

## Japan Choral Harmony - Building the Kingdom through Creating Harmony

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There are many different musical instruments, but I think human beings' voices are the most beautiful. Throughout history, we've been singing whenever we're happy, sad, or suffering in order to share our feelings.

In Japan back in the 60s and 70s, as children we students all learned how to sing as a choir from first grade, because we used to have about 40+ students in each class, that could make one large choir. And we used to compete with each other. When I became a high school student, I joined a mixed-voice choir and we challenged difficult songs even though we had only a handful of people. I tended to pay attention to back-up singers or accompanists more than the main singer or solo player for some reason.

I recall when True Father came to New Jersey for a speaking tour, we formed a 100-voice choir. I still remember he remained so focused listening to us, but I hope he enjoyed our performance. Since that experience, my wish has been to create harmony that could heal the heart of the audience.

After Loving Life Ministries' large choir ended its term, Joe Young (currently, a young Florida pastor) held an audition for back-up singers. I auditioned but I was not selected at the beginning. I joined a couple Sundays later, feeling I had been selected as a representative of all Japanese members. At almost the same time, I joined a Japanese choir to perform at Carnegie Hall. It was my first time joining a group outside our church community, which stimulated in me mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety. While we were practicing for the concert, I heard the news that an enormous earthquake had hit Tohoku and thousands of people died because of the tsunami. Everyone thought it was impossible and inappropriate to have a concert under such circumstances (most of the choir members were from the Tohoku area), but these choir members in Japan were the ones who had wanted to come to the US to sing to overcome their hardships. We were so moved by their words. Therefore, the theme for the concert was revised and the event became instead a charity concert for the relief of Tohoku. We prayed for those in Tohoku and they prayed for us. In the beginning of the concert, I felt that the Tohoku choir members were suffering in their hearts, but by the encore piece, which we sang together with Alexander Harmonizer from Virginia, their hearts were completely liberated. They were so happy and grateful, and they stood proud of themselves that they could participate.

From that time, we named ourselves Japan Choral Harmony (TOMO), and we have sung on various occasions, especially while engaged in charity and ambassador work, such as the 9/11 Memorial Concert, and the 400-year anniversary of the international friendship of Japan and Spain.

There is a well-known saying: "The pen is mightier than the sword". In the same spirit, I would say: "Music is mightier than the sword". We cannot change the heads of the nation, but I believe we can move and heal the hearts of the people through music and art. We are able to hear the sound of healing if we are united together in harmony. These harmonic sounds are called overtones in musical terms. I truly believe we can change the world to the original state that God wanted to create in the beginning of time through the sounds of harmony.