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Missionary Association
exists to network and equip
its members to make
disciples for Christ***

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The World in Our Classroom

by Joseph Poulshock, PhD Professor, Tokyo Christian University

Spencer packed his bags to get ready for his long journey. In the afternoon, he would catch a bus from Cape Town to Johannesburg, South Africa. That ride would take 18 hours. From Johannesburg, he would catch another bus for 15 hours to Harare, Zimbabwe. After this grueling 33 hour trip (and a little rest), Spencer would meet with a professor from Tokyo Christian University (TCU). The purpose of the meeting was an interview to see if Spencer qualified for a full scholarship to study in a four-year course at TCU entitled, Asian Christian Theological Studies for English Speakers (ACTS-es). The interview turned out to be a success, and Spencer is now studying at TCU. If all goes well, in four years time, he will join a growing cadre of ACTS-es graduates who came from all over the world to study in Japan at TCU.

ACTS-es students study Japanese language, and they learn theology and the liberal arts in English. Since TCU started the course in the fall of 2001, almost 60 students are doing or have done the program. ACTS-es students come from places as far apart as India and Cameroon, Myanmar and Peru, and

Macau and North America, and a number of our students have come from missions and churches in Japan. With their presence, they have raised our awareness of cultural and economic differences between Japan and the rest of the world, and they have helped us learn to cooperate and live together in diversity by our common faith in Jesus Christ.

TCU has benefited from having these students on our campus, but as the university educates them, we also invest in their future. We invest in the future of their communities and churches both in Japan and abroad, and we invest by faith in the hope that a Christian liberal arts education will prepare them to wisely engage culture and graciously serve people in the name of Jesus Christ. One graduate named Joey says that TCU helped deepen his Christian worldview and that theological studies prepared him for missions and the pastorate while enabling him to be relevant to the surrounding culture. After receiving their theological education, other students such as Sawma and Amazing (yes, that's his name) have benefited from the network and relationships with church leaders

that came through TCU, and they are now ministering faithfully and joyfully in Japanese churches.

Other ACTS-es graduates have gone on to prestigious graduate schools. After finishing at TCU, Adrian received a Masters in Theology from the University of Edinburgh, where he focused on science and religion, and Christian went to the Claremont Graduate School, also receiving a degree in theology. These two young men were among our first ACTS-es graduates, and this past year they came back to TCU to co-teach a challenging course in science and religion for our current students. Though an education in theology and the liberal arts may seem like an abstract endeavor at times, the results are clear and wonderful. We see a growing procession of graduates, each one learning to live out a life of faith with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. They are a parade of witnesses that show the value of Christian education, and they remind us that Spencer's long journey and our collective journeys as learners and educators are most definitely worth the effort.

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From the Editors



Gary Bauman has been Managing Editor of Japan Harvest since September 2005. He and his wife Barbara have served in Japan since 1988 with Asian Access.

It was the first full day of our mission's annual conference in the mountain town of Karuizawa. Our speaker was near the end of his challenge. At first we ignored the vibration in our chairs, but when the chandeliers refused to stop swaying and the roof began to groan, we decided to wait out this unusually long earthquake in the gently falling snow. It was only after our evacuation from the chapel at Megumi Chalet and following our hour-long wait in the Woodshed coffeehouse for clearance to enter the main buildings again that we were able to turn on a television. It was then that we began to realize the full scale of this disaster... it was more than just another strong earthquake.

Shortly after we arrived back in Tokyo a few days later, I got a call from long-time friend Ken Taylor: "We need you in Higashi Kurume at the temporary headquarters of CRASH (see article on page 32), and we already have a job for you." I soon realized the task that lay ahead was enormous. The 11-hour workdays seemed far too short to



Wendy Marshall and her husband David have served in Japan with OMF International since 2000. She is kept busy looking after their three boys and various other roles, including Associate Editor of Japan Harvest.

Gary came to me only days after the March 11 disasters. He said, "Let's put aside all our plans for the Spring Harvest, do a special edition focused on the current events. . . and I want you to do it." That meant a standing start—we had nothing. However, my immediate reaction was to agree. It seemed the right thing to do. The next reaction was, "What! Me?" I'd only walked through one whole cycle of this magazine's production with Gary and there was so little I knew. Nonetheless, with my husband's support, I dove into the deep end and, by God's grace, managed not to drown.

Many of the people who usually write for Japan Harvest were hard at work with CRASH or in relief work. However, only ten days after that standing start God had given me 22 potential articles, two assistant editors, six people taking first-hand accounts and turning them into articles and two people with journalistic training sourcing or writing more articles. And now, just over a month later we have a completed magazine. Amazing! And the glory doesn't go to me or

organize long-term help and provide hope to survivors of the disaster in Tohoku. I quickly realized two things:

- 1) We needed to forget all our previous plans for this Spring Japan Harvest, and
- 2) I wasn't going to have the time to manage it.

But during the past year, God had supplied a willing and capable associate editor in Wendy Marshall, and although I had only just started "showing her the ropes," I knew she could do the job and would provide a breath of fresh editorial air at the same time. I am delighted with what God has brought together through her hard work, and am excited to see what she will continue to bring to this magazine in the upcoming issues.

Yours for the Harvest,

any who helped me, because there is no way that we could have organised that by ourselves.

Nonetheless I want to thank all who helped me. Who shared their stories, who put up with my inexperience, who used their writing, editing and designing skills. Thank you.

Our family prayer card reads: 1 Peter 4:11b "If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

To God be the glory.



The Moment That Will Stand in Time

By Mary Jo Ruck

I was in the hallway when the building began to shake. Some of our teachers down the hall chatted. Didn't they notice?

"Earthquake!" I yelled, running to a classroom. "It's not stopping!" I didn't know what to do. I edged toward the outside door as the shaking grew worse. Scared, I pressed against the wall and began to pray. "God, make it stop," I pleaded. Then I prayed again, "If it's my time to go, then so be it. Just take me quickly, Lord."

The shaking lessened, at least enough that I finally gathered my wits. I dashed out the door and away from the building. Seeking something grounded, I sat on a rock and begged God to make the earth stop moving. Cars rocked in the street, telephone poles swayed. Finally, the quake subsided. I cried, relieved that it was over, but shaken by fear.

A moment later my husband William ran down the hill. "Are you okay?" he asked. I assured him I was; we stayed outside for a while, hit by aftershock after aftershock. It was impossible to go inside. When anyone tried, it would only be a moment before the quake shook the earth again, sending everyone running toward safety.

We waited a trembling hour

outside. Then, snow. Hard, like the kind of snow you get in a blizzard. Twenty minutes later, it stopped and the sun shone. A bit shaken, we returned to our office and started picking up.

Many things lay fallen and new cracks etched the walls. Surprisingly, my water glass stood half full on my desk. We had no electricity; the water was running, but we turned it off when a broken pipe flooded a classroom. We cleaned up scattered office and classroom supplies, and headed back to our apartments, wondering what damage we would find.

At home, I was amazed by what fell but didn't break. Dishes lay scattered across the kitchen floor. A water pitcher in our fridge tipped and dumped into the freezer. Olive oil, dropped from the highest shelf, suffered a dented lid, but landed upright on the floor. No oil spilled. Three bowls and one mug broken—that's it. Exploring other rooms, we discovered our closet's top shelf piled against the sliding doors, our books splayed across



the floor, but only a few cracks on the walls.

In God's providence, the day before, I filled our cupboards with a week's groceries. Also, in God's providence, we were in between programs at school when the quake struck. The kindergarten children had almost all gone home. The Friends Club children hadn't yet arrived—the buses hadn't even left to pick them up. What a terrifying disaster if they had been here amidst it all.

Tap water ran for about seven hours, before it shut off. It came back briefly the next evening, allowing me to quickly fill containers. I wish I had saved more, but so far we have what we need. As I write, the water still isn't running; I learned that it's not only that water can't get to us but that water shouldn't go down the drain. Some sewage facilities are shut down, and if water were restored, overuse could flood the manholes into the streets. We're blessed that we have a source for running water at work.

Thankfully, we had only one night without heat. Power was restored to us the next evening after the earthquake, and the next few days were warm. Forecasters predict sleet and snow. I pray it never comes.

We have enough food, as do the people around us. Grocery stores are rationing food, so people wait in long, long lines - two hours or more to get basic necessities. The water lines at the local community centers can be just as bad.

As bad as it is here, we are not the worst hit. We are inland far enough that the waters never reached us. Coastal areas, slammed by tsunamis, are worse. We've been to those places that are no more: Takata-matsubara, Nobiru Beach, Shichi-ga-hama. It's hard to take it all in.

In contrast to all the devastation, I got a letter in my mailbox today. We have electricity, we have food, and we have water; we have friends and help.

I've seen and talked to my neighbors more in the last few days than in the two years we've lived here.

My grasp of the Japanese language was a part of that distance before. Now the language barrier no longer matters. People look those who were once strangers in the eye and join together to encourage and help one another.

God is good. He is in control. His mercy endures forever. May the hearts of the Japanese people be ready to hear the gospel and to listen, to give their lives over to a creator and a savior who cares for them—not only during horrible tragedy, but always. Just yesterday we had a new person come to church—a young woman who lives nearby. She is seeking. I marvel as I watch God work in the little things.

Pray for encouragement: for us, for our neighbors, for the tsunami

I've seen and talked
to my neighbors
more in the last few days
than in the two years
we've lived here.

victims. Pray for the relief efforts: for all that can be done to help others. Pray that we become a light to shine in to the people around us. Pray for peace amidst the unknown. God will provide. I know that deep in my heart. He tells us not to worry about tomorrow for tomorrow has enough worries of its own. Lord, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen. 卍



japan 3/11/11

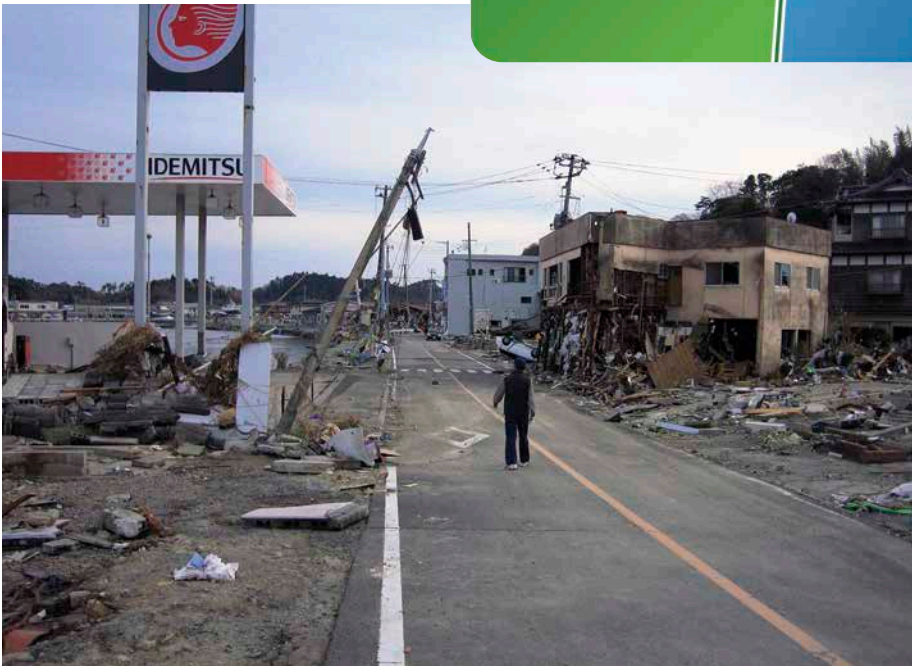
By Eiji Fujino

someday i will look back at the
time
i was given here on earth
and wish i had spent more of that
time
on things that advanced
His
kingdom.
because i carry a
name.
my name was given to me at
birth.
it tells people who i am.
it means something.
and there is a reason it was given
to me.
but it doesn't define me.
His name
does.
my name was given to me at birth
so people can get my attention.
nothing more.
there is only one name
that has the power to save, and
the world needs
Him.
those who believe carry Him
like i do.
i want to take that name
and make the earth shake - flood
the darkness
with His light.
make that name
famous.

Eyewitness Account at Takayama

By Christina Aiton

March 11, 2011, 11a.m. – I casually walked across a small beach in Shichigahama, unaware that in just a few hours, everything around me would change.



By 2:46 p.m. I walked over to a cabin on Takayama hill to do some work. All of a sudden the house started to shake, and shake some more; we realized this was no small earthquake. We ducked for cover under the kitchen bench—everything around us smashing to the ground. The shaking—punctuated by my screams and prayers—seemed endless.

Finally, the ground settled. All phone lines were down so we jumped in the car and drove to Toyama hill to check on family and friends. On the way I noticed some of the neighboring house's roofs were damaged by the quake (houses that would be gone in half an hour's time).

Thankfully, everyone on Toyama hill was fine. Just as we started to share our stories, the snow began; then a siren blared. Loudspeakers warned of an imminent 6–10 meter tsunami. Not sure if we were safe, we sprinted higher up the hill. The snow fell heavily, making it hard for us to see anything beyond the shoreline. Then we heard the awful, deafening noise. The first tsunami swept through the village behind us. Soon, all sorts of objects floated by in the ocean—cars, yachts, shipping containers and other debris.

Then it was our beach's turn. We could just make out the wall of water in front of us, increasing in speed. It finally hit the cove far

below with a tremendous crash and splash. It tore down the village on our right. We stood in disbelief.

Soon after, darkness fell. Just when we thought we had experienced it all, a mighty bang broke the stillness of the night. The oil refinery down the beach from the cabin caught fire. We watched in horror as flames lit up the dark night. In silence we wondered, would it spread to our hillside? What else will come?

Over the following days, we explore our hillside-turned-island, surrounded by waves that refuse to subside. The destruction is overwhelming. However, each day brings increasing hope. The clean up moves remarkably fast; relief goods come in from so many different places. One friend who lost his home and business says, "Our tears have dried up, now it is time to rebuild".

Just weeks before this disaster, a verse in Lamentations 3:21 jumped out at me, "Yet I still **dare to hope**" (NLT, emphasis mine). This verse encourages me daily. We see miraculous protection, provision, favor and connections. We dare to hope for greater things in this place. ¹⁴

Amazing Escape

By Tim Clark

When the tsunami suddenly flooded her home, Kiwako tried to escape. But doors and windows were blocked by debris. Water was rising rapidly. And her foot got lodged between objects. She couldn't move and accidentally gulped the dirty water that so quickly engulfed her. She thought, "This is it!" and prepared to die.

But somehow, the rising water freed her foot and lifted her up. She scrambled to the stairway and found air on the second floor. Despite water reaching the floor of the second story, Kiwako managed to elevate herself and change into her mountain climbing clothes. She stayed there throughout the night, perched just above the water level. Thankful to be alive, she wondered if her husband had also survived.

Kazuo, a successful 69 year-old business owner, had just landed at Sendai airport when the quake

struck. He saw the tsunami in his rearview mirror as he drove away from the airport parking. He found a road free of congestion and fled to a relative's home in the mountains.

It took three days for Kiwako and Kazuo to find each other again.

Kazuo is the brother of Shizuko Masuda, a church planter and pastor in Sapporo who has led hundreds to Christ in her 35 years of ministry. Like so many though, she finds her own family members among those most resistant to the gospel.

Last year Kazuo and Kiwako treated Shizuko and her husband, Ryoichi Masuda, to a luxury trip to Eastern Europe. Kazuo and Kiwako generously shared from their success, with no thought to the fact that they might be about to lose it all.

The business Kazuo developed over the last three decades was washed away in the tsunami. Their house and belongings were destroyed. All they have left are the clothes Kiwako changed into, the car Kazuo was driving and the things he had

taken on his business trip.

"I pray that this unthinkable tragedy, and the loss of their home and business, will open up my brother and his family to encounter God," says Shizuko Masuda.

Psalm 18:16 says, "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters." (NIV) May many like Kiwako who were drawn out of the waters open their hearts to discover the One who has the power to save for eternity. JH



Kazuo and Kiwako: From traveling first class in 2010 to losing everything in 2011



Superheroes are fictional characters who save those in distress. There were no superheroes around to stop a tsunami. But there is a Savior who can give hope and eternal life, though he won't arrive wearing a cape or mask.

Why the Japanese Don't Ask Why

By Wendy Marshall



I asked Yoshie, a Japanese pastor's wife, if she has been asked, "Why would God allow this disaster?" She responded,

"I am not being asked that. We Japanese have known that a big earthquake would happen sooner or later. The scale is beyond what anyone expected. When earthquakes happen, there is almost always a tsunami. We know that too. It is the scale of the tsunami and how wide the affected area was, that is troubling."

"We are also aware of the risks of nuclear power plants. There have been accidents in the past. There were casualties. People are asking whether it is a good idea to have new nuclear power

plants. The majority of people say that we need them, although they might be a necessary evil. People seem to accept that if we are to continue living our current convenient lives, without a viable alternative, we cannot avoid having more nuclear power plants."

I was struck by her assessment of the Japanese people's mindset. She said, "It's now a matter of fixing the damage. For that we need patience and sacrifice, which everyone is ready to contribute."

She went on to clarify why she hasn't

Japanese don't know the God

of the Bible. In the world of

eight million gods,

things are quite arbitrary.

Gods might punish us,

but when things happen, it's

up to us to clear up the mess.

been asked why God didn't stop the disaster. "It is because Japanese don't know the God of the Bible. In the world of eight million gods, things are quite arbitrary. Gods might punish us, but when things happen, it's up to us to clear up the mess."

Digging deeper into the Japanese psyche, she explained, "One of the reasons why 99% of the population is not Christian is that Christianity is still seen as something from the west, not Japanese. If people think in this way, for them, becoming a Christian is becoming un-Japanese, which is very problematic. Man is known to have lived on this land for millions of years. Indigenous religions grew which influenced even Buddhism which arrived in Japan in the 6th century. Protestant Christianity has only been here for a little over 150 years."

Yoshie ended our discussion with hope. "Our Creator and Redeemer can use this crisis so that Christianity becomes something more than a superficial veneer. It is up to us, His labourers, to make Jesus meaningful for those who desperately need Him." 卍

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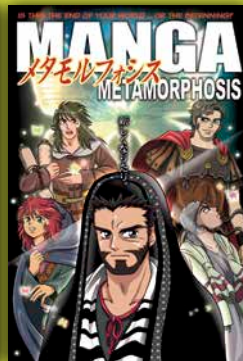
— Paul Nethercott

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Ordinary Objects, New Significance

By Caitlin Potter

Iron weights that wound the cuckoo clock dangling from my hand. Plastic hanging blinds in my office. Water in my small fish tank. Ordinary objects, in the context of great stress and tragedy, take on new significance. Ever since that moment—by which of course I mean March 11, 2:46 p.m.—I have an object in every room to counteract my jumpy nerves. I feel tremors everywhere—are the weights rocking? Are the blinds swinging? Yes: grab my son and cling to the door frame. No: ok, calm down.

In the midst of chaos, we humans exhibit a desperate urge to speak, to justify, to “rage against the dying of the light,” to explain (or at least to ask) why—a compulsion I sometimes feel would be better spent in listening. But somehow, we must speak: “Where were you

when?” “Do you know anyone there?” “Have you heard about?” Our thinking is so linked we no longer need antecedents, everyone knows when “then” was, and where “there” is. Old clichés carry refreshed meaning: we’re a bit shaken up. Rock my world indeed! We became instant experts in seiverts (both micro and milli), Geiger counters, the Richter scale.

But? When I surface from my obsessive perusal of web pages—NHK, Facebook, BBC, Gmail, Japan Meteorological Association Earthquake sensor—I smell daphne and home baked bread. I see friends walking on the path with their dachshunds and poodles. Self Defense Force helicopters rattle my windows (no, it’s not another aftershock, my cuckoo clock weights are motionless), but so does the sound of my neighbor’s

chainsaw as he confronts the bamboo in his yard. The river still flows from the mountains, past my house, out to Tokyo Bay. Ordinary objects, in their new context, take on new significance.

In my grade 12 English class, we read the opening chapters of Madeline L’Engle’s *Walking on Water* where she borrows a phrase from Leonard Bernstein: “music is cosmos, found in the midst of chaos.” Although I don’t understand why, I must acknowledge that it is part of God’s nature to trickle streams through deserts, to garden in wildernesses, and to root rich restoration right smack in the middle of shocking chaos. But, don’t get confused; it isn’t that God celebrates chaos or that wildflowers somehow undermine the bleakness of wildernesses. Earthquakes are terrifying; the death of any one person is the utmost tragedy. It is actually possible that God grieves over this week even more than we do. It is actually possible that he loves the world so much.

So where does God’s tendency to root restoration in the middle of chaos leave me? Like the poet Milton going blind or the composer Beethoven going deaf, I wrestle with the knowledge that my own humanity, my circumstances, often hamper my gifts. What can I do, sitting at home with a dog, a cat and a five month old teething son who suddenly refuses to nap anywhere but in my arms? Being human, I want to be center stage, to be front line, to be interviewed by the news, to be the subject of the “Did you hear about?” How will all of this get solved unless I fix everything? Wait a minute. Is that really what I think of God, that he can’t fix this unless I get my hands on every truck driving supplies to Sendai, on every piece of rubble hiding survivors? No, my job is to trust, not to be God. I pray. I welcome strangers into my home for the night. I listen to my neighbor’s stories. I hold my sleeping son. 卍

THE GOD OF TRANSITIONS

By Kathryn Fleming with Shirley Corder



On the morning of Friday, March 11, I folded up the corner of my daily reading without really knowing why. “Adjusting . . . is saying goodbye to that which is no longer true for us,” I read. “It has to do with coming to terms with our past while being able to face the future, however uncertain that may be.” Little did I know how prophetic these words would prove.

At 2:46 pm, one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded slammed Japan’s eastern coast, triggering a ferocious tsunami. I was in the pool when the quake hit, and at first

didn’t think it was that bad. Then the building began to move, and I wondered if the roof would fall in. As I ran to the changing room, the glass wall alongside the pool imploded. I fell to the ground in the changing room and prayed for my daughter Julia (11) at her school. Her classroom is in an old building on the third floor. It would surely collapse. I prayed four words aloud over and over: “Jesus Christ, save Julia.”

The earthquake seemed to last forever. Some ladies yelled to get out of the building. I changed

quickly and ran to Julia’s school, praying and singing all the way, “Jesus, Jesus how I trust thee . . .”

To my intense relief, I saw the school standing and the kids lined up outside on the playground. Monthly drills prepared them well.

Rob, my husband, was already there in his van. We made it home safely, though the ground moved incessantly with hundreds of tremors.

That night, the sky was glorious with a shining moon and millions of stars, punctuated by the roving lights of helicopters. Our devotions consisted of a prayer and one verse of Scripture: “Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed.” (Isaiah 54:10 NIV) Woohoo!

We later learned that the earthquake registered a Richter scale magnitude of 9 at its epicentre. In our city, Hitachinaka, it registered 6 plus, and that was bad enough.

As aftershocks rocked our city, I returned to Friday morning’s meditation, struggling to come to terms with our recent past. The words rang true: we knew we must face the future, impossible as the future was to imagine. “The familiar contours of our world fade. Faith turns to fear. Answers become questions. And we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory with no road maps.” Indeed.

Yet . . . I found encouragement in the words at the end of the reflection: “Above all, it will involve making the wonderful discovery that the

God of our previous certainties and our familiar world is much greater than that. He is also the God of the difficult transitions and the God of our uncertain future.”

Over the next days, we constantly saw Him to be the God of transitions. Our future remains uncertain, but God is God. We see this in so many ways. For example, a week after the monster quake, we were without water and did not expect to have any until the end of March. Water tanks emptied and the city ran short of gas for the cars.

Rob went to the Hitachi church building (our first church plant 15 km to the north) for the first time since the quake. Passing the Hitachi fish market, which is at sea level, he looked in awe at cars lodged in trees.

As he left the church building, two trucks and a van arrived, bringing 1,500 litres of water to Hitachi. When the drivers realized the city had water, they asked Rob if he knew of a place that needed their supply. Of course he said, “our subdivision in Hitachinaka City.” He phoned me at once, and I ran to tell the neighborhood. People flocked happily to the park with empty bottles, chatting and sharing stories,

Yu-chan, a Christian single mother of two young children and

member of our new church plant, was staying with us at the time. After stocking up on water, we hosted Yu’s mother for the evening meal. She had no water, gas or electricity. The two ladies brought a supply of Japanese food from their fridges and we enjoyed a wonderful spread.

Our daughter Tess (18) and son Grady (15) were due to arrive in Tokyo from the Philippines the next day for their spring vacation, and we looked forward to seeing them again. We were particularly concerned that Julia would have a good time with them. She was experiencing headaches and not feeling well.

After a few days, life settled. Yu-chan’s mother once again had water in Hitachi City, so Yu and her two children were able to move there.

We shared a wonderful time, laughing, crying, and learning. Our home became “a place of springs.”

Rob got gas for the car. This required waiting in a long queue for several hours, but he made the most of the time, preparing a sermon. Julia returned to school two days a week and completed her Grade 5 year. We enjoyed Tess and Grady, who flew back to the Philippines on March 28.

We are privileged to be here at this time. Undergirded with prayer and encouragement, we cannot adequately thank those who supported us. Words from Psalm 84:5,6 sustain me: “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca,

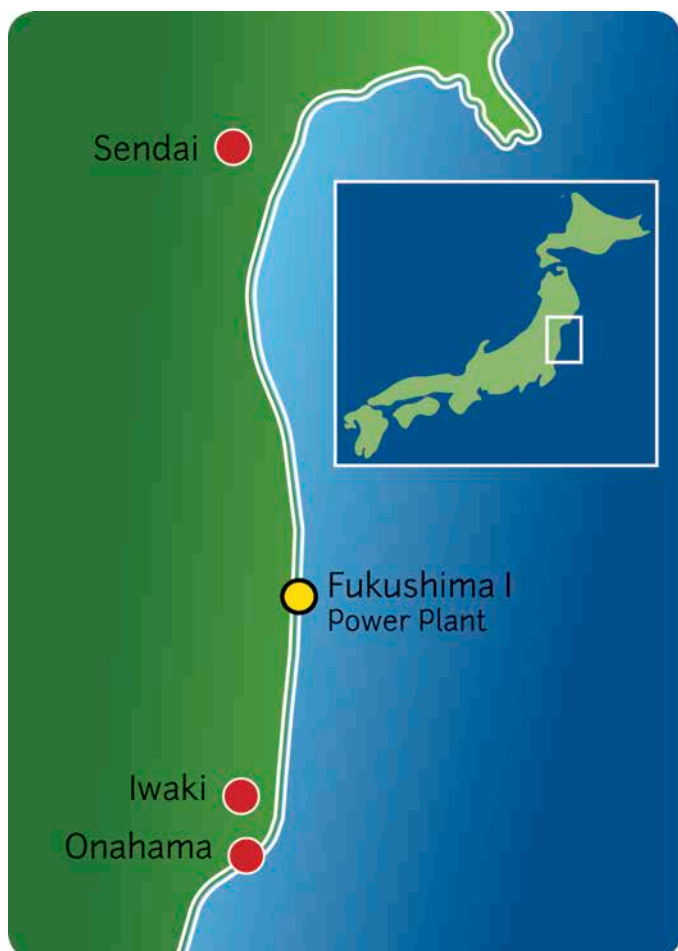


they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.” (NIV)

Truly, unbeknownst to me, my morning devotions on March 11 prepared me for the days to come. God shows Himself to be God throughout difficult transitions and remains the God of our uncertain future. JH

IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

By Anniken Steineger Mori, April 6, 2011



When my pastor-husband watched the fire from next door demolishing our little church building 16 months ago, he sensed God's clear voice in his heart: "I will give you a new building. Enter a new season!"

Shortly after, we were offered the opportunity to buy a three storey former Japanese Inn and "Pachinko" containing 700 square meters on land with 30 parking spots in the central part of Taira, in Iwaki City. Several church members left us when we decided to go for it and remodel the first floor into a chapel, café and Christian bookstore. The building was 30 years old, but

the second and third floors had been refurbished lately and had several offices, three modern kitchens, six bedrooms and both Western and Japanese large living room areas. (The church that burnt down was on rented land and had no commercial value. We had no savings, but through the insurance money and lots of offerings we had not asked for, we were able to pay two-thirds of the price of the new building.)

While waiting for the

substantial bank loan we've needed to refurbish the first floor, we used the former "pachinko" area for our services since last July. The floor smelt from the two years it had been a storeroom for tires and fridges and other things. But it worked, and fortunately God sent more and more young people to us with a calling to work in Iwaki City, which now is getting famous for its vicinity to the Fukushima nuclear power plants.

The Great East Japan Earthquake

This quake measured 6+ in Iwaki. I was on the second floor of our "Global Mission Center" and for

those long five minutes in intense prayer, I must admit I feared the jolting and shaking building would collapse over us five under the spacious Swedish table. But only some plates and cups in the kitchen went to pieces.

Looking around outside everything looked amazingly okay, apart from some rifts in the road and some old stone-fences that fell over. Our home on the mountain was also fine.

Since the most northern part

of our city is within the

30 km radius, Iwaki was

considered "unclean

territory". Supplies stopped

arriving for fear of radiation,

and stores closed down.

But then most of us in this city of 350, 000 people discovered that we no longer had water in our pipes, nor gas, and some not even electricity.

Tsunami

Watching the cruel all-eating monster-wave steadily changing the landscape in Miyagi Prefecture on TV, my heart screamed for all the people I knew living along the coast of Fukushima and Iwate. But the next ten days brought only good news concerning all the Christians I knew. What a joy in the middle



Tokyo ladies making onigiri (rice balls)

of all the sorrow for the Japanese people, to get calls from dear ones I thought must be dead.

Here in Iwaki City one of our church members lives right by the shore of the Pacific. The waves crashed into the second floor of her house and her car was thrust on into the forest, but she and her daughter-in-law, carrying one child each and soaking wet, managed to escape on their feet. Another member living near the harbor of Onahama town (70,000 inhabitants), saw the tsunami stop three houses away from her home. In our Onahama house-church building, nothing was even moved inside. But the aquarium just by the sea was damaged, and its 200,000 fish died because of electric black-out. Praise the Lord that all the tanks of petroleum and cement at the harbor proved safe!

One little old seashore village, Toyoma, is said to be completely wiped out and other fishing communities in Iwaki are severely damaged and full of twisted trash.

arriving for fear of radiation, and stores closed down. In just a few days after March 11, our place of calling turned into something close to a ghost town for around 10-12 days. People fled in a steady stream. Even the leaders we needed to make the society function disappeared, and hungry citizens tried to find the seldom store that could offer something to eat. No messages went out from the city hall to the different neighborhoods. But local TV and radio informed us where the closest water car was.

One hundred refugee places, mostly school gyms, became shelters in our city for people who had lost their homes more or less, or for people fleeing from radiation.

A Deserted City

For Iwaki the worst though seems to be the ongoing crisis at the power plants. Since the most northern part of our city is within the 30 km radius, Iwaki was considered "unclean territory". Supplies stopped

An Opposite Stream

Nobody in our church will ever more complain that their pastor, Akira Mori, has spent so much time serving in other parts of Japan. Our precious brothers and sisters in Chiba, Tokyo, Nara, Osaka, Nagano, Miyakejima, Ibaraki and so on have faithfully and steadily brought tons of supplies every day since the 16th of March. They arrived even before the military!

Ladies in a precious church in Chiba made two thousand *onigiri*, rice balls! We received kerosene for our stoves and fuel for our cars while people here waited in line for hours to get a limited amount.

Our Oasis

Now we understood the delay of the bank loan (which came last week). We had 300m² to use as a storeroom for all the supplies. For almost a week, until the neighboring store opened again, the first floor also functioned as a free market for anyone in need. What a privilege it was to talk to people everywhere and tell them we had all they needed in the church!



Pastor Mori

Our building even had water in its pipes all the time after the quake. The first days it housed members and friends without water who felt safer in our Global Center. On the 15th we evacuated small children and their mothers and young ladies to our friends' pension in Tochigi Prefecture. From being a shelter the Center then immediately turned into a rescue worker's camp.

A Rescue Worker's Camp

Around 15 of our church members that stayed behind in Iwaki linked beautifully with guests who brought their sleeping bags and wanted to serve with us for a day or two, even a week. All the rooms have been occupied by friends from far and near and amazing ladies have provided nutritious food three times a day. More than once, 40 hungry workers have enjoyed dinner at our church.

Every day starts with a prayer meeting at six in the morning. Then in the midst of constant calls the leadership team must discern the greatest need that day. One of our "Operation-leaders" has been in constant contact with the city hall for information.

The first days we had the privilege of taking food, water, healthy drinks, diapers and so on to the desperate needy in old people's nursing homes and the refugee shelters.

Two weeks after the Great Quake the need shifted more to mental care. The Lord sent us several gospel singers that could sing and speak in the evacuation centers after some good warming up of stiff limbs by gymnastic exercises, *taichi* and even hula-hula dance through a Hawaiian lady.

Two weeks ago my husband met 50 persons at a shelter who had barely escaped by running in the above mentioned village, Toyoma, that was totally ruined. They were still in the same clothes that they had fled in and ate only bread 3 times a day. Akira, my husband, then started giving warm foot baths (*ashiyu*) and our

"Usually Japanese say

they are OK

and do not need help,

but when our workers start

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bits of glass

and trash anyway,

they open up and show

thankfulness.

This is a wonderful chance to

reach the hearts

of this precious people."

workers also made and served warm soup full of vegetables and meat in huge pots at shelters in the evening.

The shelters are now fewer and less crowded since water supplies are back in most places since the end of March, but still our work is much in demand.

Clearing Up the Rubble

Another important part of our work is to help people retrieve their yards and homes. Usually Japanese say they are OK and do not need help, but when our workers start picking up and removing bits of glass and trash anyway, they open up and show thankfulness. This is a wonderful chance to reach the hearts of this precious people.

Last Sunday we decided to start a

"Global Mission Non Profit Organization" as part of our work in order to lead on in building up our city. First of all we will start paying people in need of a job for clearing up rubble. Since last week people have returned to Iwaki, but many have lost their jobs. Today we got the first five workers.

Our vision is to create several mission centers along this coast.

Just Being in the Right Place . . .

I seem to be the only Norwegian living in this havoaked coastline of East Japan. I have been the object of lots of interviews by my country's mass-media asking why I do not obey the Norwegian Government's appeal to leave the area within 80 km from the critical reactors. (Our church is 40 km away).

I have tried to tell them we as a pastor pair just naturally have to stay with our people, and as the captain in the sinking ship, be the last to leave. It has been wonderful to be able to share with all Norway about our friends and contacts in other parts of Japan venturing against the stream and turning our Center into a vessel of loving action for those in need in Iwaki.

"Why are you so calm?", a journalist asked me." I can only say it comes from Bible verses and prayer to God," was my honest reply. I have a sprained back and can do so little lifting, but just being here praying and encouraging seems to be my task. It has been the most terrible, but also most wonderful time in my life! And by the way, until now the air has been absolutely breathable! I have taken my walk in the forest here almost every day as before!

Even tougher times lie ahead, but God is our Refuge and Provider and the coming of Christ is closer than we might imagine. Let us listen to the Lord first of all and not to the panicking voices of the world! "God did not give a spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, love and a sound mind"! 卍

Opportunities Abound

by Cal and Edie Cummings

Cal and Edie Cummings are missionaries based in Sendai. They've been extensively involved in ministry since the earthquake. Here are some excerpts from their Facebook notes:

18 March (Edie)

Our small Japanese house is being used as a base for some supplies that our son Luke and his friends brought up from Tokyo three days after the earthquake. Cal was able to give our neighbors cup ramen, my bread and a few other things today. They were extremely grateful as they are running low on food. Cal also took some food to one of our elderly pastors and his wife today. Pastor T. and Cal took more supplies to Okino elementary school (also near the ocean and near where we used to have a cooking and Bible class). They were thrilled to receive the food and supplies. He said the only things they didn't want were the Skippy peanut butter and spaghetti sauce!

Thank you for your continued prayers for this country and our precious Japanese friends. Please pray for wisdom to know where to go, enough food and other supplies to take, relationships with neighbors, victims, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

19 March (Edie)

Today has been a busy day for Cal, the Lauers, our boys and their friends. The boys were able to take goods (diapers, water, etc.) out to Shichigahama shelters and distribute them. They were able to meet our OMF missionary friend Rod Thomas. The Thomas's lost their car in the tsunami but amazingly

their house is still standing!

Woody, Laurie, David, his wife and another church member drove four two-ton flatbed trucks overnight. They had loaded up at Yokohama Costco with food—rice, dried food, curry, flour (for Tsuruko and I to bake a **ton** of bread) clothing, bedding, other necessities. As I write this, Cal and Woody are still distributing supplies to various RCJ (Reformed Church of Japan) churches. They delivered goods to Megumi church, East Sendai church, Sendai church, Kita Nakayama church and finally are on their way to Watari to meet Pastor H. so he can distribute to the shelters. All the pastors were extremely grateful for what they received because the church friends and neighborhood people are all running out of food and basic necessities.

21 March (Cal)

Nearly every day has been filled with innumerable opportunities to share the gospel of hope in Christ in the midst of this disaster. As the shelters are being supplied, the neighborhoods are now becoming a focus of need as people are unable to get out due to age, sickness, or no gas. Plus no supermarkets are open so those who had been saying they are fine are now realizing their vulnerability and are accepting our gifts with deep gratitude.

From church I went to East Sendai and delivered some liquid gold, in the form of gasoline, so the pastor could get around to the needy in his church and neighborhood. They had already delivered much of what we had left in his church to the local



school and were actively inviting people to share in another load that we delivered Saturday.

While I was there I was able to share with a neighbor that fact that these goods were a gift from God. She thanked me for those words and then we were able to add, "But there is even a greater gift that God gives us through His Son Jesus." Then she said, "O yes I remember the U. family. I came to Sunday school here." Pastor T. extended a further invitation to come and visit her and to welcome her to the church as well.

Everywhere we go we are able to share this same message of the Bread of Life, The Good Shepherd, The Living Water. Pray that the Lord will bless the testimony of His grace to these lives that have been devastated. JH



Search for Answers

By John Elliot



From town to town, we see glimpses of strange anomalies and strong hope.

first floors. One man told how his bed-ridden father floated in his room for an hour until the water receded.

of it is just garbage. Acres and acres of garbage; everything imaginable mixed in a vile mountain that is, frankly, beginning to smell. The photos are graphic, but they just don't communicate the smell.

Ohzuchi was beyond belief. There, we found them, the illusive "lost people." The towns on the coast cluster along the waterfront, and up into the steep gullies at the foot of the mountains. The wave - how high was it here? It jammed an impenetrable wall of debris against the mountains and cut these gullies off from the outside. The few who managed to scramble to safety in the mere five minutes between siren and wave are now only connected to the outside world via narrow muddy trails. They get supplies from the emergency center—an old school—and lug them back to their houses, which are undamaged but without water and electricity for the foreseeable future.

Emergency services reach out, but there is a gulf between these survivors and restored services: one thousand power poles fallen, the



In Ofunato a small church is anxious for help cleaning the building so they can continue services. Windows are broken; everything is soaked in smelly water, two inches of slippery mud, and a layer of broken glass.

In the surrounding neighborhood, water rose to the middle of the

We carried a woman's heavy washing machine out to the yard for disposal. Everything is ruined.

Further downtown, the destruction is much worse, but hard to describe. Strange anomalies: boats on city streets, cars on roofs, houses stacked on top of one another. Most

town office destroyed, along with the town's decision makers. The town Emergency Response Center is gone, along with all contingency plans and the people to implement them. This is a small town, among the last to be reached by rescue workers.

Little clusters of survivors, separated by spurs of mountain, adapt in varying degrees. Those with dynamic, imaginative leaders fashion a water line from a mountain stream, directing it into a salvaged bathtub, which is heated by a fire in a halved oil drum. They sit around scavenged tables in someone's yard, concocting a huge pot of soup from relief supplies.

Handwritten signs direct us to the next enclave. Two ladies and a man meet us, anxious to share their stories, and ask for information.

I wonder, "Why they are still stuck there?" A backhoe juts up above the rubble, not more than 50

yards away, and Japan Self Defense Force personnel busily remove downed power lines in preparation for clearing the road. Surely they would be connected in no time?

"Oh no, it will take a couple of days at least," one lady comments. "There are probably 40 corpses in there, and they have to stop and deal with each." She is very matter of fact, although she would know most of those people. Tears press close to the surface, then she rallies and continues her story. As we talk, a little girl skips down the street from the undamaged houses behind us. The woman smiles.

"The kids think it's a lark." The tears surface again.

"When I hear the children's voices in the morning, it gives me the only hope I have."

Their dignity is impressive. They have not bathed in days; they have no clean clothes.

"What do you need?"

"Underwear. Medicine for our elderly. Hand disinfectant. Cold medicine. A radio for local news. Batteries. Heating oil."

"Detergent?" I ventured.

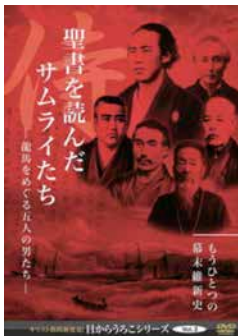
"We have no water," she replied flatly.

"Soap? Shampoo?"

"Shampoo!" Her eyes lit up. It was as though she had forgotten the existence of shampoo. "Yes, shampoo. With a little water, we can wash and massage the old folks. And wash my hair." She smiled ruefully as she tugged at her hair. "It's been days."

We rally around tomorrow's plans. Teams are coming! Volunteers from Japan and abroad. Coming with supplies, coming to help. Where will they stay? Have they brought enough food and fuel? Can we get to the people who need help? Tomorrow we go back in; tomorrow we sharpen our focus; tomorrow we need some answers. JH

Christian Impact on Japanese History



Samurai Who Read the Bible (Seisho o Yonda Samuraitachi)

Home use DVD #49981 ¥3,990

Church/Group public showing use DVD #49982 ¥6,090

53-minute documentary plus 20 extra minutes in extra features. Host Yuri Mori interviews Yoshimasa Moribe. Five Samurai who surrounded Sakamoto Ryoma encountered the Bible and Christianity 150 years ago. Little known, surprising facts reveal that the Bible had a great influence on these men, including Saigo Takamori and Katsu Kaishu, and thus on Japanese history and culture.



Samurai Who Read the Bible

(Seisho o Yonda Samuraitachi), by Yoshimasa Moribe.

Impact of Bible in the Meiji Era. Some former Samurai, such as Jo Niijima, Inazo Nitobe and Yukichi Fukuzawa, encountered Christianity and exerted great influence on Japanese culture. Forest Books. B6 size, HC, 160 pp. ISBN978-4-264-02783-6 (11270) ¥1,260



Eternal Homeland (Towa no Furusato)

Home use DVD #49979 ¥3,990

Church/Group public showing use DVD #49980 ¥6,090

50 minutes plus 25 minutes extra. Documentary with Yuri Mori singing and narrating the amazing history of children's school songs in Japan. Luther Mason set up the music education system in Japan and introduced hymns and songs based on hymn tunes that influenced the development of modern Japanese music. Keichi Okano, who wrote "Furusato" (Homeland), was probably thinking of heaven when he wrote the song.



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Clockwise from top left. Damaged church sanctuary holds donated supplies; Japanese lady scavenging in the rubble; irretrievable piano; emotional worship in Tokyo church post-March 11.



I Believe in Small Groups!

by Dan Ellrick, pastor of Osaka International Church and husband of
Karen Ellrick, producer of Japan Video Praise

I scrambled to find my cell phone as it buzzed repeatedly. Finally I found it, flipped it open, and hit the button. "Moshi moshi?" Keiko's voice bubbled as she updated me on the latest news from her Alpha Course. "When can we have a baptism? We have ten members now and some are thinking of getting baptized, and I think some will come to leadership training too!" We laughed together as I reminded her of how cold the Kamo River was when she was baptized there in March of 2009. In less than two years, Keiko has made the journey from baptism to small group leader - producing not only new believers, but new leaders as well. I am a fan of the Alpha Course, and Alpha was important for Keiko in her journey to faith and in her first steps toward learning to lead a small group - the Alpha Course videos, books, and small group leader training materials are very helpful. But I think the key ingredient for Keiko and others like her has been participation in an encouraging and supportive small group.

Almost 90% of the decisions for Christ that we see in our ministry come out of small groups. Interestingly, the most effective groups have often been those led by Christians who are young in their faith. These new leaders sometimes make mistakes, but they have an important advantage over missionaries and pastors - no one calls them *sensei*. The best small groups create an atmosphere where people talk freely about their questions, doubts, and fears, but many Japanese people find it difficult to speak freely if a *sensei* is in the room. However, when the group leader has only been a Christian for a short time, it is easy to explain that they are only a facilitator and not a teacher. This gives everyone the freedom to speak freely, and it also releases the new leaders from feeling like they have to have all the answers.

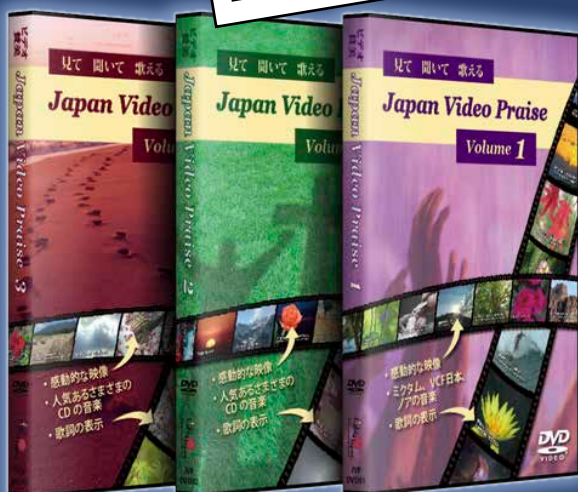
I don't have all the answers either; I am constantly learning new things. But I know that although it isn't easy to form effective small groups, with prayer and patience

it can be done. Obstacles and problems come up, but solutions can be found. One issue that used to come up a lot was lack of musicians. It is possible to have a successful small group without music, but it is much easier with good music. Music helps people relax and open their hearts to the Lord. Potential leaders often used to feel that they couldn't start a new group unless someone volunteered to do the music. But now with Japan Video Praise, we have a ready solution for high quality Japanese praise and worship music. I have been surprised to notice that some groups actually prefer to use the DVDs even when a musician is available. Maybe they like the feeling of everyone in the group being as equal as possible, or maybe they like feeling free to say which songs they like and don't like.

There are other good tools as well, but with the Alpha Course and Japan Video Praise, good teaching and good music for new small groups are available "out-of-the-box." Add a few on-fire Christians and a day or two of small group facilitator training, and good things can begin happening very quickly. Praise the Lord!

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Early Surveys Reveal Devastation and Hope

By Roz Stimpson with Wendy Marshall



As soon as the earth stopped shaking on March 11, those of us who felt it sought information. Where was the epicentre? How big was it? What damage has been done? Soon we knew way more than we wanted to know. Before we could settle our beating hearts, the world was here with their cameras capturing the pain that descended on Japan that day. The secular media was not interested in mobilising relief or support for the victims of this disaster, however others made early trips to the affected area. These were people who love the Japanese. These were people who wanted to find out how to help.

Joey Millard conducted an early survey of damage. In an interview on March 15, Millard said he saw, “piles of debris three to five feet deep, covering the land as far as you can see”, on farmland several kilometres inland.

He and three others didn’t just survey the damage, they took five thousand dollars worth of food supplies as well as diapers, infant formula and other essentials to people in assisted living quarters and evacuees in

Sendai. His family’s summer home is located in Shichigahama (“Seven beaches”): “I spent many summers as a boy on the very beach that was hit, as my kids have in more recent years.”

Although much of the news coverage of the quake and tsunami’s effect has been focused on the coastline, Foxwell said that cracked roads and bridges, even a long way inland, meant the normally five-hour journey took nearly fourteen hours. Foxwell also spoke of a town he drove through: “You could see for a couple of miles straight out towards the sea. It had just been flattened.”

Accompanied by startling pictures of the wreckage and continued details of the destroyed towns and roads, Foxwell seemed at first to be imparting hopelessness

Sendai.

Phil Foxwell also did an early assessment of the damage. He explained during an interview that, “My objective was to get up there and try to understand if there was any way we could constructively help.” Foxwell is well acquainted

and a portrayal of utter devastation. However, he added light to the darkness when we learned that he found approximately two dozen of his close friends in shelters or around the area, many more than he had expected to still be alive. In addition, he had pulled out of the rubble a sign with ‘The Lord is My Way’ written upon it in Japanese. Amidst the devastation, came an overwhelming reminder that it is God who will lead everyone, Christian or not, in times like these and—although the paths may be broken and difficult to travel because of adversity, it is important to remember that ‘The Lord is My Way’. Every element of this work relies heavily on the Lord’s will and guidance.

C.R.A.S.H—Christian Relief Assistance Support and Hope (a ministry networking Christians to do relief work through local churches, in Japan and around the world) volunteers delved into the rubble in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, conducting surveys and gaining insight into the real damage. ‘CRASH equips and prepares churches and missions to be there to help



their communities when disasters strike and coordinates Christian volunteers to work with local ministries in the event of a disaster'. (<http://march2011japanearthquaketsunami.blogspot.com/>)

Early on in the wake of the disaster, the CRASH command centre in Tokyo grappled with the difficult task of whom, when and where to help in the affected areas of Japan, but also with the responsibility of sifting through the immense number of new volunteers willing to help.

Bryan Thompson, a member of the CRASH leadership team wrote the following on his blog: "Serving at the CRASH Japan earthquake relief command centre has been an incredible experience so far. I've never been a part of such a chaotic, urgent and difficult task, infused with the patience, grace, cooperation and mutual support that I believe can only be found in the body of Christ".

On March 18, a week after the disaster, another advance team went to

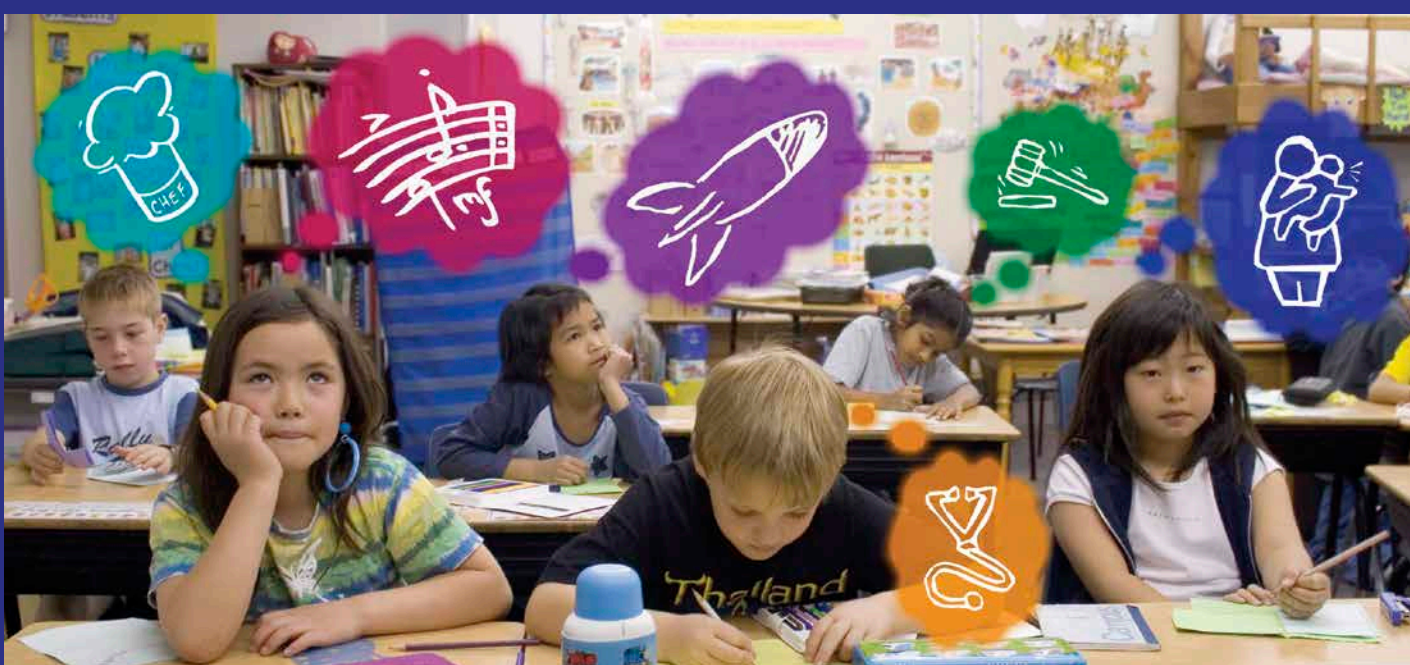
assess the needs. Two OMF missionaries from the unaffected areas of Tohoku sought to provide information needed for CRASH to set up another base for aid work in the area. They reported they'd seen worse than the images on TV news reports. They also found encouraging news, "We visited a church near the coast that had been spared by the wave by 15 feet. This small congregation of 12 had considered closing the church, but now feel that God has a purpose for them: To help those suffering from this calamity."

Food and water are now reaching these areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami, however the people affected still have many desperate needs. As the situation changes, so does the work of CRASH. CRASH and similar organisations are still faced with a tremendous task. It is important to remember that the Lord has his hand in this relief effort. God is indeed working through this disaster. He can bring about a change for the better. JH



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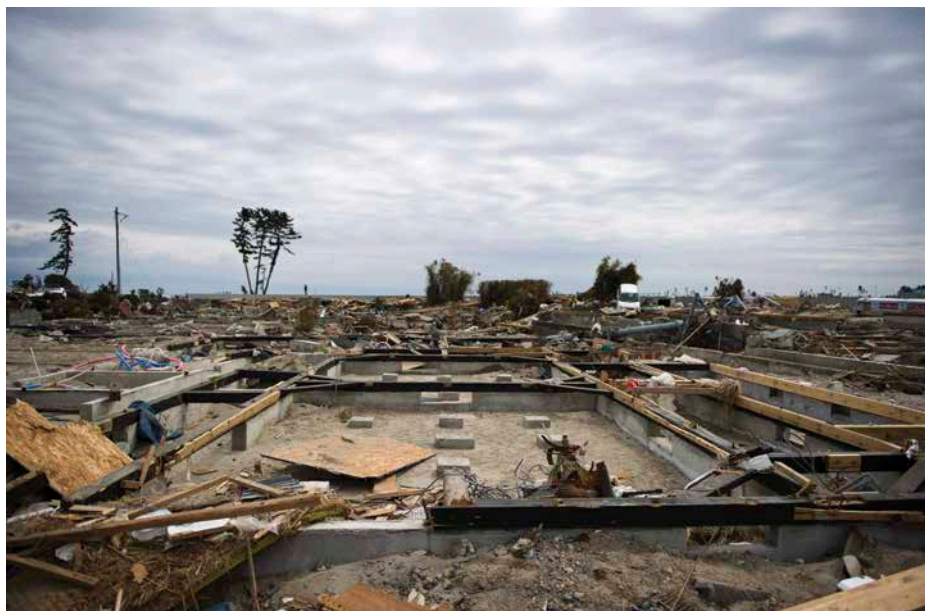
Love Greater than a Tsunami

By Elmer Inafuku
with Shirley Corder

On March 18-20, we made our first trip to Miyagi following the earthquake and tsunami of March 11. There we met Hiroshi Minegishi, pastor of First Bible Baptist Church of Kesenuma, and his wife, Yoshiko. Kesenuma, a city with a population of 70,000, was one of the hardest hit with a death toll of 2,000. In addition to the shocking destruction, the city was also engulfed in a raging fire that burned all night.

When the earthquake struck at 2:46 p.m., Pastor Minegishi was working in his church office. Earthquakes happen frequently in this area, and they actually had one just a few days prior to the big one. The tsunami warnings sounded then as well. However on March 11, the jolt was so strong that Pastor Minegishi sensed it was different.

He had worked at a nuclear power plant in the past and was trained to check the sea as soon as a quake occurred. He ran for his car and rushed to the sea to check whether it was receding. Although there didn't seem to be a strong recession, the warning sirens continued to blare, so he decided to follow his instincts. He rushed home, collected his wife and daughter, and headed for higher ground. The roads were still clear, and they were able to leave the area



“The First Bible Baptist Church of Kesenuma is not the only church which was swept away. Here we see that the foundation is all that remains of Seaside Bible Chapel in Sendai, Japan. The pastor of this church did not evacuate and was saved by his wife who drove to pick him up. As they were driving away, they saw the waves come over the barriers.”

without any problem. Forty minutes later, the deadly tsunami thundered onto the shores.

Many people weren't sure whether there would be a tsunami. By the time they realized the warning was for real, it was too late. As they tried to make a getaway in their cars, the roads were jammed, and the traffic snarled to a stop. The tsunami crushed them in its relentless path.

Pastor Minegishi returned to his church and home the next day. To his horror he found both had been completely swept away. Nothing was left. The congregation had built a new church sanctuary just three years before, but now they had lost everything. Pastor Minegishi loves to read. Through the years he had collected thousands of books covering many Christian as well as secular topics. Every single book in his library was washed away. He says he felt like Job must have felt when he lost everything—except Job also lost his business and even his children.

This experience has caused Pastor Minegishi to realize the value of God's love—far above all material possessions. The pastor has renewed his dedication to God and wants

more than ever to love Him and live for His purpose. Today, the pastor often quotes Song of Solomon 8:7a, “Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.” (NIV)

As much as 80% of some areas of Kesenuma have been demolished. Yet Pastor Minegishi feels a strong calling and burden for the people of his city. He wants to impart hope and life to them in the midst of this catastrophe. A few days ago, he found a large farmhouse which he can use as a storage space. He plans to receive relief goods and distribute them to the afflicted in his city. And as he is able to, he would like to purchase land on higher ground and build a new church sanctuary there, where it will be safe from tsunamis.

Praise God, we have been able to send in trucks carrying tons of materials and many people to come alongside Pastor Minegishi and his local team in their work with the displaced and grieving people of this devastated city of Kesenuma. JH

Hokkaido Churches Unite for Greater Impact in Northern Honshu

By Tim Clark

“I’m scared about what will happen after we finish cleaning up,” a woman in Otsuchi Town told Yui Masuda of Grace Community. Her comment reflected deep fear in her heart two weeks after all was lost in the earthquake and tsunami.

“This lady and others are currently busy cleaning their homes and searching for loved ones. But soon that work will be finished. Yet life won’t return to normal and they will be left with profound emptiness,” reported Masuda, Youth Pastor of his church in Sapporo, following a trip to aid communities in northern Honshu.

The team included Masuda and three young leaders from Grace Community. They ministered in towns which experienced damage and death but were so isolated that they received little help in recovery. The team’s ministry was a part of a strategic focus of churches in Hokkaido to partner with churches in northern Honshu.

This strategy is being developed by Hocmin, the Hokkaido Christian Mission Network, a group of about 15 churches. Hocmin’s original purposes were to support churches without pastors and introduce single Christians to one another. That has been expanded to include uniting churches for recovery work.

Hocmin’s strategy is based on the belief that the impact of recovery



Christians unite for prayer and recovery work.

work can be multiplied as congregations work together. Hocmin is helping usher in greater unity in the Church in three ways:

1. Bringing Christians of multiple churches together on each relief team;
2. Having teams work with several churches in northern Honshu, which gives local churches increased opportunity to join one another in serving their communities; and
3. Holding Sapporo-wide prayer gatherings.

The team Masuda was a part of included thirteen people from six congregations. “I felt nervous at first to be working with so many people I didn’t know,” reported Manae Shinoda, the team’s youngest member at age 19. “It was a new experience to work with people from many different churches. But the warmth of the other members helped me relax. I’m thankful to have been able to serve with these new friends.”

“It’s important to look beyond denominational differences,” says Ryoichi Masuda, Senior Pastor of Grace Community. “Now is the time for churches in Hokkaido to unite to powerfully share Christ through recovery and relief work. We can get to northern Honshu more easily than people from the south and west. It

makes sense for us to focus our efforts there.”

The vastness of the devastation, even far north of the areas we see in the news, heightens the need for unified efforts. “I was surprised how much work and time each bit of clean up takes,” reported Taka Ichikawa of Sapporo. “In places where there was total collapse of buildings we could see many Self Defense Force workers. But in other places there was nobody helping. We found elderly people on their own sorting through heavy rubbish with no one to assist.”

As Yui Masuda reflected on the comments of the woman from Otsuchi Town, he grew more concerned for the next stages of recovery. “Some may feel attacked by their deep feelings of emptiness once the clean-up is finished and they’re left to face the realities of their loss. Perhaps we’ll see greater numbers of violent acts such as rape and suicide. We must remember that being ‘neighbor’ to these people means ministering to their hearts as we help with the cleanup.”

Pray that as Christians in Hokkaido unite to serve, many of those experiencing profound loss and emptiness will discover the abundant life found only in Jesus Christ. ^{JH}

Making Connections

By Tim Cole

The Tohoku Earthquake/Tsunami disaster has hit me especially hard, since I was born in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Ken (about 50km north east of Sendai). I still have friends and acquaintances there from my parents' church planting days.

Nevertheless, it wasn't until three weeks after the quake that I was finally able to visit the area. After a joyful reunion with the Ishinomaki church folks, we took off for the neighboring town of Onagawa (pop. 10,000), another place I had visited frequently as a child. Coming over the hill between the two cities, I couldn't believe the devastation which met my eyes. This whole town had literally been destroyed, and its 8,000 survivors were all in evacuation.

Driving out the far side of town



we came upon a remote Zen Buddhist temple, which housed approximately 100 evacuees. The priest was politely cool, until discovering he and I had attended the same kindergarten. After we made this connection we had a warm conversation, and our supplies were welcomed. His wife laughingly suggested he get lessons from us on how to preach. We saw the tears in their eyes as we listened to

their stories and struggles of having suddenly become host and hostess to 100 guests under these circumstances.

An hour later as we left they gave us a sincere invitation to return. We realized how personal connections and long term involvement are especially going to be the keys to sharing Christ with these precious people who have suffered so much. 卍

Imparting Hope with a Free New Evangelism Tool

In April, *OneHope* (formerly *Book of Hope*) and New Life Ministries are releasing a special evangelism tool for use with relief efforts in the northeast. This new booklet includes selections from the Psalms and an article written by Eisuke Kanda, "When the Foundations of Life are Shaken". Kanda sensei originally wrote the article as a tool for those ministering to the survivors of the Kobe earthquake. He has revised it now for use in the current situation.

The booklet has a contemporary look and is designed to appeal to students and adults alike. It would also be useful for general use beyond the Tohoku area. The booklet is 36 pages (A5 size), making it easy for handling and distribution. The initial printing will be 200,000. Copies are available free of charge. Those placing orders are asked to simply cover the cost of shipping.

For orders or additional information, please contact Brian and Sally Snider at onehopejapan@gmail.com. 卍



Hang On, Be Brave! *Anonymous*



My cousin Hirako's house is near the sea. After the earthquake hit, she grabbed her two kids, jumped in her car and drove, trying to escape the tsunami. Soon the road was so congested with cars that she wasn't getting anywhere. The tsunami was coming, and then it reached Hirako's car. The water was coming into the car. Knowing the danger, Hirako opened the car door and tucked a child under each arm struggling until she had lifted them on to the roof

of the car. "Mama! I'm scared!" they began crying and screaming. Then some people in a boat spotted the children and helped them. Hirako was relieved to see her two children safe but her energy was gone. The water kept on rising. It reached her head. Just as she thought, "I'm going to die," she heard a voice: "Hang on! Be brave!" Someone yanked her arms and somehow pulled her to safety.

Broken Buddha *by Brian Birtles*

Two days after the quake my landlord dropped in to see me. He told me he's afraid to catch the subway in Tokyo now since that's where he was during the quake. The day after the quake, however, he couldn't avoid

the subway. As the train emerged from underground before an above-ground station (Minami-Senju station on the Hibiya line) he felt a wave of relief. He went to pray "thanks" to the big statue of Buddha that is clearly visible from the train at that point. That was when he noticed it had split in two.

I can't help wonder what impact that dramatic image has on those who pass by.



A week later the stand for the statue (right) remains empty whilst Buddha's head (above), arm and other pieces lie scattered around.



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Fight or Flight

By Wendy Marshall

During the days following the earthquake and tsunami disaster it became apparent that there was a significant problem with the nuclear power plants on the coast south of Sendai, in a place that is now known worldwide: Fukushima.

As those of us in Tokyo tried to find food to feed our families and learned to cope with rolling power blackouts, we suddenly needed to decide whether we would evacuate. Missionaries in Japan are not used to this decision. Missionaries in other countries frequently face violence, political coups, wars and threats to their personal safety. Not so in Japan. Indeed compared to many other countries Japan is a relatively safe place to live. Little violence, politically stable and without the religious persecution seen in many other countries in the world—day-to-day life in Japan is not threatening. So the sudden change on the 11th of March sent stress levels soaring.

The fight or flight response is a well-known phrase. At its base level this is how our bodies respond physiologically to threatening situations. This was one of the stressors we felt as the news grew worse from Fukushima. The decision of whether to stay or leave Tokyo became larger and larger in our thoughts. Then came news of people leaving. Most left so quickly they didn't have time to tell their friends. Emotions ran high. CAJ's headmaster, Brian Vander Haak said he saw a strong need for people to justify their reasons for leaving or staying.

For a while it looked as if a gulf existed between the "goers" and the "stayers". Along with this came misunderstandings and the possibility of judging one another. Every time I heard of someone going or someone asked us if we were, I felt thrown into emotional confusion again. Were we making the right decision? Why were others deciding to go?



At the time, I wrote about my confusion on my blog and here is how one missionary responded:

"This is such a sensitive topic here now. As a missionary in Kansai, I know of many people (missionaries as well as Japanese nationals) who are temporarily leaving Kanto for Kansai for a respite from the stress . . . It is not an easy decision . . . Each situation is different,

"There are no right ways
to emotionally respond
so you are no worse
or better
if you appear to respond
differently
to those around you."

they are making decisions with what they believe is best with the information they have. It's not a situation of coward versus courageous. It is a community of brothers and sisters in Christ that need to respect one another's decision and support them."

Another missionary wrote: "We are counting the cost and believe that until

God leads us differently we should stay here."

Now, as the situation slowly settles here in Tokyo, I can look back with more objectivity. I now understand more of the reasons why people left. And how people made different decisions with totally valid reasons.

Marjory F. Foyle wrote in *Honourably Wounded*, "Over-strong alarm reactions are related to personality type, but they can also occur in periods where there is much environmental insecurity...these need to be recognized for what they are, understandable hyper-arousal to prepare us to deal with possible difficult situations. They should not, however, be allowed to continue. If we are constantly being over-alarmed we should get out of the situation for a time, get rested, and then decide what to do." pp32-33

Some people left because the situation became too alarming and they were overstressed. Some simply took a break to recharge for the future, wisely seeing that Japan's recovery from this disaster would require a long-term effort. Others left because the media in their home country had so alarmed their family, friends, and government that they were bombarded with pleas to leave.

Those who stayed also remained for different reasons. Some remained because their jobs needed them to stay. Others became involved in relief work. Some remained because their family

situation made it difficult to go, others assessed the news and decided they weren't at risk.

Each one of us had to make our own decision. One missionary during the crisis wrote: "I have slowly been developing my own Biblical perspective on the fight or flight tension. I've come up with the decision that it is so important for each one to stay very close to God to hear what He is saying to him/her individually. God may give one command to one and a different command to another."

I was also encouraged by Australian psychologist and crisis management expert Associate Professor Robert Heath who wrote in relation to natural disasters: "Remember anything you are feeling is real and valid at that point in time. There are no right ways to emotionally respond so you are no worse or better if you appear to respond differently to those around you." (<http://www.ausmc.org/2011/01/science-blog-some-basic-realities-of-natural-disasters-crisis-and-recovery-management/>)

We have a tendency to justify our own actions, especially in a situation

where the decision was a dramatic one. However in justifying our own actions, it is easy to judge others. Despite being aware of this, only this morning I slipped and said something that probably sounded judgemental to someone who chose differently than our family. Ouch.

Brian Vander Haak reminded the CAJ community that the Bible says a lot about judging others. Jesus speaks sternly in Matthew 7:1-5 about plucking the log out of our own eye before daring to locate other's specks. Ouch again. As a missionary community we need to be careful on this one. Let's mind our words and thoughts.

Now that we are past the acute stage of the crisis, it has become clear that most missionaries who evacuated only left temporarily. This response is in contrast to the response of many others in the foreign community as the following letter reveals.

*"Friends,
The response to the earthquake by many of the westerners here in Japan has been to*

head straight to the airport and get out of the country.

The Christian missionaries here have done just the opposite; they collect relief supplies and go straight to the disaster area to help out.

It is truly amazing what they have accomplished . . .

Tom (non-Christian businessman in Japan)"

Well, of course we want to reflect this praise to God. It is he who called us to Japan. And it is only with his strength and wisdom that we are able to make any difference at all here. We also need to respect the decisions of any who do not intend to return. It could be that the time has come for them to move on. For those of us still here, let's continue to serve and while we do so, to love one another and be circumspect in our words regardless of what decision we made after March 11. 卍

1. Foyle, Marjory F., 2001, *Honourably Wounded*, pp. 32-33

Teenagers Taking Action

By Jonie Seo

When I walked into CRASH Japan Command Center at the Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ), the diverse group of volunteers struck me. I had expected to see missionaries, pastors, teachers and homemakers, but was surprised to see teenage students. At first, I assumed the students were there because we were using their school building. It didn't take long to see that they were vital to what God was doing through CRASH.

After the events of March 11, 16-year-old CAJ sophomore Gene Jeong and his schoolmates suddenly had no classes to attend and an in-

ternational relief agency was camped in their Spanish classroom.

"I thought I could be useful for tedious work, unofficial translations and physical labor," said Jeong, but God's plans for him and his classmates were bigger than this.

I soon learned that students had been filming and editing videos, facilitating social network campaigns to raise awareness and collecting donations in downtown Tokyo.

The students who volunteered were equipped with much needed Internet savvy and some even with technical skills that rivaled professional video editors. Their wired lifestyle made child's play of powerful mass communication tools like YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Jeong remarked, "I let the older guys do their older guy stuff, while I played on the Internet."

Within the first two weeks following the disaster, what Jeong and students may have considered "playing on the Internet" produced remarkable results. Over 3,000 people subscribed to CRASH Japan's Facebook page and there were over 1.6 million hits on CRASH Japan's homepage. "I wanted to go to Sendai," Jeong said, "I'm not going up there, but I'm helping other people get up there by building awareness."

Jeong acknowledged, "It was fun to work with friends from CAJ and to make new friends . . . It's going to be hard to go back to school after this." 卍

Drop in to the JEMA website www.jema.org to read the rest of this article.

“WHAT DO THEY NEED THE MOST NOW?”

By Steve Manders

The March 11 Tohoku Earthquake and the ongoing aftershocks continue to leave many speechless. What words, if any, can be said to describe the horror and devastation that affected so many, so quickly. But there is one word that is beginning to emerge, and that word is Hope.

Where is the hope in a situation like this? Most of us have been overwhelmed and struggle to believe that any hope can be found. That was the feeling expressed by the members of one church in Osaka. All they wanted to do was cry. But apart from the shedding of tears, they wanted to do something, anything. They wanted to do something, no matter how small, for those affected by this disaster. The questions they felt that they needed to ask were “What do these people need the most now?” and “What should we do now?”

What follows is an account of the early response of that church, one among many across this country, and the hope that has begun to emerge. Their story begins on Sunday, March 13, only two days after the earthquake.

Still in a state of shock from the images and words being delivered by every television channel, the church met for its regular worship and began preparations to send a team of volunteers to help in one of the most affected areas. The urgency of wishing to help was equal to the hurt that they felt for



thousands in the north. Their preparations began with prayer, prayer for those who were suffering. But these prayers were not just local. They challenged their friends and family living across the globe to pray—pray for the Japanese who were suffering and to pray that God would guide them as they sought to serve those who suffered. They sought to be the hands and feet of Christ to bring relief and hope to a people who were suffering.

And God did guide. The first team sent from the church left with a van loaded down with relief supplies on the night of March 15. They headed to Sendai, where members had either personal contacts or family in a number of

churches. Their intentions were to drop off this load, attempt to make contact with the people that they know in the area and assess some of the needs. They believed God was calling them to more than just a short-term or spontaneous response. They understood that there were many risks involved in this kind of an operation, but they also strongly believed that God had called them to go. So they sent a small team in faith that God would protect them and their cargo of supplies so that God’s Name might receive all the glory.

God led them to Ishinomaki City where they located two churches and talked with leaders. They also distributed the rest of the supplies to people



This is a nursing home the team visited:
‘They had so many questions about God and why we were all here.’



“Loading the big van we purchased...”

wandering the streets looking for food and water. They found great need, but were encouraged at their opportunity to help even in such a small way.

The church was then able to send a second team with supplies to Ishinomaki City on March 19. Actually the church was able to send far more than just a second team, because our God is a God of incredible provision. As preparations were being made to leave, the organizers began to unexpectedly receive donations from other churches and friends. They were receiving more than they could handle. Not only that, and much to their surprise, they received word that the truck that was to be used for the delivery of the supplies to the north, had already been generously filled with supplies. Amazingly God also provided not only another van at short notice, but also someone who could drive it. God had supplied all their needs and more. For the many who were involved in this relief project, March 19, was a day of great encouragement. Encouragement in knowing that there was something that could be done, rather than to just sit and watch the news and feel helpless. Through their willingness to go, they found a way they could help and bring a small measure of hope to the many who were suffering.

Our love and our actions do have an impact on the people around us. This is

true not just in times of suffering, but in all places at all times. When God moves in the hearts and lives of people, they cannot help but be moved as well. Pray for your community that the love and actions of the believers who live there will be clear testimony of the Love and Hope that can only be found in Jesus.

In all the cities and towns that the teams have entered they found the same thing. They found people who were lacking information, water, food, encouragement, comfort and hope. Some old people were even living in what was left of their homes. Even in the midst of that, the people who received these supplies were being touched and were thankful. People received them with tears. Yet at the same time, they were able to experience the joy and laughter in the hearts of the people. Hope was being restored. Some on the receiving end of the relief being offered said, “It’s been quite a while since I’ve laughed this much!” All were thankful. Some were so thankful all they could do was hug these bringers of hope.

It wasn’t just about bringing hope through the meeting of physical needs. In Ishinomaki City, after a long search, they were able to gather enough information to assure a friend living in Hokkaido that his relatives were safe, having gone to stay with someone in another town. They were also able to bring

email letters to a friend living in one of the coastal towns from concerned friends and relatives. They were also able, in return, to comfort this friend’s father, who lives in Kyushu, by showing him a photograph that had been taken of the family. All involved with this process of making contact were really touched. This man said “Being able to see their faces for the first time since the quake has given him the greatest relief yet.” What a God-given privilege to be able to touch people’s lives in such a personal way. That is the delivery of hope!

As the clean-up progresses and the country continues to feel aftershocks, so does the work of many believers, both national and international who have chosen this time to be the hands and feet of Christ. And as they serve in His Name, they offer something of the greatest value... hope. Yes, there is hope. Hope for the weary and grieving. Hope for those who feel the task is too great. Pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who, at this very moment, are being the hands and feet of Christ, offering hope, real hope, in Tohoku and beyond. 卍

Source: <http://www.onfirejapan.com/tohoku/>



“Our prayer is that the Peace of God will prevail!”

CRASH Japan — Help for Now, Hope Forever

By Jorie Seo



“During the initial weeks following the earthquake and tsunami, volunteers in the CRASH headquarters worked from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, hardly taking a break for meals”

On March 11, 2011, Japan was changed forever. The physical destruction caused by the Great Tohoku Earthquake and the ensuing tsunami, followed by the nuclear crisis engulfed Japan in fear. It also provided an unprecedented opportunity for the Church in Japan to rise up. Hearts of Christians in Japan and around the world were moved to respond to the devastation with hope... eternal hope.

In the Tokyo area, missionaries, pastors, and local church members eager to bring hope joined with Christian Relief, Assistance, Support and Hope (CRASH) Japan, under the direction of Jonathan Wilson. Wilson, pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship in Ome, started CRASH Japan six years ago in the hope of training churches to respond to

disasters. CRASH Japan had responded to other large earthquakes in China and Haiti; but this time the disaster was closer to home.

But how could such a seemingly small mustard-seed-like network of missionaries, pastors and volunteers move this mountain of despair? By faith. Faith in God’s plan to work through the Church. Wilson cast vision, in the first volunteer meeting two days after the earthquake, of ministering to the body of Christ so that through the body of Christ, the church would become a place of healing in their communities. “We don’t have the same resources as the government or Red Cross, but we have something these people desperately need... hope,” Wilson declared.

CRASH Japan quickly began

contacting pastors and churches in the affected area to see how to help. CRASH Japan volunteer-driven vans filled with aid and supplies departed from Higashi-Kurume in Tokyo and were some of the first to reach churches in the north. Long-established relief agencies chose to partner with CRASH Japan, and therefore the local Japanese church. CRASH Japan is now partnering with over 50 ministries, denominations, missions and associations both within and outside of Japan representing millions of Christians who want to help “love on Japan” in the name of Jesus Christ.

Intelligence and assessment teams were assembled to find bases of operations in Tohoku that could serve as distribution centers to local churches. While establishing these

bases, numerous relationships with churches, pastors and ministries became stronger. These relationships in turn have become the main artery through which CRASH Japan is moving aid.

In the first month, four regional bases of operations were established in Iwate, Miyagi, Tochigi and Ibaragi. Through these bases, over 30 tons of relief supplies were delivered to churches, who in turn distributed it to their communities.

Over 100 volunteers have already traveled with CRASH Japan to the devastated region delivering aid, cleaning and helping survivors cope, while over 300 volunteers in Higashi-Kurume have helped to lay the foundation for a long-term plan of action.

With hundreds of volunteers now registered in the CRASH Japan database, the Volunteer Coordination Team has been entrusted with a great challenge. Volunteer Director, Bryan Thompson, explains, "At the present time we are prioritizing teams from Japan." CRASH Japan encourages those who want to volunteer to pray, stay informed (www.crashjapan.org) and start building a team to serve. "There is a huge,

huge task ahead of us," Thompson admits, "But God can do great things despite our human weakness."

Along with logistically organizing volunteer teams, much is being done to prepare volunteers for the emotional and spiritual aspect of relief work. CRASH Japan's Emotional Care department states its primary objective is to, "bring the hope of Jesus Christ to those suffering in Japan." Through the development of *Kokoro no Kea*, CRASH Japan hopes to equip volunteers to deal with the trauma of loss. Janet Brown,

"There is a huge, huge task
ahead of us. But God can
do great things despite our
human weakness."

an Emotional Care team member, highlights the importance of prayer for all those considering volunteering. "The teams that have worked the best are the ones that stop and pray together," Brown states.

Special consideration is also being given to the children affected by these circumstances. CRASH Japan is partnering with World Vision and Operation Safe to effectively reach hurting and confused children survivors. Both programs with the help of CRASH Japan plan to have safe zones to which children who are in shelters can come, be kids, and begin processing their experiences.

"These safe zones are an oasis of peace and shelter," said Wilson. "In these child-friendly spaces, children can receive child-appropriate trauma care." Christian volunteers will work with churches to help children deal with their emotions through crafts, songs, stories, games, and ultimately hope in Jesus.

At CRASH Japan headquarters, there is much talk of the "little wheel" and the "big wheel." The "little wheel" is the missionaries and pastors who in the early days were spinning very fast. "We were able to move very rapidly to start the process," Wilson wrote, "but no matter how hard we work we can only accomplish a small amount of work." The "big wheel" is the Japanese church. Though they number little more than a million and are less than 1% of the population, Japanese Christians are still able to do much more to help.

"Our vision at CRASH is to help mobilize the Japanese church, and this picture is a great testimony that Japanese Christians, pastors and leaders are beginning to move. Our challenge is to give them the reins, help them to make it their own, and to let them run with it. Pray for wisdom and grace as we work toward this next step."

More information on praying, giving and volunteering can be found at www.crashjapan.org 卍



Jonathan Wilson explains the organizational structure to the leadership team



A Japanese Perspective on Disasters

By Yoshie Yokoyama

My mother was a survivor of the atomic bomb dropped in Nagasaki. She was out of town with her family when the bomb hit town, but walked back into town right afterwards. She saw the aftermath, the devastation of buildings and roads, dead bodies, survivors in distress. Her home was standing, but glass sliding doors were all broken. She helped clean up. All the adults were busy getting the family shop back into business. A situation not unlike what many young Japanese face today.

When I was growing up, every August she went quiet. August 6th is the commemoration of Hiroshima, August 9th is that of Nagasaki. She mentioned that these days were coming and not much else. When I was 12 or 13, I asked her why, and came to know for the first time, that these two days were making her miserable. As I grew older, when August came, I started asking more questions. She answered with few words, which is very unlike her. When I was at university and knew more about history, I linked things and understood a bit more. Her classmates published a book, which is a record of each one's story of the 9th of August. The stories are there, but I can only read two or three stories at a time. It is too sad for me.

She felt guilty that she'd survived. She didn't register as a survivor until she was 60, thinking it was not fair

to receive benefits from the Japanese government in this way. When one is registered as a survivor of the atomic bomb, his or her medical bills are covered, depending on the kind of illness. I receive similar benefits as her daughter.

At this time when there is so much uncertainty about the radiation risk and how Japan will recover from this disaster, I would like everyone to remember that Japan survived the atomic bombs. This country was devastated, but it survived and has recovered. Not without scars. There are survivors and their offspring with scars on their bodies and in their hearts. The memories are carved into the land of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I studied Luke 21 in mid December in a series of Bible Studies at my church. I was deeply struck by Jesus' teaching about the end time. Earthquakes are one of the prominent signs Jesus gave us. We live in the period between the first and second coming of the Lord. The New Testament writers were acutely aware of the end and 2000 years later it is getting nearer. We walk closer to the end, day by day, as citizens of His present kingdom. We have our destination; let us not forget, which is not an earthly kingdom.

I want to encourage the missionaries who remained in Japan. We Christians are comforted, encouraged and

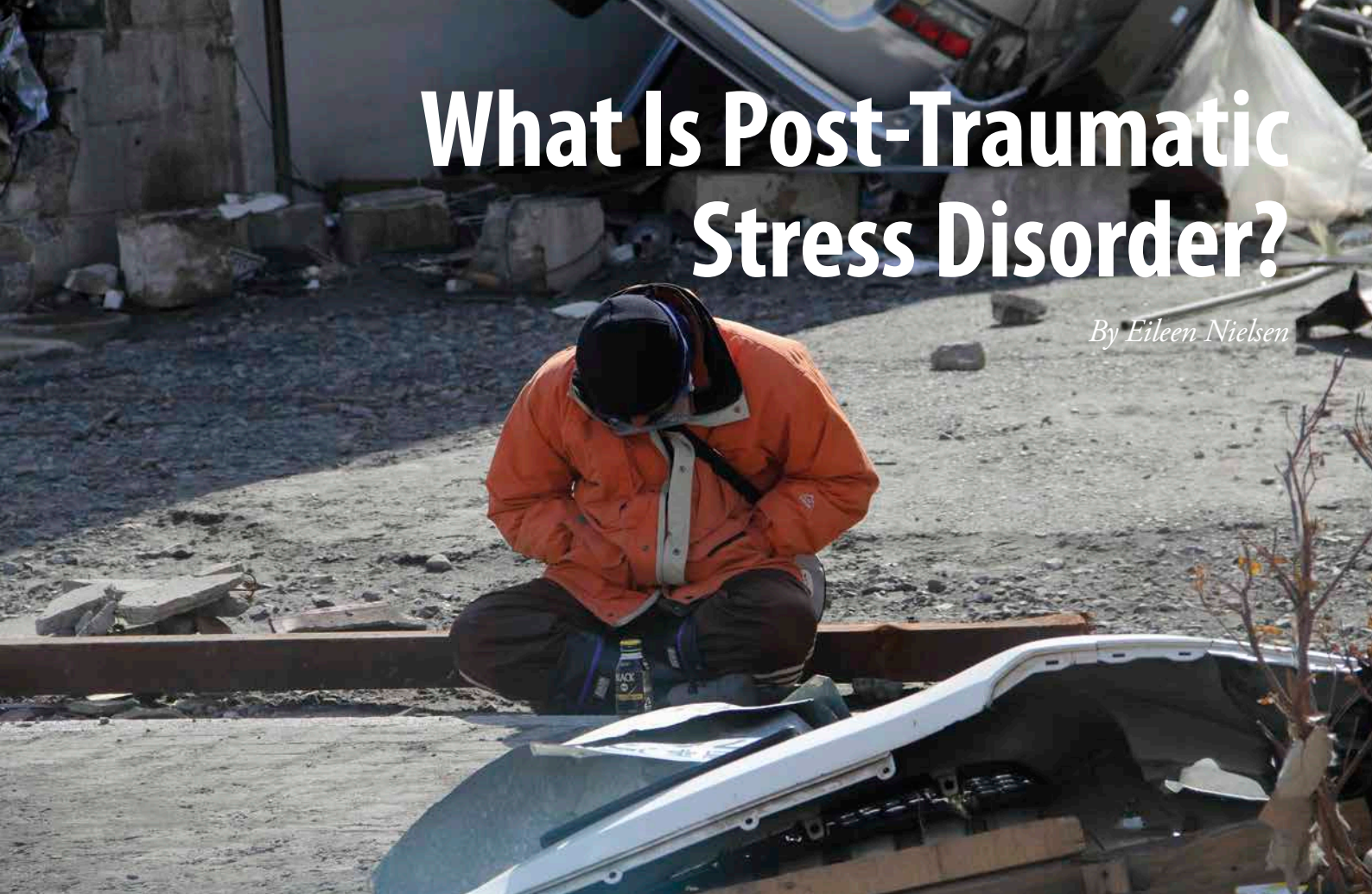
strengthened by the camaraderie and courage they are sharing in our future. More than that, I believe that through them, non-Christian Japanese will receive the love of Jesus, who came and identified with us, and gave His life so that sinful men are saved.

Recently there has been a book published by a former missionary to Japan, Stephen Metcalf, *In Japan the Crickets Cry* co-written with Ronald Clements (2011). Stephen grew up in China and became a prisoner of war of the Japanese during the Pacific War. His book, published first in Japanese, sold well. His story of love for the Japanese and their response to his physical demonstration of that love by coming to Japan is meaningful to Japanese people. It is also a great encouragement to missionaries today as you stand with the Japanese, showing your love for them by your presence here.

I am in no way making judgement on those who evacuated. They must have gone through a very difficult time in making that decision. I am sure the Lord is pleased in whatever response His labourers give to Him as they serve Him. I am voicing my opinion because I believe God will use in a very special way those who stay, and stick to the end, or as far as they go. 卍

What Is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

By Eileen Nielsen



“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, “I will try again tomorrow”. ~Mary Anne Radmacher

The events of 11th March 2011 and the days following could very easily result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The following article provides an introduction to the disorder, and how it may affect anyone in Japan during and after this difficult time.

The disease known as post-traumatic stress disorder has been around for many years. It was initially associated with those returning from war. In years past, “shell shock” or “combat fatigue” were popular terms. For the first time during the Vietnam War it was given serious consideration and treatment. Since that time, the disease has become associated with a wide variety of other traumatic events, including physical assaults, being taken hostage or devastating accidents. Events are classified as “trauma” if they are coupled with a

threat of death or injury. The event usually inspires intense feelings of fear, helplessness or horror. For this reason, PTSD has become associated in a lesser, though still significant, degree with natural disasters.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is an anxiety disorder. It is a form of chronic stress. The word “trauma” means wound, and often a traumatic event leaves people with deep emotional wounds. The difficulty in recovering from such an ordeal and the accompanying symptoms is what separates PTSD from other anxiety related illnesses.

Immediately after a tragedy, many victims will struggle with three main symptoms: re-experiencing the stressful event, avoiding things related to the event and being physically alert all or most of the time. Other associated symptoms are a sense of numbness, becoming easily irritated, angry outbursts, sleeplessness, having trouble concentrating and detachment.

Up to 14% of people will have

some form of PTSD over their lifetime. What separates mild and severe PTSD is intensity and duration of the symptoms. It’s common for symptoms to start right after an event and last about a month to six weeks. If the symptoms last longer than this, it could be a more severe form of PTSD, and it’s wise to check with a health care professional. Some people find these symptoms popping up months and even years after the traumatic event, when another stressor or tragedy occurs in their lives, such as the death of a loved one or prolonged illness.

It’s ironic that the cause of this disease is actually something helpful. PTSD happens when the fight and flight reflex, which often helps us survive the crisis initially, goes “haywire” and is unable to shut off. This causes your body to react as if the crisis is still happening. “Flashbacks” or “flashbulb” memories, which are vivid and intense, occur without warning. Most victims feel as if the “carpet was pulled out from

under them” and they find it impossible to get on with their everyday lives, experiencing a “diminished” interest in significant activities in their lives. Strangely, they also seem unable to recall important aspects of the trauma.

There are no predictors of “who” will get PTSD, but some people are more susceptible. PTSD is twice as likely to occur in women than men. People who are already struggling with depression or substance abuse issues are also at greater risk, as well as those with poor coping skills and a lack of support systems. Severe or complex PTSD is also more likely to happen to those who have had childhood traumas or are the victims of repeated trauma as adults, such as being a prisoner of war or a victim of spousal abuse. Those with any of the above risk factors are recommended not to engage in high stress occupations.

There are no “preventative” measures for PTSD, but it has been



documented the best help for children going through a traumatic event is a warm, supportive family. It has been found that a good relational support system can lessen the effects of a trauma. Talking is an important tool in helping people cope with a trauma. Immediate psychological intervention, when used judiciously, can prevent the development of

PTSD. Judiciously means that health care providers don’t jump in before your body has a chance to heal naturally.

Since there is no way to prevent PTSD, there can be a sense of panic or fear experienced by those who have been affected by a trauma. Is PTSD inevitable? If recent studies are any indication, the answer can

Post-traumatic stress and coping

Those in the vicinity of natural disasters can also experience symptoms of trauma, but there are some everyday things we can do to help bring some stability back into our lives. The following list is from the Royal College of Psychiatrists website:

Helping yourself

Do ...

- keep life as normal as possible.
- get back to your usual routine.
- talk about what happened to someone you trust.
- try relaxation exercises.
- go back to work.
- eat and exercise regularly.
- go back to where the traumatic event happened.
- take time to be with family and friends.
- be careful when driving – your concentration may be poor.
- be more careful generally – accidents are more likely at this time.
- speak to a doctor.
- expect to get better.

Don’t ...

- beat yourself up about it—PTSD symptoms are not a sign of weakness. They are a normal reaction, of normal people, to terrifying experiences.
- bottle up your feelings. If you have developed PTSD symptoms, don’t keep it to yourself because treatment is usually very successful.
- avoid talking about it.
- expect the memories to go away immediately; they may be with you for quite some time.
- expect too much of yourself. Cut yourself a bit of slack while you adjust to what has happened.
- stay away from other people.
- drink lots of alcohol or coffee or smoke more.
- get overtired.
- miss meals.
- take holidays on your own.

Source: The Royal College of Psychiatrist’s website at: <http://tinyurl.com/PTSDinfo>

be a resounding “No”. PTSD is not inevitable. As a matter of fact, traumatic situations can result in personal growth.

Research done among soldiers returning from war shows that most are more likely to experience a phenomenon called “post-traumatic growth development” (PTGD). The findings suggest that most people are naturally resilient. When faced with trauma, they are likely to adapt and cope.

In a Washington Post article, journalist Michael E. Ruane reported that there is a trend among returning veterans, especially those with injuries, to claim that they are “wiser, more

compassionate and more appreciative of life” after their devastating experience. Most said, that in spite of the consequences, they wouldn’t change the experiences of “being there” with their fellow soldiers for anything. Having a sense of “meaningfulness” was essential for this positive result. Even though the event wasn’t “good”, many felt the change it caused was “valuable” and “beneficial”.

These findings have interesting implications for believers. The two important elements necessary for developing PTGD rather than PTSD, are being part of a supportive and caring community, and knowing that there is purpose and even good

that can result from difficult situations. These are intrinsic teachings of Christianity. This idea was not far from the Apostle Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.” (The Message)

By the power of God, the most traumatic of circumstances, can be to our benefit and result in personal growth. JH

How to Cope after a Traumatic Event

How to cope after a traumatic event

What should I do?

- Give yourself time
It takes time - weeks or months - to accept what has happened and to learn to live with it. You may need to grieve for what (or who) you have lost.
- Find out what happened
It is better to face the reality of what happened rather than wondering about what might have happened.
- Be involved with other survivors
If you go to funerals or memorial services, this may help you to come to terms with what has happened. It can help to spend time with others who have been through the same experience as you.
- Ask for support
It can be a relief to talk about what happened. You may need to ask your friends and family for the time to do this - at first they will probably not know what to say or do.
- Take some time for yourself
At times you may want to be alone or just with those close to you.
- Talk it over
Bit by bit, let yourself think about the trauma and talk about it with others. Don’t worry if you cry when you talk, it’s natural and usually helpful. Take things at a pace that you feel comfortable with.
- Get into a routine
Even if you don’t feel much like eating, try to have regular meals and to eat a balanced diet. Taking some exercise can help – but start gently.

- Do some ‘normal’ things with other people
Sometimes you will want to be with other people, but not to talk about what has happened. This can also be part of the healing process.
- Take care
After a trauma, people are more likely to have accidents. Be careful around the home and when you are driving.

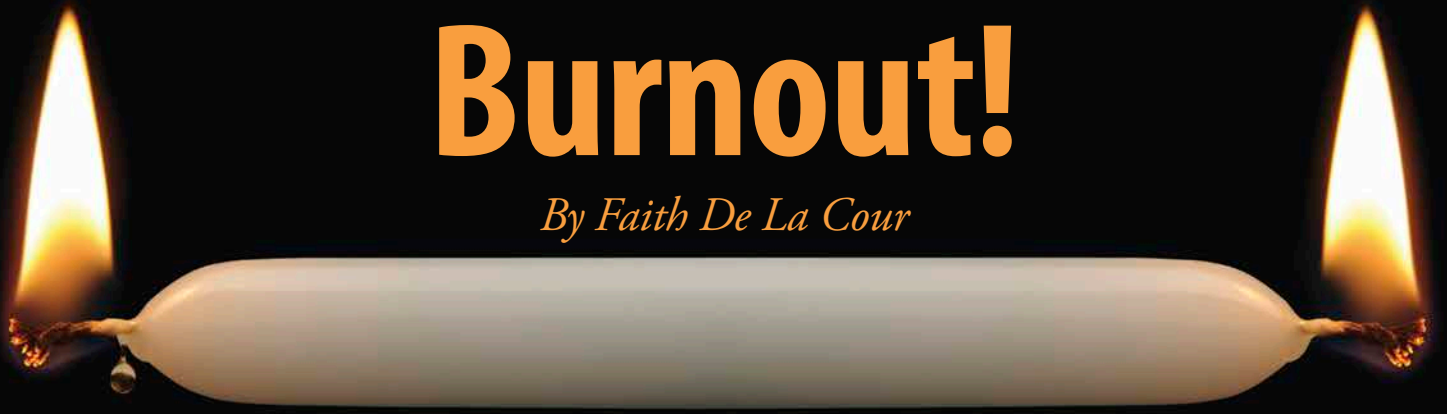
What should I NOT do?

- Don’t bottle up your feelings
Strong feelings are natural. Don’t feel embarrassed about them. Bottling them up can make you feel worse and can damage your health. Let yourself talk about what has happened and how you feel, and don’t worry if you cry.
- Don’t take on too much
Being active can take your mind off what has happened, but you need time to think to go over what happened so you can come to terms with it. Take some time to get back to your old routine.
- Don’t drink or use drugs
Alcohol or drugs can blot out painful memories for a while, but they will stop you from coming to terms with what has happened. They can also cause depression and other health problems.
- Don’t make any major life changes
Try to put off any big decisions. Your judgment may not be at its best and you may make choices you later regret. Take advice from people you trust.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/Copingafter311>

Burnout!

By Faith De La Cour



I shouldn't have been surprised, but in the days following the earthquake, while I felt I should be part of the first-responder team, I was overwhelmed with a sense of paralysis and a desire to withdraw. I was confused at my reaction, until I read an article on Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. The first question in their list was, "what was going on in your life emotionally before this event?" Over the last two years we've moved twice, experienced the death of parents, and continue to deal with some chronic family issues. I also took on extra responsibilities in our mission, and started a graduate program.

The build-up of transition, loss, and emotional exhaustion, along with unrealistic expectations of myself was tipping me toward

burnout. I'm guessing that I'm not alone among my missionary colleagues here in Japan. Burnout is not uncommon in ministry professions. "The values inherent in ministry are for self-giving, sacrifice, working for change in the self, others and the social context. In a sense, these are dangerous values, 'setting up' the opportunities for failure and burnout" (Dodds).

Dr. Archibald Hart writes that a pattern of emotional overload with little reward or appreciation in the context of feeling helpless is at the heart of the burnout syndrome. This is sometimes called compassion fatigue. We discover that we have limits, and when those are exceeded, the price is "burnout." Rather than seeing this as a sign of failure in ourselves, we need to see it as a warning

signal that we are over-extended.

Many of us are experiencing stress living in this post-earthquake and tsunami time. Some of us are heading toward "burnout." What is the difference? Dr. Archibald Hart, in his article, "Burnout: Prevention and Cure" describes the essential difference between these two (see table).

Ron Koteskey says that burnout is the result of continual stress over a long period of time rather than great stress over a short one. He also says that missionaries who burn out to the point that they actually leave the field are unlikely to return. So becoming aware of burnout before it gets to that stage is important.

Acknowledging the problem is the best place to start. Dr. Hart tells us not to fear the cure of our burnout, but to pray for the wisdom

Burnout	Stress
Characterized by disengagement	Characterized by over engagement
Emotions become blunted	Emotions become over-reactive
Emotional damage is primary	Physical damage is primary
Exhaustion affects motivation and drive	Exhaustion affects physical energy
Produces demoralization	Produces disintegration
Best understood as loss of ideals and hope	Best understood as a loss of fuel and energy
Related depression caused by grief of lost ideals and hope	Related depression caused by adrenal exhaustion and the body's need for self-protection and conservation of energy
Produces a sense of helplessness and hopelessness	Produces a sense of urgency and hyperactivity
Produces paranoia, depersonalization and detachment	Produces panic, phobia and anxiety-type disorders.
May never kill you, but your life may not seem worth living	May kill you prematurely and you won't finish what you started.

and courage we need to align our life with God's purpose and plan. Learning some coping techniques to make changes in the circumstances of the burnout can be helpful. It is essential to set realistic goals for ministry, and clarify the expectations others have of us. We may need to focus our roles, learn to relax, get exercise and proper rest, slow down, and learn constructive ways of dealing with our anger. He says wherever possible, we shouldn't hesitate to seek the counsel of a competent professional.

Koteskey urges us to take breaks, take a Sabbath, and take vacations. He also encourages us not to take things personally, to leave our work at work, to learn to laugh at ourselves, and to have a support group.

Burnout has the potential to be traumatic and devastating, but it is also a tool that God uses to mold us and transform us into the likeness

While I felt I should be part of the first-responder team, I was overwhelmed with a sense of paralysis and a desire to withdraw. . . . The build-up of transition, loss, and emotional exhaustion, along with unrealistic expectations of myself was tipping me toward burnout.

of Christ. For some of us, it may be the only way that God can get our attention. ^{JH}

Notes

“Burnout: Prevention and Cure” Dr. Archibald D. Hart (undated) Retrieved March 11, 2011, from http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200603/200603_020_burnout.cfm

“What Missionaries Ought to Know about Burnout” Ronald L. Koteskey (undated) Retrieved March 11, 2011 from http://www.missionarycare.com/brochures/br_burnout.htm

“Stressed from Core to Cosmos: Issues and needs arising from cross-cultural ministry” Larry A. Dodds and Lois E Dodds. (1997) Retrieved March 11, 2011 from <http://www.heartstreamresources.org/index.php?view=article&id=70>

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