

Der Ausschuss des Kyodan für Katastrophenhilfe berichtet

17. März 2011

As the response to the devastating earthquake & tsunami disaster on Friday, March 11, the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) established the Relief Planning Committee the following morning. The committee is responsible for the initial actions, i.e. investigation, consolation visit & planning. It appointed Rev. Naito, UCCJ general secretary, as its chair. Dispatched to Tohoku & Ou Districts were four UCCJ executives:

- 1) Rev. Ishibashi, UCCJ moderator
- 2) Rev. Morita, UCCJ Committee on Social Concerns
- 3) Rev. Fujimori, UCCJ executive secretary on general affairs
- 4) Rev. Kato, UCCJ executive secretary on ecumenical ministries

They left Tokyo in the early morning of Sunday, March 13, attended the Sunday morning service on the way at UCCJ Tokamachi Church in Niigata prefecture, bought relief food & goods, and finally arrived at Tohoku District Center in Sendai late in the evening. On Monday, March 14, they visited eight churches around Sendai city, escorted by Rev. Takahasi, UCCJ Tohoku District moderator. Due to the food shortage, they ate no more than some small pieces of banana on Monday before returning to the Tohoku District Center late in the evening.

<Relief food & goods>



<Tsunami damage in Ishinomaki City>



They found that the major damage was caused not by the earthquake itself, but by the tsunami. The city of Ishinomaki was annihilated along the coast by the tsunami. The church building of Ishinomaki Eiko Church was OK, but the tsunami reached its garden. Rev. Suzuki, senior pastor of Ishinomaki Yamashirocho Church, was

caught by the tsunami. The water covered his body to the breast level, but survived. He was safe and encountered the UCCJ team by coincidence on the mountain ten minutes (on foot) away from the church. The shortage of water was prevailing, and their distribution of drinking water was literary welcomed with tears. The gasoline was one of the scarcest resources

<Ishinomaki Eiko Church & its garden>



<Revs. Suzuki & Bae in the middle>



<Ishinomaki City, viewed from the mountain,
only ten minutes on foot from Ishinomaki Yamashirocho Church>



<Revs. Fujimori & Morita, giving water at Shiogama Higashi Church>



On they had meeting

Tuesday, March 15, an executive with Moderators of

both Tohoku and Ou Districts at Ishinoseki Church, after visiting two more churches in Iwate Prefecture. In the evening of Wednesday, March 16, they all returned home safe.

<Ofunato City in Iwate Prefecture>

They found UCCJ pastors safe after the disasters. But the local pastors had hard time contacting with their church members, since the telephone system was largely down.

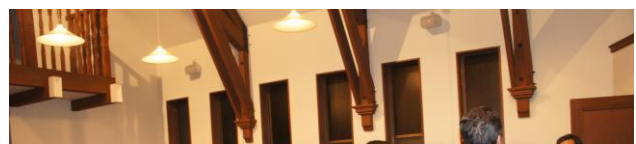


Upon return of the team, the UCCJ Executive Council's Executive Committee will take place on Tuesday, March 22, and will try to form the actual relief plan.

In the meanwhile, the PCT representative, Rev. Ng Tiat-gan (Huang Che-Yen), program secretary on church and society, flew all the way from Taiwan, visited the UCCJ office and handed the PCT relief donation. The PCK dispatched Rev. Lee Seung Youl and others from the Department of Social Service Ministry to Tokyo, and visited the UCCJ office, too, on Wednesday March 16.

The UCCJ appreciates your prayer.

<Giving ride to a Tsunami survivor>

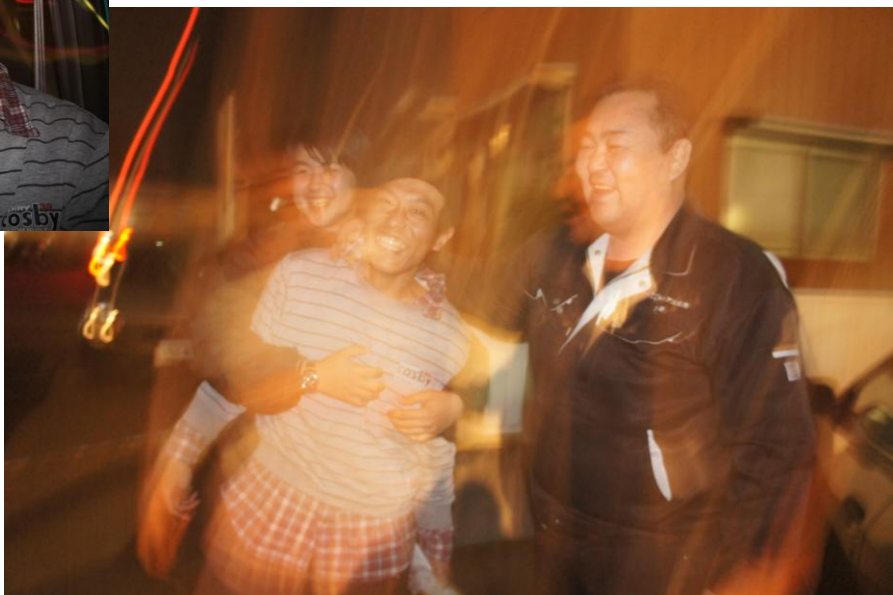


<Sendai Higashi Church as refuge>





<The survivor joins his colleagues>



<At Shiogama Higashi Church>

From left: Rev. Morita, Rev. Kato, Rev. Fujimori, Rev. Takahashi (Tohoku District), Rev. Tsumura (the local church pastor) and Rev. Ishibashi.

