

## Praying for Japan



*The whole world gathered in Tokyo for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which concluded on September 5th. We have an opportunity to join our prayers with those of the Japanese church—both for their own nation, but also for all the nations that gathered in their land. Please join in ASKing for all God wants to do in Japan and across the nations in this troubled hour.*



### **ASK that the Japanese would no longer be bound by fear**

*I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Psalm 34:4*

Japan had a revival through the arrival of the Catholic missionary, Francisco de Jasso y Azpilicueta, in AD 1548. The Christian (Catholic) population grew rapidly to 350,000 in 1580, 600,000 in 1600 (2.5% of the population at that time), and 750,000 (3.2%) in 1605. However, during the Edo period (A.D. 1600 to 1868), the Tokugawa Shogunate gradually escalated the persecution and killed 200,000 to 300,000 Christians by waterboarding, fire-boarding, and crucifixion. In other words, the Christian population plummeted, and all became hidden Christians. Some scholars say that this persecution was worse than the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. The Meiji government after this also persecuted Christians. In the last 300 years of persecution, it has become a culture of fear. That's why some Japanese people have scopophobia, cannot say their own opinions, but agree with the opinions of their neighbors

## **ASK for churches in Japan to be free from legalism**

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Matthew 7:1-5*

Japanese churches are legalistic and often judge each other. Protestant churches in Japan were based on the children of the samurai, which led to a Christianity based on the spirit of Bushido.

## **ASK for the raising up of the next generation of Japanese believers**

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:4-7*

If children are not taught to become Christ disciples, they will all be robbed by the secular world by many temptations! Children who attended church school only on Sundays disappeared as they went up to high school and university, and were taken away by the secular world. Children are gone from the church in Japan. Education in Japan denies Christianity, so when children become junior high school students, their faith is quickly lost. Most Japanese churches (95 %) have lost children. Please pray for the next generation.

## **ASK for fruit from Olympic and Paralympic evangelism**

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. 2 Chronicles 7:14-15*

While there was no direct evangelism, many prayed during the Olympics and Paralympics. Please pray that the Lord would bless and bear fruit from the seeds of faith that were planted by the chaplains in the Olympic Village. Also, pray for those who received booklets and Bibles that were distributed. One believer started a movement of one million hours of prayer for the Olympics and Paralympics—may this prayer give unity to the 8,000 churches in Japan.

## **ASK for international missions**

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19*

Some Christian organizations in Japan are focusing on international seminaries to train Indians and Myanmar students, who might return as missionaries to their own countries. Now the door to Russia is also open. There is great opportunity, but limited resources. Pray for God's provision, the young students and many open doors.