



Liebenzell Mission was founded in 1899, born of spiritual revival in Germany in the late 1800's. It was initially the German Branch of the China Inland Mission, later branching out on its own under the name of Liebenzell, after the town where the mission set up its headquarters.

Work in Japan began in 1927, after Liebenzell's director of the South Pacific Islands department visited Japan the year before. He attended a missionaries' conference in Karuizawa, where he received a strong burden for bringing the Gospel to Japan. Upon returning to Germany the mission's council promptly accepted his proposal.

At the time, Germany had been defeated in World War I and the German empire collapsed. Prior to this, Germany's empire had included islands in the South Pacific. After Germany's defeat, these islands became a mandate of Japan.

The mission felt there was a need to have a center in Japan in order to negotiate with the Japanese government. That center (at Yokohama) quickly evolved into the headquarters of Liebenzell's mission in Japan.

Churches founded in the years up until World War 2 are now part of *Dōmei Kirisuto Kyōdan* and *Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan*.

After World War 2, work restarted in 1951 at Nakanoshima, Kawasaki, where the center of LMI-Japan is still located today. The number of missionaries increased rapidly, most of them, according to the mission's policies, evangelizing in the unreached rural area of Ibaraki Prefecture.

From the 1960s onwards church planting further spread throughout Kanto, forming the *Ribenzeru Kirisuto Kyōkai Rengō*. In 1992 Liebenzell churches joined with many churches from three other church associations (founded by OMF, SEND, and TEAM), to form the Japanese Evangelical Church Association (JECA).

Today about 50 congregations have grown out of LMI's ministry. At present 18 missionaries serve in Japan.

Liebenzell's ministry aims to establish groups of believers and churches that ultimately will be self-propagating and self-supporting and also have a burden for world missions. We focus upon less-reached but rapidly-growing suburban areas.

Liebenzell's present ministries include:

- Church planting in areas not served by an existing church.
- Cooperating with churches that seek to do missionary outreach.
- Pastoral ministry at churches that do not yet have a Japanese pastor.
- Retreats and support services at the *Okutama Fukuin no Ie* (House of the Gospel).
- A boarding home for missionary children who attend the German International School in Yokohama.
- Continuing support of relief efforts in the areas affected by the March 2011 earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster, involving short-term "impact" teams.

Other ministries include student outreach, literature distribution, retreat programs, Sunday school, and Bible-teaching classes.

Liebenzell sets great value upon:

- Adhering to biblical principles,
- Working in partnership,
- Servant-mindedness,
- Cross-cultural sensitivity,
- Exemplary lifestyle, and
- Mutual esteem and encouragement. **JH**

# Liebenzell Mission

