



Moshi Moshi!

A Prayer Letter from the Ellricks

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June 2011

Dear Friends,

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Our break from the weekly ministry at Osaka International Church (OIC) has come to an end and we are settling into a weekly rhythm once again. We had planned to work on several ministry projects during the break, but after the 9.0M earthquake struck northeast Japan on March 11th, our plans had to change.

We were celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary in Guam when the disaster struck. We were shocked to see monster tsunami waves wiping away whole towns on the news. We canceled the rest of our trip and headed home to Japan to help with the relief work. Disaster relief was not part of our plan, but we felt that the Lord wanted us to go quickly and help.

The disaster area stretched along the northeast coast of Japan for about 200 miles, from near Misawa almost to Tokyo. Missionaries from Tokyo were headed into the areas closest to them, but only a few people were helping in the northern areas because roads and train lines going north were closed due to earthquake damage. So we flew from Osaka to Misawa in the north, took a local train south to Morioka, and caught a bus to Tono where Martin, an OMF missionary, had rented a house for use as a relief base.

We arrived the day after Martin received the key to the house and found about a dozen volunteers from Hokkaido already sleeping there, even though there was no furniture. They had been working for several days, but couldn't stay much longer. *(continued on the back)*

At Taro, the shape of the coastline squeezed the tsunami into a narrow channel where the height of the wave reached 130 feet, the highest level recorded. Jill, a volunteer from the U.S. who grew up in Japan, was heartbroken when she saw the destruction of Taro.



Jill stands in front of debris in Taro City

This was a residential neighborhood behind a huge seawall in Taro, but the tsunami went right over it.



YouTube Check out Dan's channel on Youtube; search for "Dan4Osaka" to see videos of the towns on this page.

Left: Volunteers from CRASH and Tono City work together to make riceballs for people in the emergency shelters. Today's goal: 1,700 riceballs by 2:00 pm.



Left & steeple/roof below: Bethel Mission Christ Church. This tiny congregation continues in faith above the city.



Rikuzen-Takata


The tsunami stopped at the driveway of Bethel Mission Christ Church, the only church in Rikuzen-Takata, but the city below the church was devastated.



Above: This team from a church in Hong Kong was great! They shoveled tsunami mud, washed feet in the emergency shelters, and much more. Left: The Hong Kong team delivering new home kits (with Bibles) to people moving from shelters into temporary housing. Dan arranged for the chapel at Misawa Air Base to make hundreds of kits to be delivered to people who had lost everything in the tsunami.



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In Kamaishi, the *Asia Symphony* sits on top of the dock where the tsunami left it



That evening Martin dropped a big surprise on us. Martin had consulted with Jonathan, the leader of the Japan-based *Christian Relief, Assistance, Support, and Hope* (CRASH) organization, and they had decided that I (Dan) should be the CRASH representative for Iwate Prefecture. Suddenly it became our responsibility to set up a CRASH base and to implement a strategy for CRASH's relief work in Iwate Prefecture.

For the next three weeks, we worked to set up the relief base, coordinate volunteer teams from across Japan and beyond, connect them to Japanese pastors and city relief centers, and make sure they had what they needed for effective work. We got to do some hands-on work ourselves, but we served mainly as leaders and hosts for more than 80 other volunteers. Building relationships was a major part of this, so we visited Japanese pastors, churches, and shelters, providing encouragement and support in the name of Jesus and introducing volunteer workers.

Iwate is a very unreached area, and there are very few churches. So, in order to maximize opportunities for Christian witness, we placed many volunteers through city relief offices. This gave volunteers a triple-opportunity to witness - to city officials, to other volunteers, and to the people in the disaster area. Tono City is about an hour inland from the tsunami-devastated coast, and our volunteers were able to make friends and share the gospel as they rode the city buses to and from the work sites.

After things were running smoothly, the Lord had us pass the baton of the Iwate work on to others so that Karen could go to the CRASH Command Center in Tokyo and provide much-needed technical support. A key task was implementing a database for tracking volunteers and resources. Karen's database is expected to be a primary tool for CRASH's relief work for years to come. Dan returned to Osaka to continue work on other projects. Now we are both back in Osaka, but we expect to remain involved with the relief work for many more months.

We pray that you will enjoy this edition of *Moshi Moshi* and that the Lord will lead and bless in your life always. Thank you always and God bless you!

In Jesus' love, Dan and Karen



Left: Dan wrote a 28 page booklet called "Prayers of Hope" for distribution in the disaster areas. This booklet provides comfort and encouragement to tsunami victims by sharing the gospel through story and prayers. Dan wrote it in Japanese, and Keiko, Yuko, and Mitsuru edited it. Karen did the design and layout for printing. We sent copies to all the churches in the disaster area, and it has been well received. Our first print run of 5,000 has been used up, and we are now distributing a second print run of 10,000.

Reminder: The MUP finance department asked us to remind supporters to not write our names in the memo field of checks because under IRS rules this might make the funds appear to be taxable gifts instead of tax-exempt donations.

The Alpha Course continues to bear fruit as Japanese are led to faith in Jesus in a relaxed and friendly small group atmosphere. The photo below shows an Alpha meeting in our home. The video lessons are followed by food and discussion time. The photo on the right shows Dan praying for newly baptized believers who came to faith through Alpha.



Left: Hiromasa smiles widely just after his baptism in our bathtub. Assistant Pastor Joseph did the baptism and Keiko assisted. Keiko came to faith through Alpha in 2009 and is now a very successful Alpha leader. She has also recruited several new leaders who will lead in the fall.



Prayer Points

1. Pray for Japan, especially for the hundreds of thousands who are directly suffering from the triple disaster of the earthquake, the tsunami, and the nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima power plant. (For those who are wondering, both Osaka and Iwate are a safe distance from the Fukushima nuclear disaster area.)
2. Pray for OIC, for churches throughout Japan, and especially for churches in the disaster area in northeast Japan.
3. Pray for Karen's technical support ministry with CRASH, Japan Deaf Ministries International, and other organizations.
4. Pray for the *Prayers of Hope* booklet, the *Dan4Osaka* YouTube channel, and other outreach efforts to bear much fruit and lead many to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.
5. Pray for adequate finances to support this ministry and other ministries in this time of need. The huge needs of the disaster relief situation have severely strained the finances of nearly all missionaries, churches and ministries in Japan.
6. Praise the Lord for new believers! Pray for those who have recently made decisions to trust in Jesus.
7. Pray for the new Alpha Course leaders training and for new small groups and outreaches planned for the coming year.

A Final Word from the Word

"O LORD God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the raging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them." ~ Psalm 89:8-9