle of her battle with cancer

But looking at Bola's example this past year, we get it now. The whole gospel choir community saw how a Christian faces illness and the end of life with hope and trust.

This is our mission field's first experience with a death among our personnel. We've all stepped up in our

various roles and support of the Taylor family. We've cried and prayed together. And now we face the tough days ahead.

Bola is an example to us of a missionary who gave everything to reach Japan for Christ both in her life and in her death. The melody line... ➔ **continued on back**



Bola leads our joint gospel choir concert at Christmas 2003

The music never dies for the believer in Christ, but God might change the concert venue. The voice of Bola Taylor, our "musicianary" colleague here in Japan, was quieted on October 19 at 3:16am. But the last strain of her voice here on earth was the opening chord of a triumphant gospel chorus in heaven. I envision her doing the lead vocals in the heavenly choirs. I can't imagine what "O Happy Day" looks like in eternity.

During her 10-month battle with cancer, Bola modeled the perfect blend of faith and surrender. In our gospel workshops at our church plant, Denen Grace Chapel, we always struggled with how to translate the song words "He taught me how to fight and pray" to pacifist Japan.

Additional support: \$170 needed monthly. See our website to give online.

Leaf light-up (photo above)

Without lawns (and cleanup) in Japan, fall leaves become a thing of pure beauty and enjoyment. Fall foliage night illumination spots attract millions.

PRAY with us thru the week

SUN Thanks for praying for Kaori's re-entry permit. She was granted a one-year permit to be out of the States. So we'll be back briefly again next year to "reset the clock."

MON Pray for our evangelistic Bible studies. Mrs. O placed her faith in Jesus in our living room recently. Keep praying for other decisions. This is the heartbeat of our work here.

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

WED Franklin Graham is doing an evangelistic crusade in Tokyo, November 20-22. Several of our seekers are attending, and others are being invited. Some of our believers are training to be counselors.

THUR We've been busy. Additional leadership responsibility on our field, and major life events around us, have added to this. Pray for us to balance life and mission work well.

FRI Pray for a Japanese pastor to work with us in our existing church, and new church planting work. This is a challenge in Japan where a third of churches are pastorless. Pray for workers for this harvest field!



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➔ Beginnings...in missions & marriage



Andrew and Tanja start their English ministry at Denen Grace & Tsukuba Grace

We are excited with the expansion of "Team Kawasaki" with Andrew & Tanja Rokeby coming from Vancouver, Canada to work in our church plant team. They bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm to their English teaching and friendship ministry. Our church loves them!

Getting a place rented and ready for them in our neighborhood, getting them settled in, and getting their ministry opportunities set up was a lot of work in August and September. Our dream of leisure days on the beach didn't happen. But we are glad to work together to bring Japanese to Jesus. The harvest is ripe, but the workers few! Praise God for these two!

HELP WANTED. The Rokebys will be here until February 2016. We are already praying for someone to come after them, stay in their current apartment nearby, and continue the work with us. Do you know of someone with a heart for missions? Would you pray for workers to be sent here?

As one couple begins in missions, yet another couple begins in marriage. I am delighted at the opportunity to marry a Christian young couple in early November. I've only performed a few weddings in Japan, where a booming cottage industry of wedding chapels and planners make weddings a multi-layered challenge. Getting married in a "Christian style" is popular, even though Christian marriages are rare (less than 0.2% of couples).

The two are members of our church plant, and want their wedding to be a testimony to their unsaved family. It's been fun -- but work -- for Kaori and I to lead their



Kevin, Kenji, Risa and Kaori together at the wedding chapel in Tokyo, fall 2015

premarital counseling. Everything I do in ministry in Japan requires extra time to work through the language and culture. I do a lot more Japanese study in ministry than I ever did in language school! This slows me down at times, but perhaps God knew that's the pace I needed. As Kaori reminds me on our walks: "a slower pace helps us stay together." ☪

☪ continued from front

has switched to eternity, but the harmony of God's grace resounds on earth. I expect that many of Japan's 99% will begin to sing the real gospel in the days ahead because of Bola, and because that harmony line has captured their hearts.

In some ways, God has been preparing us for Bola's death. Last week I had the hard job of counseling a woman on a Christian funeral (Buddhist funerals are the norm). Her mother (Mrs. U) made a faith decision years ago, but was never baptized out of fear of her husband. Now in declining health, she wants to be baptized. And wants a Christian funeral.

I've only had a few experiences in conducting funerals in Japan. There's a lot involved in logistics and cultural awareness, let alone the language aspect for me. As I got out my material once again, read through and prepped for our counseling, I knew this was God prepping me. Bola's promotion to glory on the following Monday, and Kaori's unexpected ambulance trip to the hospital the following Tuesday (Likely from fatigue and stress. She is resting and fine now.) were the real events. ☪

Ask God to glorify himself in Japan in the death of his saints. Ask God to give us wisdom and strength as a field in the days ahead, and to help me in particular with the funeral preparation for Mrs. U. Ask God to convict Mrs. U's daughter on her need for Christ and his resurrection promises.

LIFE IN JAPAN

"Waiter, this coffee tastes like sauce!" (blog post from January 2001)

Japanese say that "hunger is the best sauce." That may be true, but a recent "cultural blooper" taught me that sauce is NOT meant to be drunk.

One evening while out, I got a bite to eat, ordering a pork cutlet set and coffee. The waitress brought my plate of food, then set out sugar, cream, and a black liquid in a glass jar, which I assumed to be the coffee.

Apparently the black liquid was intended for the cutlet. I had ordered this type of meal before without having seen this sauce addition, and so innocently sipped

away. It was definitely not Starbucks house blend! One salty mouthful taught me the truth.

I think the waitress had a bit of a giggle on her face when I paid the bill, but it's probably not the first laugh at a foreigner's expense. Incidentally, my coffee came after the meal...and I smelled it carefully to make sure. Next blooper, here I come.



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