



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

~DONATIONS~

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**Fukushima Now ~ Report (4) from 30KM radius of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant~ “Living in Two Homes”**

2017 spring, the evacuation order for many of the districts in Fukushima prefecture was removed. The “Restricted Immigration” order that allowed residents to visit their homes during the day has now drastically decreased. With this, many residents are now living in two homes, one home is the temporary housing, and the other is the home that they lived in before the nuclear power disaster.

When I visited the new shopping mall, built 10 km from the Tokyo Electric Power Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, many of the people who live back and forth between their two homes were lined up from before opening time to purchase food items and daily goods. However, the store had clearly changed its contents when compared from before the accident. The supermarket sells many packed lunches and ready-made side dishes that are bought by workers who work nearby on radiation decontamination. Before, the supermarket used to sell many goods with big families in mind. Three generation families were not uncommon. They sold sushi and meat products that were family friendly. But now, many of the goods are sold to individual buyers. This is because many of the people living between two homes are the elderly, while many of the children and grandchildren generations that used to live in the area evacuated further away to Iwaki City and Koriyama City. Therefore, now meals are often eaten alone or with one other person.

As more people start living in two homes, many of the temporary housing estates are becoming deserted. At its peak, about 33,000 people lived in the Fukushima Prefecture temporary houses. However by April this year, there were less than 10,000 people, and currently, there are only 5400 people. When visiting the Iwaki City temporary homes, there are many vacant houses. Occupied houses are few in between, and there is a sense of desertion in the air.

I went to the house of an interviewee that had taken care of me in the past. However, when I went to his house, there was no one home, and there were empty alcohol bottles rolling around in front of his house. I was worried. He lived alone, and a year back he had told me with a smile, “If I win the lottery of the reconstruction housing, I will leave this place. When I do, visit me in my new home.” Thankfully, when I returned to Tokyo the next day, I received a call from him to my cell phone. That night he had been staying over at his daughter’s house in the neighboring town, where she had bought a new house with her husband. He visited there twice a week and only stays in the temporary housing half of the time. I was relieved to hear from him. There are many victims of the disaster who are unable to buy a new home and are unable to move into the new reconstruction housing. These people must continue living in the temporary houses.

When the Niigata Prefecture Chuetsu Earthquake took place, the last temporary housing resident moved out 3 years after the disaster. The Hanshin-Awaji earthquake took 5 years. It has been 6 years for the people living in the temporary housing in Fukushima Prefecture. How many more years must this continue? The delay in recovery is frustrating.

Left: A new mall that opened 10Km from the nuclear power plant  
Right: Decontamination workers are seen buying packed lunches



**Disaster Relief Donation Goal for 2017 Donations: 6,000,000Yen**

**1,370,000Yen Collected so far (by July)**

**Donations made in August and September: in order of donation**

Jiyugaoka, Yurigaoka, Chofu, Tanaka Akinori, Ijyuin, North East Convention Woman’s Group, Koga, Hitachi, Kubo Yuko, Marugame Jotocho, Ainoura-hikari, Keisen, Nara, Fujimino Church Youth Group, Chofu, Tanaka Akinori, Otaru, Megumi, Fukuma, Omura Kogashima, Book Sales, Omiya. We give thanks.

**The Vegetable Garden - Watanabe Mitsue (Fukushima God’s Foot Print Church Members)**

Looking at the report that had arrived in the mail, my husband immediately got out into the vegetable patch and pulled out all the vegetables. This happened in August. On the branches and vines that he pulled out, clung cucumbers, egg plants and tomatoes.

The report was from the Iwaki City Radiation Measurement Office, and it showed the level of radiation in the soil and the vegetables. The radiation was measured from the soil collected from the garden, the vegetable patch and the rain drainage. Radiation decontamination was carried out in the autumn of 2013. The outer walls of the homes were washed, and the soil around the homes was replaced. The topsoil (5~10cm) was taken off and replaced with soil from areas that were not contaminated. The vegetable patch soil was also replaced with farming soil. The radiation level was noted and concluded.

The following year, my husband went to a nearby garden centre, bought fertilizer and seeds and started his vegetable patch. The fertilizer was cow manure and mulch. The seeds grew well, and we were able to harvest many vegetables. We were not worried, assured that the soil had been decontaminated. We continued to add fertilizer to the soil and enjoyed gardening. We continued growing vegetables for 3 years, 2014, 2015 and 2016. When we measured the soil this year on the fourth year, we found that the radiation figures were very high. The cucumber that I submitted for measurement had normal levels of radiation, but since the soil was too contaminated, my husband decided that the vegetables that were grown in it were no good, and pulled them all out.

If I think about it, even six and a half years after the nuclear accident, full-page radiation news articles are printed every day in Fukushima. Every day on TV, radiation measurements are reported. Every time there was a strong earthquake, I used to worry about the nuclear power plant, and worry that my car didn’t have a full tank of gas. But I feel that I have cancelled out my insecurities about radiation. Even though there are children close to me.

Through this trial, I feel that God is telling me to think about and study the issue of radiation for myself, and to live my life, despite the reality that the radiation issue may continue for decades. I feel he is telling me to protect the young children from radiation as much as I can.

I pray, "Lord, we trust in you. Please protect us. Please allow the damages of the radiation to be as small as possible. Show us your way. May Jesus enter the hearts of those who have been forced out of their own homes through radiation. Please rescue each person. Please protect each of the thousands of people who every day work on the treatment of the nuclear power plant. I pray for their health and pray that they will be protected from accidents. I pray for recovery after the nuclear power accident, and I pray that the needed finances are provided. I pray for the research of nuclear power and pray that the promises that were made to us are met as soon as possible. Most of all, I pray that no one else will have to experience such a catastrophe. Lord show us the true way."

Please continue to pray for us.

**From the Local Aid Committee - Local Aid Committee President Makoto Kanamaru (Sendai Chomeigaoka Church)**

Thank you for your continued prayer and support. It has been six and a half years since the Great East Japan Earthquake. In the early days after the disaster, we handed out goods and opened soup kitchens. Now we are focused on walking alongside the victims and carrying out visitations. Through this, the relationship between the people and the church is deepening. The temporary homes are being closed, and it is a time of great change. The needs of the people during visitations are also changing. We have shared this below.

**Needs that have not changed:** There is a need to hold visitations and chat and spend time together. From the sense of loneliness brought about by the number of people leaving the housings, we see that people want to stay connected and to not be forgotten. There are things that the residents can only say to outsiders. It is important to provide people an outlet while they continue on their path to recovery. We are needed so that people can talk freely about the radiation damages, food security, and the health of their children.

**New needs:** More than material support, there is a need for emotional support. We feel that there is a need to shift from general support to a support system that meets individual needs. We believe there is a need to support elderly residents living alone, individuals who are secluded from the community, and those who are emotionally strained. We ask for your continued prayer and support.