

From the Editor

Hello all!

Thank you once again for continuing to stand with us in prayer. Our banner this season shows autumn leaves, and soon we will indeed see that change. However now in mid-October, we're still seeing many sunny days!

This time we return our focus to the northern block of churches, and I want to introduce to you an exciting new church planting development coming out of Nagahama Church.

Simon



News and Prayer Points

This month we welcome three short-term workers, **Peter, Fabian** and **Elina!** Peter and Fabian are both from Switzerland and will be with us for three months; Elina is from the UK and will be in Japan for six months. Pray that they would quickly settle and be used by God here.

Kusatsu Church are starting a mother child group from October. WEC missionary **Gisela Gaub**, along with a young Japanese mother, will be responsible. Pray for them as they approach and invite other mothers with small children they see in the town, and gradually develop a programme. The church will also have a family service on Sunday October 19 followed by a BBQ.

Pray with us for the future of **Kyoto Ai No Church**; the missionary-pastors have decided not to return to the field from their furlough, and so we need to think about what to do next there for the two members. Please pray also for **Seongjae Yu** along with **Henrietta Dudgeon** who are leading the church in the interim.

Maibara... Revive!

In February, I started doing some research into a missionary who was active in our area before the Second World War. One of the things I found out was that he had a church in Maibara, the city next to Nagahama... but when I went to look, I found there was no church there now. In fact, Maibara is the only city in Japan with a bullet-train-stop but no church!

Since then I have been working with people from Nagahama church to 'revive' Maibara city. We're still in the early stages, but are trying to do this outreach in a specific way.

First, I'm working with a core team of Japanese. Not pastors, but lay Christians. Some of them live in Maibara and come to Nagahama for church; some are from outside Maibara. In July we had our first meeting, and we've been thinking about how to evangelise, give testimonies, lead meetings and study the Bible together. Using the community center for continued meetings has allowed us to get involved in local community events. At the end of this month, we have been invited to be part of the community centre's culture-festival.

The focus from the first days has been getting something up and running that is self-sustaining and

easily reproducible. To spur this on is the reality that I'll be returning to the UK from January until the following year. So, we're using materials and ideas from the house church movement in our meetings: everyone shares what they believe God is saying to them as we study the Bible, and everyone prays for people that they wish to see become Christian. There are no non-active members, neither is there a need for theologically qualified leadership.

After leading the first three meetings myself, I handed over to the believers to lead themselves. As well as freeing me up to find ways to reach out to other sections of the society (as a supplement to the believers' personal evangelism), it also encourages the Japanese lay believers to put together their own outreach programmes. Our short-term missionaries will continue to support these next year.

I trust God will nurture the Maibara group, but whatever happens, I hope it will serve as an encouragement and good training to those believers involved, as well as a positive witness to the city at large! Please pray for Maibara city, and help us to see God's kingdom established! Simon Cozens