



## From the Editor

*Operation World* is the definitive prayer guide to every nation. It was first published by WEC in 1964; the most recent edition was released in 2010 in book and CD form. This month's article is from the website <http://www.operationworld.org/>.

Henrietta

## News & Prayer Points

A **short term team** from Korea and family from Hong Kong arrived in Japan this week. They have already met with people in Yamashina and through Kaori and Megumi churches. Pray for a warm and memorable witness.

A team of six missionaries travelled to north east Japan on Wednesday to 'mud out' houses affected by March's **earthquake and tsunami**. Pray for their safety and work, and also for the affected households to hear of and know the love of God.

Final preparation of our campsite is underway; pray for plenty of open-hearted **campers** at this year's camps, starting soon!

Thank God for our **field leaders**, the Crowhursts, currently on furlough in the UK. Pray for the formal UK-legislation of their adoption of daughter Emma (which has already happened in Japan).

Thank you all for your prayers!

## Operation Japan

### Answer to Prayer

Uncertainty about the future has prompted spiritual searching. This is partly in response to many economic and social changes that threaten the status quo in Japan. The constant threats of a major earthquake, of economic decline, the widening generation gap and the feeling of social isolation (*hikikomori*) that so many suffer provoke widespread soul-searching.

### Challenge for Prayer

Japan is a nation facing many crises and is a culture with no apparent direction. Accompanying this drifting is its lack of hope or confidence in the future. Pray for the following issues, all profoundly felt by Japanese society:

**a)** A lack of a moral centre. Japan's own leaders called it "a superpower without a moral compass". This is most notable among young people, who struggle with particular challenges such as social phobia or social anxiety (*Hikikomori*), a suicide epidemic (over 30,000/year), bullying and teenage prostitution. High rates of suicide in other age groups and divorce also reflect this challenge.

**b)** Political leadership is characterized more by factional dynamics with self-seeking parties than by nation builders. The legacy of WWII hangs over and holds back the government in many ways. A recent, rapid succession of prime ministers has relatively paralyzed



urgently needed reforms to address economic and birth rate issues.

**c)** Major economic transitions. The world's third-largest economy, rocked by recessions in recent years, stands at a crossroads. The job-for-life salarymen are becoming outdated, and the younger generation is uninterested in the type of lifelong commitment that forged Japan into an economic giant. Lack of natural resources, increasingly competitive high-tech markets and demographic changes make for an uncertain economic future. The inability (or unwillingness) of many of the younger generation, even well-educated ones, to get full-time career jobs is another recent phenomenon.

**d)** The percentage of the aged in Japan's population is rapidly increasing (faster than any other nation), with one of the world's lowest birth rates and highest life expectancies. By 2055, half of Japanese will be pensioners – an unprecedented demographic situation and a monumental economic challenge. Caring for the elderly already accounts for the majority of the health budget.