



SDA English Schools in Japan

History of SDA English Schools

From the earliest days of Protestant missionary work in Japan, English teaching has been an opening wedge. Following in this tradition, nearly every missionary in Japan today has at some time or another used the teaching of English as a means of reaching the Japanese with the gospel. Seventh-day Adventists are no exception. Indeed, English teaching as an evangelistic tool offers a point of contact with many people that are hard to duplicate by using other methods.

Early in 1966 Elder M. T. Bascom became director of the Osaka Evangelistic Centre. The Centre was ideally located just a couple of blocks from the prefectural governmental offices and literally sitting on top of the Temmabashi subway station. Tens of thousands of people passed by the front of the building each day of the week. When Elder Bascom came and began working at the Centre, he found that very little was being done to utilize the fine three-story building that the 13th Sabbath School overflow offering from the second quarter of 1957 had helped to build.

The Centre had a large hall with a seating capacity of 250 on the first floor. The second floor was designed for a clinic and dental office. The third floor provided space for welfare work, food demonstration area and a couple of classrooms for health lectures and other various types of instruction.

In the fall of 1966 a call was placed with the General Conference for two student missionaries to begin work as English teachers. Jim and Ann Fisher, a young married couple from Pacific Union College, answered the call thereby becoming the first English teachers for the Osaka English School.

Advertising was placed in buses and newspapers for the fall quarter, but by the first night of classes only 17 students had signed up. However, during that first quarter students continued to trickle in so that by the end of the term 42 students were enrolled. The Fishers taught two more quarters, leaving in June of 1967. By that time the school had grown to 250 students.

Three volunteer missionaries, Jim Pappas, Darrell Vaughan and Bruce Bauer worked with the English School for the next four quarters. During that time they saw tremendous growth as the enrolment increased to 650 students with eight student missionaries doing the teaching.

Beginning in April of 1970, branch schools were started as funds were generated by the Osaka School and later by the other schools as well.