

Stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the Gospel... (Philippians 1:27)



Japan Evangelical Association

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Report and Prayer Requests for the 3rd Year of Post-3.11 Japan March 2013

Greetings in the wonderful name of our Savior Jesus Christ!

As we approach the two year memorial day of the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster on March 11th, 2011, we would like again to express our gratitude to the global Christian community for continuing prayer and support. Despite the small number of Christian population in Japan (less than 1%), we have been able to serve those who suffer and to bring the love and hope of Jesus Christ to the devastated communities with the help from the global Christian community.



WEA Ambassador Dr. Brian Stiller
praying at the site of a church that was
washed away by tsunami.

In some areas recovery process is advancing, yet in most of the tsunami-devastated coastal areas and in Fukushima with ongoing radioactive contamination, recovery is still a long way away.

At our disaster response chaplaincy training by Dr. Kevin Ellers of Salvation Army last month, pastors from the devastated areas in Tohoku shared that the emotional state of survivors actually have gotten worse after one and half year anniversary and the needs for emotional and spiritual care are higher than ever. Many churches, relief organizations and regional networks in Tohoku are continuing to minister in devastated areas despite decreasing funds and support. According to their reports, a widening disparity among people in temporary housings triggers bullying, while the decreasing number of volunteers heightens the level of anxiety for the future. - In fact, the critical period for Christian volunteers and churches to bring the gospel of hope has just started.



Dr. Kevin Ellers visiting survivors
at a temporary housing in Ofunato.

Taking these current situations into consideration, JEA Board of Directors has decided to extend the work period of the JEA Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster Task Force by one year until March 2014. JEA Disaster Task Force will continue to support recovery ministries based on “from church to church” relief principle, and will also promote the disaster response projects to be better prepared for the next disaster. After March 2014, those tasks will be handed over to JEA Relief Commission.

Last October, JEA Mission Commission organized Mission Forum in Sendai and heard reports from many Tohoku pastors who continue to minister to disaster stricken communities. Although the types of ministries vary greatly depending on their location, one common observation was that the Holy Spirit is working among people outside of conventional church. One pastor testified, “We had tried to invite people to church before the disaster, but now God is sending us out to the local communities to serve people there. People are coming to Christ even before coming to church. Maybe we need to reconsider how we do church.” This is a missiological challenge for us to embrace and to learn from what God is doing in disaster areas and apply it to ministries in other regions of Japan, which in turn paves the way for a revival in Japan.



Tohoku pastors discussing during the JEA Mission Forum in Sendai

As we look ahead to the third year of the post-3.11 era, we ask you to join us to pray for Japan.

Prayer Requests:

- (1) Christ’s love and hope will touch those affected people who are suffering from 3.11 Disaster. Also many care-givers and disaster chaplains will be trained and will protect relief workers from burn-outs.
- (2) For churches, relief organizations and regional networks to be able to continue relief ministries – especially for provision of staff and funds, as well as establishing sustainable framework for those relief ministries.
- (3) For Japanese Christians and churches to continue to pray for and engage in recovery of churches and people’s lives in the disaster stricken Tohoku area, especially for churches in Fukushima that are struggling with radioactive contamination.
- (4) For harmonious collaboration among different church groups and organizations, as well as unity among existing churches and new churches to reach out and witness Christ’s love to their local communities.
- (5) For churches in Japan outside of devastated areas to reconsider their engagement to local communities as they prepare for the next disaster, so that they would be ready to share Christ’s love at the time of disaster, which in turn paves the way for a revival across the nation of Japan.

***“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:19)***

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Japan Evangelical Association
Takao Nakadai (Chair, Disaster Task Force)
Kenichi Shinagawa (General Secretary)