

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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In the scar of disasters of Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

The Most Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu
Primate of Nippon Sei Ko Kai

A month had passed since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (hereinafter 'Disaster') attacked on March 11, when we celebrated Easter. As we had never expected such a serious disaster, we were just lost for words and some people thought the end of the world had come. The long days of darkness and despair continued. However, for the people who thought the day would not come when they would be released from such tragedies, the joyful morning of Easter arrived.

On March 26, two weeks after the dreadful Disaster attacked the Tohoku (North East) area of Japan I was finally able to visit the stricken district in Sendai. As the railroads and highways were all severed due to the disaster, I first flew to Yamagata Airport from Haneda, Tokyo, and then arrived in Sendai the next morning. Sendai is the largest city in the Tohoku area and is the location of the Tohoku diocese Cathedral of NSKK. On the morning of Sunday March 27, I arrived at the Cathedral (Sendai Christian Church). When I entered the Cathedral I found many parts of the walls had peeled off and fallen down and there appeared to be cracks everywhere. It also seemed as if the cathedral was warped and leaning badly. However sent from churches all over Japan were relief supplies of food, fuel and clothes, neatly sorted out and piled high over the floor. Due to frequent aftershocks making it impossible to foresee what will happen, the Church vestry had decided not to use the Cathedral for Sunday worship services. Instead worship services will be conducted in the church hall. In the Sendai city area, city water and electricity services resumed on that day, however the gas lines were not restored. It was not so difficult to obtain general foods but very hard to obtain kerosene or gasoline. Some Church members who live in remote areas had to walk many kilometers on foot in order to attend the worship services that day. As I said before there were aftershocks daily, so people were not able to change clothes or take off their shoes even when they went to bed with some people still having sleepless nights and seemed to be tired exhaustively. The Bishop Hiromichi Kato delivered his message to inspire and encourage the beliefs of church members enduring the severe trials leading them to their hopes through their beliefs. Among the congregation were some for whom it was their first service after the disaster. After the service, reports concerning the victims swept away by the tsunami, lost families and the missing were made. There were also explanations on the present situation of the parishes and churches in the Tohoku area and also on the relief operations. After the service, together with Bishop Kato and other staff members, I went to the coastline area to inspect and observe the real situation of disaster. The damage incurred by the Tsunami was worse than anything you can imagine. The Tsunami reached the 4th floor of buildings, destroying everything, with the wreckage of houses and automobiles remaining. Members

of Self-Defense Forces and police were engaged in searching for bodies. There was not even a single sign of life, just wreckage that covered the earth and beach. We stood in silence gazing at the wreckage and just prayed.

The relief activities in Nippon Sei Ko Kai commenced immediately after the disasters in various ways. At the beginning there was no way to communicate on account of the disconnected telephone network so we could not know the safety or situation of people in the parishes. In addition, as the transportation networks were severed in multiple places, it was really difficult to send the emerging relief goods for the people in most need. A task force was set up in the (Cathedral) Sendai Christ Church in addition the provincial offices (Tokyo) of Nippon Sei Ko Kai led a van of activities with many other dioceses creating support groups and offices for countermeasures. As per the requests of the Tohoku Diocese, relief goods were gathered from the churches all over Japan and sent to Sendai and other disaster areas. People's exceptional response was unexpected such that the volume relief goods gathered far exceeded expectations. To ensure effective programs, the persons in charge of relief activities from each diocese twice met at the Provincial Offices to exchange information and further co-operate regarding relief activities.

The disaster areas are spread so widely that not only Tohoku Diocese but also some other dioceses set up bases for relief activities providing supporting activities around those devastated areas in collaboration with the Tohoku Diocese. The Diocese of Hokkaido is assisting Shin-ai Church, Kamaishi and its nursery school. Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe Dioceses in the Kansai area have sent clergy and members of their churches to support St. Timothy's Church, Onahama in their activities. Tokyo and Yokohama Dioceses are sending clergy to churches in Tohoku Diocese, where the regular clergy are not settled yet, to support Sunday services. The Tokyo and Chubu Dioceses continue to send relief goods and supplies to the disaster area.

The total number of deceased and missing people from the disaster exceeds 30,000. The greatest impact in the disaster was the Tsunami, with almost all the villages and towns along the Tohoku coastline damaged in a deadly manner. In addition to the Tsunami and Earthquake, due to the catastrophe of the radiation contamination from the Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Plant, people who live in the districts within the radius of 30 kilometers from the plant are required to evacuate to far places where the shelters are temporarily arranged. These people continue to face uncertainty and significant hardship. The fear of contamination of radiation does not stay within the 30kilometer radius, but have reached as far as Tokyo which is 200 kilometers from Fukushima. There is still no solution to these anxieties.

Outside the disaster area Japan remains a fortunate country, with enough food and commodities to share with the people in disaster areas. With transportation (railways and highways) restored and supplies of gasoline and other fuels are back to normal, we no longer have to depend so much upon the material support from overseas. Foods and relief goods received preferential treatment to arrive in the disaster areas. However, the need of volunteers to sort through the relief goods and send them to the places where people are waiting remains. The need for volunteers for clearing up the rubbles and debris which are scattered all over the devastated earth still remains. But the most important mission given to our churches is much needed mental care for victims of disaster who first were sent to shelters but have now moved to the newly built temporary housing. Supporting those works will be needed long term going forwards and Nippon Sei Ko Kai decided to set up a task force for coping with the disaster in Sendai with its operations to commence soon. From now on, this department will co-operate with the Tohoku Diocese and also with other support groups within each diocese. We will

find out what is most needed or what kind of talent is necessary. By releasing the information gathered, coordinating the acceptance and dispatchment of volunteers, we are going to make sure NSKK provides continuing effective support towards the recovery.

The earthquake and tsunami we had this time were really a calamity and have created so much sorrow, agony and trial for many people. But, even though we are under these difficulties, we hope to walk together with the victims of disaster, starting with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From Golgotha, the hill of despair to the way of delight, Resurrection should be the assurance HE showed us for our works.

Happy Easter to you all.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The damage within Nippon Sei Ko Kai Caused by Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

Rev. John Makito Aizawa
General Secretary of the NSKK
Provincial Office

On 11th March 2011, a huge earthquake hit the Tohoku area of Japan, and caused unparalleled calamity. Everything was unprecedented: the magnitude of the earthquake, the size of the tsunami and then the unpredictable leakage of radiation caused by damage to the nuclear power station. The calamity caused by these incidents has continues to expand. (As of writing this article) No less than 10,000 people have lost their lives and 18,000¹ are still missing. Just reading these figures causes our hearts to bleed. It has been reported that those who lost their homes and properties are making their livings in extremely difficult situations. There are a number of people who have come to support them as volunteers.

We pray that those who lost their lives be at peace with God, that the missing are found, and those suffering will resume their normal life as soon as possible. We also pray for the volunteers who are working in the disaster-areas.

There are a number of dioceses in the NSKK that have organized project teams to aid the disaster area, and have established front-line offices in order that action can be taken quickly. Support has already begun.

In the Hokkaido Diocese, the “Hokkaido Diocese Aid Project to support victims of the Tohoku/Kanto Great Earthquake” has started its activities through Shin-Ai Church in the city of Kamaishi. The Kobe Diocese, the “Eastern Japan Earthquake Aid Office of the Kobe Diocese” has started support activities through St. Timothy’s Church, Onahama. In other dioceses, many volunteers are helping through activities including the delivery of relief supplies to the disaster areas, sorting and

¹ As of the National Police Agency of Japan, Emergency Disaster Countermeasure Headquarters on July 3, 2011 15,527 people have died and 7,102 remain missing.

managing the large amount of supplies brought by many people, and arranging vehicles for delivery. Furthermore, we have received a number of inquiries from overseas Anglican dioceses and churches worldwide, asking what kind of help or donations are required. The NSKK will answer their inquiries when it knows what the real needs are.

As of 7th April, the present situation as understood by the NSKK was as follows. Taking these details into consideration, we would like to ask for the prayers of everyone in the Anglican Communion.

Diocese of Tohoku

<Sendai Christ Church>

An enormous amount of dust fell from the ceiling of the church, and the walls on the left side of the church were cracked. As there remains a high possibility of a level-6 aftershock, it has been decided by the vestry members that the church building should not be used for the time being because of the danger of collapse. It is reported that aftershocks are occurring frequently. There are a number of the church members who have lost their homes, fields or properties, or whose properties are submerged.

<St. Francis' Church, Sendai>

The walls of the church and the hall were cracked, and tiles fell from the roof and the vicarage. There were no victims amongst the church members except one house which was submerged.

<St. Timothy's Church, Onahama>

Parts of the church walls have flaked off. Fortunately, the tsunami stopped just 50 meters from the church and kindergarten buildings. Due to problems of the nuclear power plant, people are facing difficulties in obtaining daily necessities.

It has been decided by the Tohoku Diocese that support activities in the Onahama area will be restricted due to problems associated with the damage to the power plant, the difficulty in obtaining accurate scientific information, and the unpredictable situation for the future, which of course causes feelings of anxiety and tension. Potential volunteers will need to be over 40, and who have a definite will to volunteer. As of 6th April the first stage of support activity has been suspended. The second stage of support activity will restart after considering the conditions of the disaster area.

<St. John's Church, Isoyama>

It was reported that damages to the church and kindergarten were not serious, but 17 pupils and staff of the kindergarten lost family members.

Diocese of Kita-Kanto

<Anglican Church, Shimodate>

Damages include considerable cracks in the walls of the church. Repair works are urgently necessary. The garden of the kindergarten has sunk a considerable depth.

< St. Barnabas' Church, Tsuchiura >

There are cracks both outside and inside the church building. The font fell over, and some tableware was broken. In Tsuchiura City the recovery of the electricity, water and gas supplies has been delayed, and it has been difficult to make contact.

<St. Stephen's Church, Mito>

Half the concrete of the bell tower was had flaked and appeared as if it would snap in two. In consultation with specialists it was decided it had to be removed, which will cause the church great financial burden. The walls around the altar crumbled causing damage to the altar itself.

<St. Andrew's Church, Hitachi>

The ceiling of the church was and the walls of the kindergarten were damaged. There are a number of cracks in the garden and a steep depression. Due to the frequent aftershocks there is concern regarding a landslide.

Diocese of Yokohama

<Urayasu Mission Station>

Violent upheaval and deep depressions were seen around the Mission Station. As the building is leased no financial loss is anticipated. However, the whole building is leaning and may fall down if large aftershocks occur.

<All Saints Church, Choshi>

No serious damage in the church building. However, frequent aftershocks have caused several cracks in the foundation of the altar. There were no earthquake victims, but several houses of church members had damaged roof tiles or damage inside. Iioka town, Asahi City, neighboring Choshi, suffered badly from the tsunami. A great number of houses along the seashore were completely damaged or have been inundated with sea water.

No other churches were reported to have suffered much. Victims of the earthquake/tsunami/radiation will soon start to live in shelters or temporary dwellings. It is anticipated that under such circumstances, they will encounter various problems, both mentally and physically. Without a doubt, they are still in the middle of a disaster. The situation is changing every moment, and we are required to take immediate action according to the changing situation.

The NSKK is considering the most appropriate action to be taken by the whole provincial office, while forming a clear view of the changing situation. We request your continuing prayers for all the victims as well as for our activities, which will continue for a long time yet.

SUPPORTING DISASTER-STRICKEN DIOCESES

"PARTNERSHP AMONG ALL DIOCESES OF NSKK"

Hajime Suzuki
Secretary of Communication, NSKK

I had the opportunity to read the notes written by children on the Earthquake and Tsunami.

Mari Yamauchi(14), Third grade Ishinomaki Junior High School, Ishinomaki City, Miyagi prefecture, tells us of a deep indescribable loss.

It has been over 1 month since the Earthquake my great grandmother is still missing, and my Grandfather used to farm fish, but he cannot farm anymore. I have returned to my daily routine as if nothing ever happened. But when I walk outside, I see burnt out buildings and devastated towns where nothing remains. I cannot help but weep as I see these.

Yuka Hashiura(12), Grade 6 Elementary School in Natori City, located southeast of Sendai, Miyagi prefecture, wrote about her fear when the Tsunami attacked her.

The Tsunami reached the second floor of our school. I watched the Ocean side and there was fire spreading everywhere. Then another earthquake attacked us, and on top of that it started snowing too. I was in the freezing cold waiting for the Tsunami to subside. But the Tsunami was not ebbing, water stayed everywhere. I had to spend the night in the classroom on the 3rd floor. That night it was so cold that I couldn't get a wink of sleep. I kept watching in the direction where the crimson flame could be seen. I kept talking with my friends "Is this a nightmare?" "Is this really happening to us?"

Ishinomaki City and Natori City are located in the Tohoku Diocese. These cities were greatly devastated by the Earthquake and Tsunami. May 10th marked almost 2 months since the Earthquake and Tsunami of March 11th. The numbers of identified victims as of then were 14,949 dead and 9,880 missing. The scale of the devastation from the Great Eastern Earthquake/Tsunami is greater than that caused by the January 1995 Hanshin-Awaji Great Earthquake where 6300 were killed.

NSKK is made up of 11 Dioceses, with all Dioceses taking action to help the Tohoku Diocese and the Kita-Kanto Diocese, both stricken by the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster. The Most Rev. Uematsu, the Primate, Bishops of each Diocese, those in charge of countermeasures within each diocese together with Rev. Aizawa, Secretary General and other directors held meetings on April 1st and 12th in the Provincial Offices in Tokyo to confirm the following: confirming the conditions of stricken areas; sending priests to the disaster areas; arranging emergency relief supplies; confirming transportation routes for supplies and the securing storage space supplies; securing emergency vehicles; recruiting volunteers and appealing for contributions. Immediately after the above mentioned consultations plans were placed into action.

Relief supplies from each church were collected at the Chubu Diocese Center in Nagoya, or St. Andrew's Church, Tokyo Diocese. These were transported one after another by emergency vehicles to the stricken areas in Sendai and Fukushima. All vehicles were arranged by the Dioceses of Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Yokohama Tokyo and Kita-Kanto. Relief Supplies from Hokkaido were sent to Kamaishi, in Iwate Prefecture. Petrol for Transportation vehicles was unable in Eastern and Western Japan; therefore it was arranged by the Kyushu Diocese and forwarded to Nagoya and Tokyo. The Okinawa Diocese supported as much as they could from their location. In addition to the sending of relief supplies, each diocese sent the priests to the stricken areas. These Priests reported the situations to their congregations.

Rescue operations to the stricken areas initially started voluntarily within each Diocese but I would especially like to mention these volunteer activities have been enhanced through the partnerships between the dioceses enabling greater relief. Through the leadership of the Primate and consultation with representatives of each diocese, just 40 days after the Earthquake, activities of NSKK supporting people and churches in the stricken areas have built up an organized partnership as follows:

- (1) Establishment in the Province of the Revival and Support Headquarters to the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake /Tsunami.

Set up and opened Reconstruction Support branch in Sendai, Miyagi prefecture under the Headquarters of Province to work together with the Tohoku Diocese area. Rev. Nakamura has been placed in charge, as the director of missionary work for the Province office, together with 3 to 4 fulltime staff.

- (2) Support to Shin-ai Church, Kamaishi, by the Hokkaido Diocese
The Hokkaido Diocese sent priests and seminary students to Shin-Ai Church in Kamaishi during the period of April to June 2011. They assisted in the operations of the Church and the church operated Kamaishi Nursery School, and also supported people in the community. Kamaishi is the one of the areas most damaged as a result of the earthquake induced tsunami.
- (3) Support to St. Timothy's Church Onahama by the Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe Dioceses
The Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe Dioceses have cooperated and carried out the first project from April to June. They sent priests to hold the Sunday Service at St .Timothy's Church Onahma located in Iwaki City, Fukushima which was greatly damaged by the Earthquake. These Dioceses also aided those who had been evacuated living south of Iwaki. Through the generosity of the Kita-Kanto Diocese who enabled St. Andrew's Church in Hitachi to be the operations base to assist the 3 dioceses with their relief activities.
- (4) Partnership between the Tokyo and Yokohama Diocese for Our Savior Church in Akita.
During the period from April to July, The Dioceses of Tokyo and Yokohama sent Priests to hold Sunday Services at Our Savior Church Akita, in addition to the weekly services the Priests also undertook teachings at the kindergarten attached to the church. The Rev. Kiyosumi Hasegawa, the parish priest of Our Savior Church has been in Sendai in charge of the Disaster Relief Headquarters for the Tohoku Diocese. Priests from the two Dioceses were assisting in his absence.

Two months have already passed since the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami attacked. The condition of damaged churches and people has been revealed clearly by the Tohoku, Kita-Kanto and Yokohama Dioceses. The 11 Dioceses which make up NSKK worked together as one heart as they began the journey down a thorny path to bring recovery and relief from the deep scars left by the catastrophic Earthquake and Tsunami.

The Rev Andrew Yoshimichi Ohata was inaugurated as the Bishop of Tokyo Diocese NSKK

The Rev. Andrew Yoshimichi Ohata was inaugurated as the 9th Bishop of the Tokyo Diocese of NSKK. The ordination and the institution for the Bishop of the Tokyo Diocese were administrated in Orchid Hall at St. Hilda's School in Tokyo on 11th February 2011.

Although it was cold and snowing day, the Ceremony was attended by more than 900 people including bishops, ministers and laypersons from all dioceses of NSKK, guests from overseas, other denominations, and groups of many other related organizations. All celebrated the newly ordained bishop.

