

JAPAN REPORT

On April 27, 2011 we, Andrea Johnson and I, departed for Narita Japan. We arrived on the 28th. It was nice that we arrived in the late afternoon and therefore bed was near. After a 3 hour ride on a bus, we finally arrived at the military installation around 10:00p and got into bed. The next day we rode the bus back to the airport to get Scott Caldwell, another team member that had his flight delayed the day before. Then we had another bus ride and another late arrival at the base. The next day we went back to airport again, on the bus, to get to the next location. Each time we had a bus ride for 3 hours to and 3 hours back taking up time. That doesn't include the time to wait for the bus. It was taking so long in transportation that we decided to move closer to Tokyo. So the next day, we had another bus ride back to the airport. Then another bus ride to the hotel. From this point on each day we had to go to the airport to get public transportation. Once we found that public transportation was at key points we made a point to eat at the airport each day. Just a little information, Japan divides itself into East and West. We would call it North and South.

Mito:

We found the church in Mito where we met with Atsushi Tsuneki the preacher. It was a good visit and found that the church in Mito was the largest church in the East. They were working with another smaller church to get help to the devastated areas. The Mito church was distributing food and clothing to the people in Sendai. The funds that Mito had been receiving were controlled by a group of members that had formed a committee to control spending. What we saw says they are spending correctly. They had borrowed 2 vehicles in order to distribute the goods. Joel Osborn and his group had temporarily moved to Sendai to work from the church building. There was a team of 9 people from the area in Mito that were working in Sendai. Donations from the Japanese people were taken to Sendai to be distributed. Clothing, books, boots and school supplies were being handed out to the needy. Fresh vegetables were purchased and handed out at the same time. This was very helpful since supplies had not yet been resupplied in the Sendai, Ibaraki area. We found that Mito was



preparing to try to have a team of volunteers weekly to go up to Sendai to work and help people. They were working with a small church in the Sendai area and both we doing great work helping the stricken. Mito's church had damage but was still functioning. The lost a few items and the driveway had buckled.

There was some minor damage to the church. Overall they survived quiet well. There are about 100 members at Mito - Mostly Japanese. Some American school teachers attend and were helping with the efforts.

Sendai (Ishinomaki area):

Sendai and east was where the wave hit. The towns that we say had been totally destroyed by the wave. There were a few houses still standing but were damaged and had no utilities. At one location the electricity was connected via the large power lines from above so that the houses that did stand had power but it was not everywhere. Damage was extensive. Vehicles and house destroyed. Trains had cars on the tracks. Roads were blocked with debris. The smell of death was everywhere.

Once in Sendai we would drive up to a location mostly undetermined until we arrived and stop and throw out blue tarps. Start putting out what we had to pass out and within a short time those that still had survived would show up. The fresh vegetables were the greatest needs. The Japanese people are very well behaved. They would stand in line without pushing or shoving and patiently wait for their turn to go. Joel would only allow 5 at a time to walk down the tarp and take what they wanted. Almost everyone got vegetables. Once we ran out



they would look closer at the clothes. Since everything they owned was completely destroyed a need for anything was important. At one point the people that showed up lined up and saw there was a need to help and helped with laying out all the food and stuff. Then they got back in line and got what they needed. It was so encouraging to see people in need helping with the setup. They knew we were there to help them and wanted not to just stand there but help in what they were about to receive. It shows the humbleness of the Japanese people. They just wanted to help. Always saying thank you and bowing. Most you could see the utter loss and overwhelming that had taken its toll on them. And it was overwhelming. I just kept wondering how all of this was going to be cleaned up and replaced.

This particular town was right on the ocean and was just wiped out. You can see where foundations of houses still are but no house. You can see the buildings gutted by the force of the water or the force of an object pushed through it. Stones that weigh about 30-50 lbs each just pushed up from the force. Debris all around from who knows where. The one thing that



reminded me of the loss was the personal effects all strewn around. Family pictures and personal items were just everywhere. Someone's articles from people's houses were now miles or blocks or who knows from where just out there. If the family was not dead they would never be able to find these lost items. You would see bowls that were still in tack and pieces of bowls all in the same area wondering if they were all part of the same set or the same house.

There were work crews out from the government trying to clear streets so that occupants could get into the area. There seemed to be no problems at all with looting or trouble. I believe that the devastation was so intense that shock still was present. I know that this kind of devastation does many things to people and they wake up after a time and wonder what really happened. I know I was shocked to see what the results of a tsunami had done. As for relief crews I did not see anyone else. They may have been there but their presence was not seen.

Conclusion:

The only help at this point is to fund relief efforts. There is place to stay at the church in Sendai. There is not bath and you will have to sleep on the floor of the church. There is electricity and

water but I am not sure about heat. You would have to make your lunch for the day and take water with you. In very few places there public latrines set up so far.

The church borrowed 2 vans to carry everything around. It would a good gift to purchase two vans for them. They are still trying to arrange for fresh food by the truck load to get to Sendai. The problems are not money for food but transportation and volume. Currently the team was purchasing fresh food before they drove 1 hour to the devastation.

If a team from WFR were to go I strongly suggest they take one of us with them to elevate the problems we had in the beginning. The Mito church did say they would be willing to make sure that they have drivers and interrupters with them. The logistical problems of transportation to the sites and from the airport are very cumbersome unless you have been there. There is a Japan travel report I did that would help a lot. The team should not be more than 8 people since sleeping is limited and transportation is limited. You will have to go to the public bathing facility nightly. This is a public bath facility, all together, where the men are all in one area and women are in another.

You know that old saying Visa is accepted everywhere. It is in Japan, so large amounts of cash are not necessary to carry over. Funds can be obtained through ATM's and banks.

