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Religious Institution Japan Baptist Convention General Affairs Division

Japanese Baptist Convention *Great East Japan Earthquake Support Team*: <http://www.bapren.jp/>

#### Nuclear Issues Column

##### Declaring a nuclear emergency

Matsuyama Nishi Christ Church (Chugoku Nishi Convention Committee Member) Takuya Tatsuta

I started getting involved in the anti-nuclear movement after volunteering at a recuperation camp. This summer I volunteered at the camps in Kochi and Ehime run by private organizations where I met several families.

In order to avoid their children being exposed to radiation, parents would cover their young children with masks, and layered clothing when going out, even in the summer. A mother who had just come back from decontaminating her local school and home, saw her child sleeping care-free with all the windows open. She wept, as she watched her sleeping child's hair blowing in the wind.

Other mothers who were in the same situation had no words to tell each other, but on the last day of the recuperation camp they cried together and encouraged each other. The parents that came to the recuperation camps see and experience the effects of radiation. However at home social restraints, discourage them from talking about radiation. How long must we continue to ignore the "power" that is the source of psychological worry and health worries?

On August 12, the Ikata Third Nuclear Power Plant was restarted. Demonstrations were held with the support of those through out Japan and those from the communities surrounding the power plants. There was one individual in Fukushima who had called the Tokyo Electric company a few days before March 11 to stop the nuclear power plant, because of the many small earthquakes that had been taking place a few days earlier. This man in a way "prophesied" against the nuclear power plants. Even now he continues to protest against the nuclear power plants.

Meanwhile, after the restarting of the nuclear power plant, the Ehime Prefectural mayor declared to the news press that "what happened in Fukushima will not happen". A security myth is being told. The people, the companies, the regulating committee, the government, the prefecture, even the residents who live in dependence on the nuclear power plants believe that "it is safe". They do not have a choice but to believe. This myth is being told because of this irresponsible and emotional stance. When the "structure" of this time is what is creating the current state of affairs, why is it that we do not question the "structure's" sins? Why do we not change its characteristics? Perhaps our shameless inaction towards the logic of those in power, and the logic of the majority, is our individual sin.



In front of the number 3 nuclear power plant during its restarting.

#### A Bond with the Disaster Areas - Reports of the exchanges held with the disaster victims

Yamanashi church Former Tono Volunteer Centre Head Sato Hiro

It is almost 5 and a half years since the earthquake. Now that I have been transferred to a new church, I now personally visit the devastated areas once a year. Out of those that used to live in the temporary housing estates many have now rebuilt their homes, have moved into the disaster reconstruction community housings, or have moved to the areas where their relatives live.

But even now, when we visit, they tell each other that the Sato couple are visiting, and they get together to warmly welcome us. There are also times that we visit the new homes of the people that are unable to gather to greet us. Whenever we visit the individual homes we are told "Next year make sure you let us know in advance so you can stay over at our home". We started the aid work half a year after the disaster for one and a half years. Not a very long period.

However I would like to share with you that the aid carried out by the churches of the Baptist convention has born wonderful exchanges that continue until this day.

However what I most want to share with you is that life has not returned to how it was before the disaster. The reason the voices of those in the disaster areas are becoming quieter is because the people are getting used to living in a state of lack. Those of you who have experienced volunteering at the disaster areas, please remember those that you connected with through your volunteer work. Please let the people around you know that reconstruction has not come to an end.



Otsuchi-cho Monument of Reconstruction

Catching up with friends from Kozuchi Number 4 Estate

#### From the Local Aid Committee (Local Aid Committee Makoto Kanamaru)

It is now the sixth summer since the Great East Japan Earthquake. On the news we now hear of some areas that have decided to hold fire work festivals for the first time since the disaster. At Watari-cho Miyagi Prefecture, many have now moved out of the temporary housing estates. The deconstruction of the estates have now started. The deconstruction is not all happening at once, but it is carefully being carried out in parts. When seeing this take place, it makes me think "We have finally made it this far". But at the same time there is a strange sadness. Furthermore, after moving into their new homes, there are many elderly individuals who find it hard to get out of their homes. There are even those that say "life in the temporary housing was better". This is perhaps because in their new life, it is hard for them to have the same "connections" and "support" that they used to have. Our church is continually challenged with the reality that moving into the new homes does not solve all things. Moreover, there are also still those that are forced to continue living in the temporary housing estates. There are those that continue to be divided because of the radiation disaster, and those that continue to have their lives and health destroyed. We must continue to face these issues and carry these burdens together. We want to continue prayerfully walking beside those that live in these circumstances.



### Please Support by Donating for the Great East Japan Earthquake Donations

Goal for 2016 Donations: 6,000,000Yen (Domestic and International)

2,730,000Yen Collected so far (by July)

#### Donations made in June and July 2016: in order of donation made. Our deepest gratitude to all who donated

Yurigaoka, Otaru, Asahikawa Toko, Nakano, Osaka Block Women's group, Kagoshima, Seinan Academy Educational Institution, Fujiyoshida, Yuko Kubo, Koga, Nishino Guitar and Piano Class, Hitachi, Kikuchi Sion, Women's convention, Ichikawa Yahata, Higashi Osaka, Takasaki, Iizuka, Nara, Hirao, Fukuma, Oita.