

## From the Editor

Jeahyun and Sewon Choi have been spending this last year at a theology seminary in Kobe, Japan. They choose to do this as their 'furlough' year after already spending four years here. In this month's article they share why they believe being able to understand and explain Japanese theology is so important. Henrietta

## News and Prayer Points

Jaehyun Choi and Sewon (Kang) will succeed Juergen and Gisela Gaub as pastors of Kusatsu church. In early summer the Gaubs will take up a post with the WEC sending base in their native Germany.

On February 8 Richard and Candy Yim are running a Chinese New Year event. Pray there'd be a good atmosphere, and that God would provide opportunities for our missionaries in south Kyoto to share good news with the people.

The world's first sign language Bible is in production here in Japan and one of our workers (Simon Cozens) is involved in developing the computer software for it. Please pray this would bring the good news to many deaf and signing Japanese.

Elaine Kitamura's broken wrist is healing well but she and her husband still need extra physical strength or manpower to lead their church and evangelise Kinamoto area. Do pray for God to provide help, plus a light burden.



## Studying Japanese Theology

Sewon and I came to the Reformed Theological Seminary last February to spend a sabbatical year. I thought that in one year I could study everything I wanted to know. How wrong I was! But there were two reasons why we chose to study here.

The first reason was to learn more Japanese. There were many things that we found difficult when we worked in the church in Shiga. The hardest problem we faced was that we could not give people a full account of who God is. We found that when we were available to God, He used us, but also that He only used us to the extent that we had prepared ourselves. People could only realize who God is to the extent that we could express with the words we knew. That made us

disappointed and frustrated, and made us want to study theology in seminary. I believe that the ability to speak Japanese is a crucial for missionaries.

The second reason Sewon and I have been studying here is to learn the history of the church in Japan.

We want to build a church according to God's will, not according to our own thinking. We decided to study the history of the church to know how God has worked in Japan so far.

I chose one person for my studies, Uemura Masahisa (1858-1925), who was a pastor and one of the major Christian influences in the Meiji era. He was among the first generation of theologians to build a theology for the churches in Japan which protected them from the liberal "New Theology" which had a strong influence on other pastors of the Meiji era. In that way he was a pioneer. Through this one man, I can see how God opened the door to the gospel, how God's church then grew, and therefore how I can contribute to that kind of church, that I believe God wants among the Japanese.

By Jeahyun Choi