

REACHING THE OTHER 99

church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

DECEMBER 2015 NEWS

Kevin & Kaori Laverman CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light." Isaiah 9:2

www.LavermansInJapan.com



➔ Moments of Decision

The Tokyo Franklin Graham crusade in late November was a moment of decision for many Japanese. 1941 placed their faith in Christ. Our lives are a culmination of many moments of decision God gives.



View from the choir loft during the invitation: hundreds have come forward to receive Christ in this final meeting of the Tokyo crusade

When the invitation was given, I could sense the internal turmoil going on in the chair next to me. A lot of courage needed to replace a lot of pride in a moment of decision.

As people streamed forward, I turned toward him. "If you'd like to go forward, I'll go together with you"

I offered. "Well, I agree with everything the speaker [Graham] said," Mr. S replied, "but the invitation is to come through *Jesus only*. I'm not sure about that part yet." We sat and talked about this after the closing prayer until the ushers urged us out of the arena.

Personal highlight of the crusade:

The first person that came to Christ way back when we started in Japan in 1999 was at the crusade. She had a counselor tag around her neck and was leading others to Christ! That's the kind of ripple effect we envision causing a wave of revival for this country!

Crusade-style evangelism still has a relevant place in Japan. Over 38,800 attended the three-day meetings of the Franklin Graham crusade in Tokyo in November. We were a cooperating church. Several of our church plant members went through counselor training, sang in the 1000-member strong choir, invited friends, and attended the meetings.

During the Friday night meeting, I sat next to Mr. S. He and I have been doing a one-on-one Bible study for some time. Just that past Tuesday we had wrestled with some difficult questions he had. I could tell God was on the move in his life.



Moment of decision for a Japanese lady during the final meeting

Then came Sunday, the last day of the crusade. Mr. S wasn't planning on attending, but he was in church that morning. We talked again during adult Sunday School. I shared John 14:6 and other Scripture. He ➔ continued on back

Winter Illumination (photo above)

At Christmastime in Tokyo, people don't decorate their homes with lights. Instead they visit massive "illumination parks" like this one (Nabana no Sato) outside of Nagoya in central Japan.

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. Miss K and Mrs. O recently placed her faith in Jesus. Keep praying for other decisions. This is the heartbeat of our work here.

TUE Pray for us as we finish up the 2015 financial year this month. Your partnership with us is a constant source of encouragement. Thank you!

WED Christmas is an open door to Japan's heart. Pray for my prep of Christmas messages, newcomers at our services, outreach events, and caroling, and a response to the Gospel. We're thankful for a supporter that bought candles for our Candlelight Service.

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. Especially remember us during the busy Christmas season of ministry.

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!



The newlyweds, Kenji & Risa (center) with Kevin & Kaori (left & right) and family. Bride & groom changed into traditional clothing.

“While there, I realized the depth of my sin, and the depth of the love of God who covered my sin. Even though still very young, I decided to live as one that believed. I admitted my sinfulness to God, and trusted Christ as my Savior. That Christmas morning I was baptized.” [from

➡ continued from front

listened carefully. And then a divine serendipity: a church member mentioned that a reserved seat had opened up for the last crusade meeting that afternoon.

I came in late to the meeting, sat behind our church group on the arena floor, and was not even aware Mr. S was in attendance. As the message was delivered, I was directing my prayer toward the non-Christian couple from our church seated in front of me. As I was praying one direction, God was working from another. When the invitation was given, no one moved in front of me. But off to my far left, a familiar figure suddenly stood up. It was Mr. S! He was one of the first to go forward as the music played. All heaven, and our church, rejoiced!

Would you pray for Mr. S as I meet with him and follow up on this decision in the coming days?

Earlier in the month, a different moment of decision occurred. I had the privilege of leading a young Christian couple in their wedding vows. This Christian marriage resulted from earlier decisions, like the decision to study abroad. As a junior high school student, the groom did a homestay in the States for a month:

his personal testimony]

Years later, after entering and finishing medical school, he had a new challenge in his faith. As a new neurosurgeon, finding satisfaction in reputation and social position was a strong temptation. Many around him pursued such goals. Kenji says, *“God led me back to the starting point of my faith. I knew that like Peter who denied his Lord, I too had the same heart condition. I realized my lifestyle, location, work environment, skills, opportunities, and so on -- all of it was of no value short of Christ.”*

He had previously decided for Christ as Savior, and now he was deciding to live for Christ fully in life.

Many more small decisions will come, and our life of faith is composed of putting Christ over us through them all. God is leading Japanese to do that around us daily. Would you pray for them in these moments of decision? ☞

Another young lady in our church also placed faith in Christ in mid-November. We now have a few more new believers to grow and integrate into our church family. This is the harder part! Pray for their spiritual protection, followup studies, and decisions to be baptized.

➡ Guess Who Came for Sunday Worship?

With a sign in front of our church that says, “All Welcome,” we never know who might show up in our morning worship service. We’ve had a few



Jeff, Kevin, Justen, Denise, Marty & Kaori
The church sign says “All Welcome!”

surprises over the years that added a bit of unexpected drama to our usual church atmosphere. But this time it was familiar and expected guests: WorldVenture President, Dr. Jeff Delinger, and the International Ministries Vice President, Dr. Marty Shaw & wife, Denise. What a joy to welcome them for a Sunday with our tiny church plant in Kawasaki.



Denen Grace Chapel together with our WorldVenture special guests

Jeff, Marty and Denise were here in Japan for the November 16 memorial concert of Bola Taylor, our field’s musician and beloved wife of Ken Taylor, who leads the gospel music movement. Bola passed into the presence of her Savior on October 19 after a yearlong battle with ovarian cancer.

As busy as these three are in their respective roles within WorldVenture, they flew halfway around the world to spend time with each of us, and be part of our celebration of Bola’s life. What a great mission board we are part of! ☞

HELP WANTED IN KAWASAKI (motorcycle riding skills not required)

Do you have a heart for missions or know of someone who does? We currently have a young couple, the Rokebys, helping with a friendship and English teaching ministry at Denen Grace Chapel. We are praying for an individual or couple to come after them from late spring of 2016, stay in the apartment nearby, and continue this work with us and the church. Six months to a year or longer preferred. Interested individuals would need the recommendation of their home church, be sent through WorldVenture, and raise support. But the rewards are out of this world (spiritually speaking). Would you pray for workers to be sent? Can your church send someone? Pass the word along! Write for details.