

## From the Editor

Christmas in Japan? This often equals romantic meals out for couples on Christmas Eve, or KFC chicken dinners and a cake with white frothy cream at some point in December. To convey the deeper meaning, many missionaries give out evangelistic tracts as part of their witness to Christ's coming. This month I examine the manga version!

Henrietta Cozens

## News and Prayer Points

Please pray for all our various Christmas events, including those on university campuses! Bee Choo Ong writes: 'It has been a joy to meet non-Christian students in some of our campus groups. We're hoping to invite them to our Christmas event on the 13th of December. Do pray they personally encounter Christ.'

Pastor Kitamura with wife Elaine's support has nearly finished visiting the 30 schools in his area. He has had a really good reception. Please pray the books by Christian authors he is offering the schools will be well used.

John and Sam Tan's classmates from Japanese language class (married with Japanese husbands) recently suggested they all have a Bible discussion. Pray for such opportunities as this!

The Cummings recently had an outreach based on the movie Frozen! Pray for the families that came!

Finally, pray for Japan's national election on Sunday 14th December.

## Christmas Manga

Manga! A fun pictorial way to tell a story. Manga is a Japanese term that can be translated as 'whimsical sketches', generally meaning 'comics'. Japanese picture books from the late 18th century may well have been the world's first comics. The development of manga was also aided by the comics and Disney cartoons America GIs brought with them to Japan after World War Two. Today manga is still popular.

Perhaps this is because Japanese people still value paper communication. Whereas in other countries email and online material mean many companies have gone 'paperless', Japanese offices still have bookcases stuffed with numerous paper files. What's more, people read for leisure on trains, at home and in public bathhouses and cafes. Adults too read manga! However many use a plain cloth or paper book cover, so that people around them cannot see their reading choice and judge them for it.

This multi-age hobby is one reason why the recent Christian Manga Christmas publication is very handy. Less than 50 pages, it can be given out by Christians easily and quickly, to supermarket cashiers, friends or at outreach events. The first two pages are about the creation of the world and the first human sins, then seven pages are devoted to the story of Jesus birth. Following that are 33 pages depicting the life of Jesus up until his resurrection. Christians and missionaries in Japan can order up to 200 Christmas mangas free of charge, simply paying postage costs.



In addition to this special Christmas manga, is the more robust Manga Bible series. This is the creation of Next, a non-profit organization created in 2006 to produce and distribution biblically-based manga series for distribution in a multitude of languages worldwide. The first one, Messiah, was published in Japan in 2008, although the English language translation reached shelves in the UK and the Phillippines earlier. Tyndale House in America purchased the rights of all English language versions, and the American Bible Society the Spanish editions. The first volume is about the life of Jesus, the second volume about the life of the Apostles, and the third, fourth and fifth volumes tell the Old Testament stories. The Manga Bible series was created in order to 'reach children who might resist traditional Bible translations and never attend a church.' Please pray that these inventive ways of story telling reach hearts this Christmas season.