

PROJECT INFORMATION

JAPAN: PRISON CHAPLAINCY

Support the everyday life of prisoners in Japanese prisons and give them courage to change through Christian ministry.

When compared internationally, Japanese prisons have a very strict discipline. The United Church of Christ in Japan (KYODAN) visits people in prison and provides them with pastoral care.

„Nobody looks after the prisoners and they are really in distress,“ says a Japanese pastor who cares for prisoners in his spare time. „That’s why we must look after them.“ God gave every person dignity and the possibility of transformation, even if they have been in prison for a long time. For over 60 years, volunteers and pastors of both genders from the KYODAN church have provided prisoners with pastoral care and counsel them after their release.

Ministry and practical help for prisoners

One thing that impresses is that most pastoral carers work voluntarily in their spare time. They support prisoners regularly or over long periods of time and they help them with visit applications and family problems. They prepare people in prison to resume life outside and to meet their children – many of the prisoners have not seen their children for over 20 years. The most

important thing is spiritual ministry – as a practical witness of God’s presence and, in the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:36: „I was in prison and you visited me.“ Questions concerning guilt and forgiveness also play a role in their work.

Training and networking volunteer pastoral carers

Since Christians are a small minority in Japan, the church has very little financial means. This is why the EMS supports the valuable work of the church with prisoners and gives pastoral carers the vital opportunity of having regular exchanges of experience with each other. The EMS helps with travel costs for network meetings and participation fees for further trainings or conferences on the subject. It also supports the exchange of experience between volunteers by newsletter.

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Donation Account: EMS Evangelische Bank eG
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