

Nuclear Power Issues Column

The traffic restriction on National Highway 6 (14.1km) that connects Tomioka-cho and Hutaba-cho, placed after the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Accident was uplifted on March 15. Currently many cars pass through this route. However the radiation level for this area is far from low. According to an expert's recordings taken with a Geiger counter, the radiation level in Tomioka-cho was 3-4 μ Sv/h. The radiation level near to the nuclear power plant was 5-8 μ Sv/h. Areas with these numbers would usually be avoided but for truck drivers, detouring around from Ibaraki area to Soma, then toward Miyagi means an extra 3-4hours of driving. Therefore, passing through Tomioka-cho is inevitable.

In February 2015, Fukushima's demand to supply ratio of the labor force was 1.51. This is higher than the national average. However when looking into the contents of the job offerings, many are of construction work related to the natural disaster. Also, Many offerings are "security related work". (This is the source of the high rate of job offerings.) When looking at the home page of these offerings, they were offerings related to nuclear power plants. With the highways being opened again, and with the economy seeming to improve, it appears that Fukushima is successfully reconstructing. However when we look at each aspect closely, we find that this is not necessarily true. In reality, many problems have not been resolved. There is the danger of radiation and it is difficult to look into the future.

There is something I heard from a person living in Fukushima:

There are those that think that people chose to stay in Fukushima. Of course, there are those that have set in their hearts a resolve to stay in Fukushima no matter what happens. However there are many people that still do not know what they should do and are still in turmoil about what decision to make. Perhaps there are more who stay in Fukushima because they cannot find an answer forward. If they decide to get out of Fukushima, they must figure out what to do about moving and about work. Also, it is a huge decision to move out of an environment where there are so many familiar faces. It is difficult to have a strong basis for this decision. Even if you personally want to move out, if your family rejects this decision, you cannot. Despite this perplexity, there are those that ask, "Why don't you get out?" or decide, "that person must have made a resolve." It is not as simple as that.



(Makito Suzuki Meinohama Church)

Sharing with APBAid Executive, Pastor Victor

The Japanese Baptist Convention is a member of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF). APBAid is the aid branch, and from an early stage it has continued to carry out aid and prayer.

This March, Pastor Victor Rembeth who has been director of APBAid since January this year, came to the "UN Disaster Relief Conference" held in Sendai for business. Here he told us that he wanted to know more about the current state of the devastated areas, and wanted to know more about the Baptist Convention's aid work. Through the limited time that could be afforded, Pastor Makoto Kanamaru and Pastor Chikayo Kaneko were able to share about the disaster areas and the challenges it faces. The progress in reconstruction of the areas devastated by the tsunami is varied. Some districts are said to have no household reconstruction for another 3~5years. What is more, even if people are able to move back into the reconstructed residents, there is the challenge of having to become economically and relationally "independent". What is more, in the areas devastated by radiation, the numbers clearly show how adults and children's health has been affected. Division can be seen within families and communities. The anxiety and worries of those that have lost their homes and cannot see their future will not cease. Full recovery from the disaster is still far in the future. The devastated areas are still in a state of devastation.

Pastor Victor responded that he had not known this and wrote notes as he listened and spoke of his sentiments. He said that he would share this information to his fellow APBF partners. We gave a document to Pastor Victor named "The Prayers to Remember the 4 Years from the Devastation".

Every time we see Pastor Victor we are reminded of and are thankful of how we are all one with God. In September 2011, there was a round-table conference, coordinated by APBAid, held at the Baptist Convention office. Pastor Victor attended this conference as a representative of Indonesia. After the conference he visited the devastated areas. Through this conference we discovered that Pastor Victor's father, who had also been a pastor, was killed by the Japanese army. Pastor Victor studied theology with missionary Koichi Kimura.

Pastor Victor will go back and share about the situation in the devastated areas. We are thankful that in Asia, and in the Pacific, there are those that have Japan and the devastated areas in their hearts and prayers.



It has been 4 years since the nuclear disaster. The disaster is far from being settled. We are reminded that we must once again stand back and truly look at the current reality of Fukushima and carefully listen to the voices of the people who live and Fukushima.

From The Local Support Team

Local Support Team Leader - Makoto Kanamaru

We have entered a new fiscal year and have entered into a difficult period. It is our 5th year since the tsunami. The visible "rubble" has been cleared. In some areas buildings and roads have been newly built. The devastation is now harder to see. Even though there have been multiple disasters more are more people are getting by just telling themselves, "its ok". This is perhaps possible because we cannot see radiation. I believe that fatigue has built up over the past 5 years.

What is important is for us to live out the words, "we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen" (2Cor 4:18). Living in the devastated areas, rebuilding homes, and having to face the damages of radiation causes a lot of strain. You need a lot of endurance, bravery, and faith. This is why it is so important that our aid work is not carried out as an individual, but as a church. The cooperation of local churches and the prayers of the churches throughout Japan also encourage our church. We hope to carry the aid work out with self-reflection. We believe that Jesus Christ is using us despite our own doubts. We hope that the continued work in the devastated areas, will be in it self a testimony of Jesus Christ to the people in the devastated areas. We ask for your prayer and support through out this new year. We will also give our best. We thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts.