

"For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see." Psalm 36:9

www.LavermansInJapan.com



➔ Twenty-third Praise

Over the years here, I've had the privilege of baptizing 23 new believers. Not all we've led to Christ have followed through with baptism. Many have stopped short. Some have abandoned their new faith altogether...for now. But nearly all the baptism decisions have stayed, grown in their faith over the years, and make up what we call "Denen Grace Chapel" in Kawasaki.



Denen Grace Chapel at the November 10 baptism celebration of Mr. T & wife (front center between us)

Mr. T. let out a soft groan and muttered, "That's intense." And I wondered if I had just jeopardized the relationship and two years of study. But I sensed the Spirit working. Mr. T wanted to meet again the following week. By the next study, he was ready. He had

I've written before about Mr. T. He was "The Man with the Hammer" from our December 2014 newsletter. Although I had been doing an evangelistic Bible study for quite a while with him, he didn't seem to grasp the weight of things on his own personal life: "What connection do I have with a man on a cross thousands of years ago?"

Understanding that his sin put Christ there, didn't register. This is typical in Japan. Shinto and Buddhism have no concept of personal sin like Christianity. Then a breakthrough. In one study, I suggested what seemed almost cliché: "Even though you weren't at the cross, your face was represented in the crowd calling for his crucifixion. By choosing to ignore your need for Christ, you are choosing to hold the hammer that pounded the nails. Have you ever thought like this?" L-o-n-g pause.

been struggling all week with the idea of holding a hammer against God, and was ready to let it go. As I led him, he confessed his need for Christ and dropped the "hammer" in his heart.



Mr. N's baptism in November. Kaori holds the rubber pool steady.

It's taken him a while from dropping the hammer to receiving baptism... almost 5 years. Although I continued to study with him and urge him over those 5 years, he wasn't ready to take the next step, and

➔ continued on back

About the photo above

Massive illumination displays are everywhere in Japan. Not just at Christmas but through early APRIL! It's a way of cheering up the long winter gloom. Pray that Japanese who love the lights, be pointed to the TRUE LIGHT this Christmas.

PRAY with us thru the week

SUN Praise God for timely completion of Kaori's USA naturalization. Pray for her visa application process in Japan.

MON Pray for our Christmas outreach: an open house, candlelight service, gospel concert, kids Christmas, and English Cafe.

TUE Pray for post-typhoon relief work starting up now. Many in our church association in Japan in the north were also affected by the massive flooding.

WED Pray for our team building in church planting work with new missionaries, the Mitchells, Changs & Robisons (arrived April).

THUR Pray for the faith decisions of several individuals in evangelistic Bible studies or preparing with Kevin for baptism.

FRI Praise God for construction progress with the MuKo chapel + house. Pray for a timely completion by yearend and needed funding for the furnishing and equipping of the chapel space.

SAT Pray for our health and wisdom as we juggle major projects (see front and back) and many details that challenge our language skills and time use!



Christian Cleanup Meetup

The recent October flood of the Tama River through our neighborhood wasn't supposed to happen. Dikes were built extra high. But super typhoons don't always follow our plans. After the flood waters receded, smelly mud was left behind in first floors of many homes. Elderly Mrs. S's was one. She called the Kawasaki ward office for help cleaning it up, just as myself and a missionary colleague were waiting on site for dispatch. As we mudded out her home, I noticed old Christian books. Lunchtime gave me a chance to ask her about it privately. Years ago she made a decision for Christ. *"But I haven't talked to another Christian for so long,"* she said. (Yes, that is possible in 99.5% non-Christian Japan). *"And now God sends a missionary!"* We chatted more over tea, prayed together, and marveled at the disaster that brought us together. Yes, God is at work in disasters! ☞

☞ **continued from front** missed several of our scheduled baptism opportunities. I began to despair over his ever being ready, but Kaori made up for my lack of faith: *"Well, maybe he'll be the first one to be baptized in our new church facility"* she said. I chuckled at the idea. She said this when the idea of a small multi-purpose church facility in Mizonokuchi was still a dream far beyond our tiny Denen Grace Chapel's meager means.

Fast forward to November 2019. The dream has become reality. Praise has replaced doubts. A small church house in pricey Mizonokuchi is completed. And who would be the first to be baptized there? Mr. T, of course! (I sometimes think my wife is a modern prophetess, and it scares me a little).

Mr. T's testimony begins: *"I grew up with a negative opinion of all religion...But sometimes I'd see a famous athlete wearing a cross around his neck and think that was cool. I even tried imitating them. But the truth is, I had no idea what the cross meant. I really had no interest at all in Christianity."*

Following years of God's work in his heart, he concluded, *"When I compare myself now to who I was then (before Christ), I can't believe how much I have changed."* Yes, Mr. T., that's the way God works in human lives everyday! Congrats! ☞

Final verse from Mr. T's baptism testimony: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5



MuKo Chapel Progress

It's been our mission vision for 5 years, and a construction process for the last 12 months. It started with a conviction that someone has to do something about the huge population and lack of church witness in MuKo. We've volunteered for the mission. God provided land, and much funding. Slowly, but surely, the Musashi Kosugi (MuKo) chapel + residence is coming together.

All the major construction will be done by early January. We'll move in early next year. There will still be plenty of inside DIY projects left to be done. But for now, we are thankful at Thanksgiving 2019 for the continued steady progress toward our next church planting work. ☞

2020 TWENTY in our 20th

(for our 2020 Vision)



↳ www.lavermansinjapan.org/vision

In this, our 20th year in Japan (we came to Japan in February 1999), we really need to strengthen our support base, and build a solid foundation for the mission years ahead. We have a vision for more church planting work in Japan (above), but need the people behind us to do it. Specifically, we're looking for 20 new supporters to begin support of \$20 or more monthly by yearend 2019. Can you be one? Below is the form to mail to WorldVenture. Or, begin a support commitment for us online from their website: www.worldventure.com (search for "Laverman" and click "Give")

Our progress since last update:



1 new supporter. 4 yet needed @ \$20/month.