

Moshi Moshil

A Prayer Letter from the Ellricks

January 2003

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Osaka! We pray that all of you are well, and that you had a blessed Christmas and are ready for 2003. We have settled in for the long haul here in Osaka, and we fully expect to be ministering here for the next twenty years unless the Lord has other plans for us. The task before us is huge, and we do not expect to ever run out of fruitful things to do here.

We have had one major surprise in that we originally thought that we would be spending most of this winter in prayerful preparation for the cell church plant that will begin next May, but the Lord apparently decided that we were taking things too easy. When the pastor of the nearby Osaka International Church (OIC) resigned suddenly, the church council asked Dan if he could fill in, and, after praying about it and getting counsel from some key mentors, Dan agreed to accept the responsibility. So, Dan is now officially the part-time, interim pastor for an international congregation of about one hundred members,



Dan in the pulpit at OIC

sharing the Good News from the pulpit every Sunday and keeping limited counseling hours at the church office. While we do not expect this to delay the start of the cell church plant, it is definitely making us busier than expected. Since the church is in serious financial difficulties it is likely that it will be a year or

more before OIC is able to call a full-time pastor.

This commitment has slowed down our preparations for the new church plant, but we are still making good progress. We have gotten to know several Japanese pastors through visiting church events and prayer groups, and are learning more about this huge city every day. We have a name for the new church (see back) and are researching possible meeting places and office spaces. It is also likely that we will get a lot of assistance for the church plant from the congregation at OIC, evidence of how the Lord orchestrates blessings from a difficult situation. We do hope that you enjoy reading this prayer letter. God bless you!

In Jesus' love,



Web: http://proverbs2525.org

Rainbow Club Christmas Party

Dan traveled back to Hiroshima to see the church there and to host the Rainbow Club Christmas party. It was great to see Pastor Nagashima and the rest of the church after being gone, and the party was also a big success. Dan made balloon hats for all of the kids and Pastor Nagashima told the Christmas story.



In addition to providing an ongoing witness of Christ's love to the children, Rainbow Club has also turned out to be a great way to share the gospel with young mothers. As we continue to support the Hiroshima Rainbow Club with monthly mailings of gospel comic books and seasonal parties, we are praying about getting Rainbow Club started here in Osaka.

Home Worship Visit

Twice a month, Pastor Watahara (on the right in the photo) leads these ladies in a home Bible study that is developing into

a worship group. Dan visited them one day and was impressed by Pastor Watahara's engaging style and his ability to communicate the gospel in fresh ways to his audience. We always feel that we have much to learn from the Japanese pastors, and we try to spend



time with them whenever we can. They, on the other hand, seem to have a great appreciation for the ability of missionaries to develop ministry contacts among unchurched people.

"Osaka Direct" Email Updates

By popular request, since last September we have been sending out a monthly email update called *Osaka Direct*. If you are not getting *Osaka Direct* and want to, please email us at ellrick@proverbs2525.org. You can also read old issues of *Osaka Direct* on the web at www.proverbs2525.org.

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Musical People

Karen poses with some new friends that she made at a Gospel music workshop. Black Gospel music is hugely popular in Japan right now, and Karen is trying to learn the style (especially on piano) in order to use it as a tool for outreach.



www.thinkword.com

Our pre-evangelistic web site, intended to help with making contacts for ministry, is up and running. So far the site includes a daily Scripture verse, Dan's diary/weblog, testimonies and inspiring stories, and a collection of links to church web sites and other evangelistic sites – all in Japanese, of course. If you have Japanese characters enabled on your web browser, check it out.

ᇧ Missionary Quotable Quotes

"We talk of the second coming; half the world has never heard of the first." — Oswald J. Smith

Grapevine Cell Church

After long thought, much prayer, and considerable discussion, we have finally chosen a name for the new cell



church, based on John 15:5 (below). The name will be "Budou no ki Seru Chaachi", or in translation, "Grapevine Cell Church". (Japanese Bibles say "grapevine" instead of "vine".) The logo above shows the name written in Japanese (you can see the logo in full color at *www.budounoki.org*). We feel that this name reflects our dependency on Christ in all that we do, and that it also conveys a vision of bearing spiritual and evangelistic fruit.

Naming the new church is one more milestone toward making the church a reality. One of the next major steps will be committing to locations for the first meetings.

A Final Word from the Word

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

– John 15:5, NIV

Never too young...

A young worshipper at Agape International Fellowship listens intently to the Bible story. This church meets in a dance studio and is led by Pastor Watahara, a Japanese pastor whose church planting vision has much in common with our own.



Karen, the Car, and the Bicycles

"Angels watchin' over me...", the song goes. That was definitely true on Dec. 15th, when Karen was walking to church. A car lost control at high speed and came onto the sidewalk right in front of her, and she wondered for a moment if this was "it". After hitting a small tree, a parked motor scooter, and several parked bicycles, it rammed into the metal shutter on the front of a closed shop. The bicycles hit Karen and threw her onto her back in the street, but her injuries are very minor compared to what could have happened—the tree and scooter missed her, and the bicycles actually pushed her out of the path of the car. We don't know how the angels fared, but as for Karen, no bones were broken and her scrapes and bruises are healing fine.

Ayauta Christ Church

In early December we traveled to the little town of Ayauta on the island of Shikoku where another MUP missionary, Dawn Birkner, is planting the town's first church (below). We felt blessed to be able to help with this country church plant for a few days, and we left with an appreciation for how challenging church planting can be, regardless of whether it is in the city or

the country.



Prayer and Praise Points

- 1. Please pray for Ida Anderson! After being accepted to MUP as a long-term missionary and making plans to join us here in Osaka, she has been diagnosed with lung cancer and is now in chemotherapy.
- 2. Pray that the Lord Jesus would give us great wisdom in selecting the first meeting locations for the cell church.
- 3. Pray for the Lord to raise up more short and long term workers to join the church planting ministry here.
- 4. Pray for Dan as he teaches the Word at OIC, and for Karen as she tries to carefully videotape his current series of sermons and make them into DVDs for the cell church's

video resource library. Also pray that we would find gifted Japanese pastors willing to be filmed as well.

5. Praise the Lord for helping us get settled in Osaka, make new friends, and network with Japanese pastors and other possible ministry partners.