

Gratitude and Request for Prayer

April 1, 2011
Japan Baptist Convention
Makoto Kato
Executive Secretary

Praise the Wonderful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Please accept my deepest gratitude for your kind expressions of comfort, encouragement, prayer support, and love offerings, following the earthquake that has wrought devastation to Japan. The warm response from Christian brothers and sisters around the world has sustained our broken hearts. Japan Baptist Churches appreciate the marvelous support system of Baptists around the world united in prayer for Japan. We ask for your continued prayers that in this crisis and its overwhelming challenges, local Baptist Church members will seek and follow God's perfect will, that we will carry the burden yoked with the Lord Himself, and that we will give Christ all the glory.

The following is a summary of conditions and relief activities these three weeks, immediate plans, and prayer requests:

Relief supplies

Following the disaster, all means of transportation were severely damaged in the region of the earthquake and tsunami, making it nearly impossible to deliver relief supplies. Since March 25, two weeks after the earthquake, access to the Tohoku Expressway has been given to all vehicles, finally making it possible for us to deliver relief supplies daily to the churches and refugee shelters in the stricken area. Travel from the JBC office to cities such as Sendai and Ishimaki is 400 kilometers one way and the radioactive area surrounding Fukushima and Ibaraki is 200 kilometers away, making it possible to drive round trips to these places in one day. This development assists our goal to not be a burden in the crippled region. We have been providing the most critical necessities for human existence, such as water, food, clothing, gasoline, and kerosene.

This winter has been much colder than in recent years, making the comfort and health of the refugees a major concern. We anxiously pray for the many victims struggling in severe living conditions.

Thankfully during the past 2 or 3 days, gasoline has been made available, and the delivery of basic necessities is becoming more possible. There is growing hope that by the time one month has passed since the earthquake, delivering these critical supplies will become less urgent, allowing us to concentrate on the many other needs.

Dispatch of staff workers and cooperating volunteer groups

The JBC is placing a temporary crisis management staff in the disaster area. This staff is working to support the work of the local churches. These churches are gradually recovering and are increasing their ministry to their communities. At this point, the churches especially feel led to offer strength and guidance to the many victims suffering from emotional trauma.

The JBC is receiving valuable cooperation, assistance, and exchange of information from other Christian groups, including BWAid, SBC International Mission Board, rescue organizations, and our sister convention, the Japan Baptist Union.

The organization of Protestant Churches in Sendai is coordinating relief efforts. Without gasoline to travel and a lack of basic necessities, volunteer assistance has been limited. As this situation improves, we need volunteers from any region of Japan. The on-site staff is making preparations to coordinate this volunteer ministry.

Nuclear Power Plant crisis

Alarming conditions resulting from accidents in the nuclear reactors continue to be a serious issue. People living in a 30 kilometer range have been advised to evacuate. Entire towns are being forced to move. Although there are no JBC churches located within that radius, there is concern that the radioactivity will adversely affect our church members living close to the contaminated area, especially small children and pregnant women. With this in mind, starting ten days ago, the JBC office building and JBC churches in the greater Tokyo area have opened their doors for persons in this category to find refuge.

We are also making contingent plans to evacuate and offer shelter to church members should the situation become more critical. It is our urgent prayer that this nuclear problem be resolved as soon as possible.

JBC church members and church buildings

Although none of our convention church buildings were severely damaged, a great deal of repair work is necessary. The JBC plans to provide offerings to fund these repairs.

Church members who are victims of the disaster are suffering grief, pain, and fear. Many lost their homes and loved ones. Many lost their workplace and their source of income. Many have been evacuated from their homes due to radiation exposure. It is our prayer that the Lord's rich provision and compassion be poured upon each and every person.

Funds for Disaster Relief

We have set a goal of **50,000,000** yen to budget for relief work until March of 2012. (**80** Yen = US\$1.00) This budget is divided accordingly:

JBC churches in the disaster region, relief funds and funds for repair work – **20,000,000** yen.

JBC church members in the disaster region, relief funds – **5,000,000** yen.

Disaster region relief supplies – **10,000,000** yen.

On site Staff activity expenses, also Disaster Relief Headquarters office expenses – **15,000,000** yen.

Prayer Requests

Pray for the Christian churches of Japan and the Japanese Christians, that we will follow the Lord's leadership and do His will, and that we will serve people as the Lord Jesus served. In this country with so few Christians, pray that all the Christian denominations will overcome our small differences and become a great testimony of reconciliation and cooperation, giving God all the praise and glory for His kingdom's work.

Remember the nuclear accident in fervent prayer for an immediate resolution of this crisis.

The thousands of victims in the disaster area need your prayer. Pray for the people struggling to survive under difficult conditions, pray for the refugees living in relief centers, the sick, the grieving. Pray for the people who have been evacuated from the radioactive danger, and the many more that live in fear of contamination. Pray for the Lord Jesus to fill them with His comfort and strength.

Remember the ministry of our various relief activities, and pray that the Lord will provide volunteer workers for the task, as well as funds to support our efforts in His name.