



## From the Editor

At the beginning of this month, the field held its annual field conference. This year there were several important issues discussed, including how we handle our field finances, orientation of new workers, and establishing a new vision for our church planting activities. We'll bring you more details of the new vision in the next edition, but one aspect of the vision is expected to be our resourcing of the Japanese church, and one way we're doing that is through initiatives like Songbee, our focus for this month...



## News and Prayer Points

Pray for the new **field vision**, that we would be encouraged and stimulated to plant a new kind of church in Japan, and for **Martin and Julie Crowhurst** as field leaders as they lead the field into its implementation.

**Carla Barros** asks for prayer for her driving lessons and getting a driving license, and for the Latin Group at Nagahama Church who are affected by the economic downturn in manufacturing in Japan.

The **Yim family** will be sharing in Sunday school, leading a house group and preaching in the church in Yoshino this month – please pray for their ministry and their ongoing relationship with **Pastor Ushiroyama**.

The **Gaub family** are currently getting used to a new way of life, with their children staying in a flat nearer the international school in Kyoto. Please pray for the family as they make this adjustment, and for **Sara**, a short term worker helping them out with the children and with English class ministry.

Thank you all for your prayers!

## Helping the church to sing

As well as planting new churches, we as WEC Japan see part of our role as providing useful resources for the Japanese church. These days, more and more churches are throwing out the hymnbooks and overheads and bringing in computers and projectors – and the Japanese church is no exception. But displaying Japanese text on a computer has some complexities. Often people – especially us foreigners! – don't know how to pronounce the Chinese characters used in Japanese writing, so these characters are displayed with the Japanese pronunciation written above them. Unfortunately, none of the existing programs for projecting worship songs could handle writing Japanese like this.

So we wrote our own.

Songbee is our electronic hymnal program for the Japanese church. Its name comes from "*sanbi*", the Japanese word for "worship". We made the first release in September 2007, in time for the Church Planting Institute conference, and it's been picked up by a number of churches across Japan.

Songbee is being written by Simon Cozens, one of the WEC Japan missionaries, and we asked him about his plans for its future.

"Songbee currently allows churches to display song lyrics before the congregation, and to show passages from the Bible and display web sites. I'm currently working on having it

display a rotating church notice sheet before the worship time begins. I've also been asked to support playing video, and I hope to be able to work on that soon."

"One of the barriers to uptake is that for copyright reasons, Songbee itself does not come with any songs installed – churches have to type in the lyrics to any songs they want to use, and that's quite a big investment before they're able to get any use out of it. So we're particularly happy that the German Alliance Mission have been using Songbee in their church plants in Japan, and are committed to typing in the whole of the Japanese hymnal."

"We don't charge for Songbee and we have no plans to start charging for it – it's part of our ministry! But to allow churches to use the hymnal or the Japanese Bible in their worship, we will need the publishers to sell electronic copies for Songbee."

Please pray for us as we negotiate with music publishers and Bible societies to make these resources available electronically, and for wisdom and technical expertise for the ongoing development of Songbee. And please take a look at the Songbee web site – <http://songbee.simon-cozens.org/> - to download and explore what Songbee can do.