

REACHING THE OTHER 99

church planting with you to reach the 99% in Japan

JUNE 2016 NEWS

Kevin & Kaori Laverman CHURCH PLANTING IN KAWASAKI, JAPAN



"...he has crossed over from death to life." John 5:24

www.LavermansInJapan.com



➔ Bridging the Gospel Gap

The gap in gospel presence is what moves us in mission work in Japan. Tokyo's millions wait for a gospel witness. So few know forgiveness and peace through Christ. Bridging this gap is the core of our ministry.



What's going on here? An aerobic workout? Just warm-up exercises at the start of our gospel music workshop in May

our outreach activities. Some are just looking. Some will return and connect with the church. Some will soon be interested in a *Christianity for Beginners* study. Still others we will never see again. Yet, God ordained that now, in this place, their lives intersect with the gospel and ourselves.

It's Sunday and our rented room is filled again with people coming to hear a gospel singer. The hymn "Amazing Grace" is sung widely outside church in Japan. So today I recount the testimony of John Newton in my message. "What has God used in your life to get your attention, and make you aware of your need for grace in Christ?" I ask. "Even things like a missionary from Chicago with fumbling Japanese?"

Over the years of our Kawasaki church plant, this fumbling missionary (and very competent wife) have been able to share the gospel with many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of unbelievers in

The gap of those 99% still needing Christ is bridged just a little bit more.

Still, I bemoan the missed opportunities because of the gaps. At Denen Grace Chapel, we have ➔ **continued on back**



Phil & Sharyn Waters, guest speakers at our ladies Bible study group in April

Tokyo's Rainbow Bridge... (above)

Everyone in Tokyo knows the bridge that spans the bay gap into the city. Christ bridges a greater gap between God & man, death & life. Yet, few in Tokyo know Him. Fewer cross over.

PRAY

with us thru the week

SUN Pray for the people of Kumamoto City. 8000 homes were damaged by the April earthquake. Pray for a gospel witness in the midst of the rubble.

MON Pray for a Japanese pastor for Denen Grace Chapel. There is a great shortage of leaders for Japan's church. We are meeting with a candidate couple.

TUE Pray for someone to catch the vision to come and teach conversational English at our church.

WED Pray for our partnership in church planting work with missionaries arriving in Japan in 2017 (see back). We have a vision to reach the sprawling communities west and south of our location.

THUR Pray for Justen as he takes his high school graduation tests from August, and looks to his future schooling in Japan. He has interest in studying Bible and media.

FRI Pray for our new believer studies with Miss K and Mrs. O. Also, Mr. S, Mr. T, and Mr. N, just beginning to study the Bible.

Additional support: \$516 needed monthly. See our website LavermansInJapan.com to give online.



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☞ continued from front

many more people open to spiritual things than time and manpower to respond to them. Gaps.

This situation is repeated across Japan. There are sprawling communities without a church witness. There are



Kevin & Kaori with Rev. & Mrs. Nakano (center) & Kaori's mother (right) in May

countless churches without pastors (nearly a third). There are hundreds of tiny churches struggling to make an impact in their neighborhoods. There are many elderly pastors (like 84-year-old Pastor N. at left) looking for a replacement before they can retire. There is only a small number of Christian schools, counseling, media and print material, camps, and social and compassion work (like *Wheelchairs of Hope* at right). Leadership gap. Ministry gap. Financial gap. Gap. Gap. Gap. At times I feel like Nehemiah inspecting the broken wall filled with gaps. Who will help fix it?

Coming from a country of abundant Christian resources (USA), this disparity



Justin helps with wheelchair cleaning at Denen Grace Chapel in February

of the gospel in Japan is troubling to me. It compels me to share this appeal:

- 1) Japan remains a mission field where the disparity of the gospel, and the spiritual opportunity, is as great as ever.
- 2) Our great God has called upon us, his church, to bridge the gospel gap.

Might you also help bridge the gap in Japan? Thanks for your partnership! ☞

➡ Part of God's Glory Together

We've prayed for workers to stand in the gap with us. And God put a burden for Japan in Justin & Lindsay Mitchell. The Mitchells are currently raising support for career missionary service through WorldVenture, with a spring



Under the cherry blossoms with Justin & Lindsay during their vision trip in March

2017 arrival date. They will be joining the vision with us for a small network of new churches in Kawasaki/Yokohama. We spent 10 days here with the Mitchells in March/April showing them language schools, housing, schooling possibilities for their two kids, our church plant, and sharing our burden for new churches. Justin writes:

"After returning from Japan, our family has clearer vision and a stronger passion to see that vision followed through in our lifetime. As Mordecai so timely said to Esther '...for such a time as this...' (Esther 4:14), let's be part of something bigger than ourselves. Let's see God's Glory in Japan!" ☞

Even with limited resources and difficult circumstances (including post-disaster areas like Fukushima & Kumamoto), our Japanese colleagues work tirelessly and passionately for the cause of Christ. Praise God for faithful workers in his harvest fields!

HELP WANTED. We are praying for a young Christian lady to stay in a furnished apartment in Kawasaki near us, and teach conversational English in our church for a year or longer. Do you know of someone with a heart for missions? Pray and pass the word along.

LIFE IN JAPAN

View from the New Starbucks Pew (blog post May 2016)

It's exactly 8542 steps from my house round trip to the best worship spot in town (outside Denen Grace Chapel, of course). I know the exact steps because it's a prayer-walk (and workout) route for me. There on the bank of our local river, in the shadow of towering hi-rise apartments, is a tiny park with an excellent overlook of communities near to my heart and church planting vision. Oh, did I mention there's a new Starbucks there, too?

In Kawasaki, black coffee outsells green tea as the drink of choice. In fact, Japan is now the third largest consumer of coffee. In our neighborhood alone, five Starbucks have cropped up in the last few years.

Most of the high-calorie drinks would be counter-productive to my walk increase and waist reduction goals. But I admit that sipping a hot coffee, against the backdrop of Mount Fuji and the neighborhoods of Kawasaki, is a powerful stimulant to prayer and worship. How about joining me for a coffee here? It might be a few more steps from your house, but the view and the vision are great!



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