

Gratitude and Request for Prayer preceding Passion Week and Easter

April 15, 2011  
Japan Baptist Convention  
Makoto Kato  
Executive Secretary

Praise the Wonderful Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Following the earthquake disaster of March 11, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving for the warm expressions of encouragement and prayer for the Japanese people from you, our dear brothers and sisters in the Lord around the world.

### **Encouragement from Scripture**

This year as we have entered the Lent Season from a new perspective of heartache, we take comfort and encouragement from Scripture.

***Thus says the Lord God , “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities , I will cause the cities to be inhabited , and the waste places will be rebuilt.” The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by.” (Ezekiel 36:33~34)***

After captivity in Babylon, the land of the Israelites lay in ruins. Experiencing the severe loss of everything, the Israelites turned their hardened hearts back toward God & His mercy. The fresh Spirit of renewed life flowed through them.

In Matthew 25 the Lord taught His disciples three parables when He was facing the agony of the crucifixion, encouraging us with His own example. The Lord Jesus never demands the impossible from us. He wants us to be just a little more attentive, bold, and dedicated to the mission to which He has called us. He has already provided us with the abilities necessary for the task. He requires of us one thing: total trust in Him.

When we face extreme hardship, we have the certainty that we can totally trust Him, for He has given this promise, “I am with you always.” We have the assurance that we are working along with the Lord. Please pray for us as we desire to seek His guidance

### **Churches in the Disaster Region**

April 11 marked one month since the earthquake. Churches in the disaster area, along with churches all across Japan, held a special Prayer Service, including a moment of silence prayer to remember the lost victims, singing hymns and praying for relief .

The pastor of Sendai Baptist Church challenged the gathering: "Although we appear to have been crushed by severe circumstances, the hope we have through Jesus Christ has not been taken from us. We must determine to proclaim our hope of renewed life as we continue to share our trust in God." It is our desire as we experience the terrible circumstances of this disaster to share with as many people as possible the comfort and hope we have in Jesus Christ. It is our prayer that Japan will be rebuilt as a new nation.

### **Nuclear Power Plant accident**

Baptist churches in Fukushima prefecture, near the Nuclear Power Plant, are concerned about the spread of radioactivity in the area, particularly affecting children and pregnant women. Also, fear of the unseen danger has psychological impact upon people. Although individuals in all regions of Japan are offering their homes and institutions as shelter to evacuees from the radiation, it is no simple matter for these victims to leave their own homes and neighborhoods.

Please pray that the nuclear problems will be resolved as soon as possible. Remember the people who are diligently working to solve this crisis.

### **Relief Work in the Disaster Region**

Stage One – It was our goal during the first month following the earthquake to provide life support by gathering and delivering rescue supplies to the churches in metropolitan areas. The distance traveled one way to the destinations is at least 400 kilometers and as much as 700 kilometers, and in most cases the exhausting round trip was traveled in one day. Beginning the week after the earthquake, these trips were made almost daily. By April 9 a total of twenty loads of supplies were delivered, along with encouragement and prayers.

Stage Two – After April 12 we entered the period of supporting the daily lives of refugees, focusing on the relief centers that are not receiving adequate supplies from other sources, especially in coastal areas. We are developing plans for providing simple hot meals where most needed. Of primary importance, we are developing the ministry of "heart care," listening to the psychological and spiritual needs of the victims.

### **Use of contributions**

At the end of March we established a goal to raise funds totaling **50,000,000** yen. As of April 12, **32,500,000** yen had been received (of this, **10,000,000** yen was from overseas.) We are deeply appreciative for the concern and the prayers of our brothers and sisters around the world.

The budget for repairing church buildings had been a rough estimate; now the budget has been modified for the following uses:

JBC churches and JBC church members in the disaster region, relief funds, and funds for repair work – **15,000,000** yen.

Disaster region relief supplies, distributed through the churches or directly to local areas – **25,000,000** yen.

On site Staff activity expenses, staff and volunteer lodging and vehicle – **10,000,000** yen.

### **Prayer Requests**

Pray for the victims of this disaster, who have endured for more than one month, with increasing pain and grief, and growing fatigue. Pray that each individual will be given the Lord's comfort and sustenance.

Pray for the spiritual needs of people especially during this Passion Week, for hearts to receive the hope of the Gospel, the comfort and salvation offered by our Saviour who suffered on the cross for them.

Pray that the Nuclear Power Plant radiation problems will be resolved as quickly as possible.

Pray that Japanese churches and Christians of all denominations will unite as one, joining hands in serving the Lord.

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**JBC website in both Japanese and English:**

[http://www.bapren.jp/earthquake/110311EARTHQUAKE\\_DISASTER.htm](http://www.bapren.jp/earthquake/110311EARTHQUAKE_DISASTER.htm)

**E-mail address for the JBC Disaster Relief Headquarters.**

[jbsaigai@bapren.jp](mailto:jbsaigai@bapren.jp)

### **Information for Contributions:**

1. Bank Remittance. Funds can be sent directly to the Japan Baptist Convention account via wire transfer. You will need this account information:

- PAYING BANK : MIZUHO BANK,LTD.
- A/C WITH BRANCH : URAWA BRANCH
- ADDR : 1-4-9 Nakamachi Urawa-ku. Saitama City,336-0062 JAPAN
- SWIFT CODE : MHBKJPJT
- A/C NUMBER : 541-1243429

- PAYEE NAME : JAPAN BAPTIST CONVENTION
- ADDR : 1-2-4 Minami Urawa. Minami-ku. Saitama City, 336-0017  
JAPAN

#### Additional Important Information for Wire Transfers

\*When completing the bank remittance form at the bank counter, please clearly note “Donation for Disaster Relief” in the DETAIL OF REMITTANCE column.

\*Some banks may require the more information concerning the JBC. If so, please print out the top of the JBC internet home page as well as a copy of this Guideline.

2. International Postal Money Order. Funds can be sent via the international postal service. You can follow the procedure described below:

- 1) You may visit the nearest post office in your city/town.
- 2) You can purchase International Postal Money Orders at the service counter.
- 3) You can then send your money order using Priority Mail International® or Express Mail International® to the JBC office in Japan at the address shown in the Bank Remittance information.
- 4) The International Postal Money Orders can be cashed at post offices in Japan with nominal handling fees.