

The first report of damages and prayer requests.

In behalf of the Japan Baptist Convention(JBC), I would like to express my deep gratitude for your concern and prayer support for the suffering Japanese people following yesterday's large earthquake and tsunami in northeastern Japan. The Christ-like love and support expressed by Baptist brothers and sisters around the world is indeed a great encouragement and comfort.

Following the 8.9 magnitude earthquake, towns along the northeastern coastline of Japan were demolished by powerful tsunami. The American Baptist affiliated Japan Baptist Union(JBU) has several churches near that coast, and we are waiting for news concerning their safety. We are concerned that they may have had great damage.

The large city of Sendai with a population of one million was hard hit by the earthquake, the repeating tsunami, and fires. Of our four JBC churches in Sendai, we have only been able to communicate with two of them. Both telephone and internet connections are down in most of the damaged areas. We are deeply worried about the safety of those thousands whose lives have been disrupted and are suffering from the shock, the cold, the wetness, and the lack of shelter and food.

Even the cities and towns in this region that did not experience much direct damage from the earthquake have still lost electrical power, gas, and water supply, causing a miserable situation for people during this cold weather.

At this point officials are expressing growing fear concerning two nuclear power plants in Fukushima. The cooling systems and backup systems have shut down, causing a dangerous rise in the temperature of half of the nuclear reactors. While the pressure is being slowly released to reduce the temperature, officials have advised evacuation of the residents in that vicinity.

As we learn more details of the situation of our churches and the people in the area, Japan Baptist brothers and sisters are anxious to provide relief supplies and relief work to help the thousands of victims. At this time, the vastness of the provinces that have been damaged is overwhelming, compounded by the disruption in transportation, including trains, planes, ships, and roadways. We are anxiously waiting for a means to travel to the stricken area.

Here at the JBC office building in Saitama City, Saitama Province, we were holding a workshop for 25 missions' volunteers. Yesterday during the closing worship, we experienced the tremors of the huge earthquake. With transportation down, most of the workshop participants and leaders were unable to travel to their homes, but were able to spend the night in the warm, safe JBC building. Last night and again this morning, we gathered to have an urgent

prayer meeting for the victims of this disaster. One by one, the participants were able to return to their respective cities.

Yesterday the JBU Theological Seminary located in Yokohama held their Graduation Ceremony. Following the earthquake, about 25 people were unable to travel home. Today with gradual resumption of travel, they have been able to go home.

### Prayer Requests

Pray for the efforts to rescue the many isolated people who are suffering in the freezing cold, waiting to be saved from the debris wrought by the earthquakes, aftershocks, tsunami, and fires.

Pray that the Lord will provide His peace, comfort, and hope for the thousands of persons experiencing grief, despair, and emotional pain.

Pray that the Lord will provide a means for dedicated Baptist men and women to serve in the disaster area.

Pray that the Lord's church will know and follow God's leadership during this crisis and faithfully serve the victims of this disaster, to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In His Service,  
Makoto Kato  
Executive Secretary  
Japan Baptist Convention