

From the Editor

The first Japanese Bible book (Matthew) that still survives today was published in 1871 on hand-carved wooden blocks. By 1880 the whole NT had been translated and seven years later the OT. A braille Bible exists - but not yet a complete Bible for the deaf. Simon Cozens (see opposite picture, stripy sweater) is helping part-time with this work and is completely enthralled by it - as he shares this month!

- Henrietta Cozens

News and Prayer Points

Please pray for the sign language Bible translation. As well as helping with the computer programming for it, Simon Cozens would also like to start a local signers Bible group using the new app. Pray God would go with him.

We are starting work on a five-year plan for WEC Japan's work. Please pray as we gather ideas and seek the Lord's leading.

Please pray for God to disciple and empower our leaders. Chungkyu and Eonmee Lee have been nominated as future field leaders. We will have a meeting in the next few months to affirm (or otherwise) that nomination.

Some 60 people took part in the Yims' Chinese New Year event. A lot of fun was had, and we gave them blessing verses as they left, based on the beatitudes. Next the Yims would like to do a mothers day event; pray for these gospel seeds to be watered too.



The word became... video!

I've always been interested in languages; I got into Japanese because the language was interesting. Before I was a missionary, I was a computer programmer, and so used several computer languages. After we came to Japan, one of the ways God led us was through some encounters with Deaf people. Curious about sign language, we went along to a Japanese sign language circle, as one way to meet people.

Some time later I got an email from a friend putting me in touch with ViBi, the Japanese Sign Language Bible Association. They were looking for someone who could help them create an app to put the JSL Bible onto smartphones and tablets. So many of my interests came together: sharing the Bible with the Japanese; programming; and sign language. I went down to visit ViBi in Tokyo. After a couple of days working together, we had a prototype of the Sign Language Bible player application; the full version will be released, free of charge, later this year. Since then I've developed

applications to help sign language translators, a new Bible study tool including both Japanese and JSL, and I've also been working with ViBi to computerise more of their production process, which is speeding up their translation work.

But why go to so much effort to translate the Bible into Sign Language? Can't Deaf people read the written Bible? Most Japanese Deaf are not well educated and the Japanese edition of the Bible is hard for them to understand. As well as that, translating the Bible into their heart language shows that God loves them and has something to say to them as they are. I'm so grateful God has given me the opportunity to be part of sharing the Bible with them, and pray that the ViBi player project will allow many Deaf Japanese to find out more about the love He has for them.

A full version of this article is available on our web site, <http://www.wec-japan.org/>