

Tokyo Unification Church Delivers Supplies to Victims in Sendai

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Unification Church headquarters in Tokyo has been delivering food and blankets to quake survivors in Sendai, the center of last Friday's cataclysmic earthquake and tsunami. Millions of Japanese have spent a sixth day with little food, water or heat, as temperatures have fallen on Japan's Northeast coast.



Shinosuke Ohno, UC headquarters staff, Tokyo

At least six trucks and vans have delivered supplies, according to Shinosuke Ohno, a 29-year-old headquarters staff member who has been driving the 188 miles from Tokyo to Sendai. Mr. Ohno is driving through radioactive stretches of road near the stricken Fukushima power plant and dodging obstacles and damaged pavement to make the runs, according to his reports on the Japanese Unification Church website, which have been translated into English. Tremors have continued daily since March 11, 2011, according to several reports. Mr. Ohno, who is battling fatigue and weakness on the third day of a fast, reports that the Unificationists have enough food, and surpluses have been distributed to survivors sheltering in several local school buildings.

The survivors on the Northeast coast are battling the cold in chilly school buildings. Snow reportedly fell on Sendai on Tuesday, March 15th. In order to conserve electricity, the gymnasiums where people are over-nighting are unheated, according to the Japanese church website.

"The situation in Japan has brought the best out in all people," emails Nancy Nishi, an American Unification Church member in Saitama city, just north of Tokyo. Although her city has been experiencing numerous aftershocks, there has been little damage. "The atmosphere is somber, and the media makes it even scarier," she writes. "But the Japanese people are a people to restart their lives and assist others as well. There is no looting, and supermarkets have lowered their prices in some areas. They are so giving; I can't say that about any other country I know about."



Sasaki family, survivors of quake in Shizugawa.

Some Unification Families Still Missing

There are conflicting reports regarding whether all Unificationists in the quake zone have been accounted for. Mr. Ohno reports that in the four prefectures of Miyagi, Iwate, Aomori and Fukushima there are still 19 families missing – down from 120 on March 14, 2011. Mr. Tim Elder, who works for Tongil Group in Seoul, reports that 16 families are missing, but that there are no fatalities reported to Unificationist Headquarters. According to Kinuyo Edgerly, spouse of Rev. Jim Edgerly, pastor of the Unification Church in Boston, the leader of the Unification Church in Miyagi Prefecture, which includes the city of Sendai, reports that he found all his church members and that none of them had perished.

There is mounting concern for 10,000 missing residents of Shizugawa village just north of Sendai. Virtually all of the houses and boats in this fishing village were destroyed by the Tsunami, but the single Unification family in town escaped unscathed, according to Mr. Ohno. Mr. and Mrs. Sasaki and their three children told him their escape was miraculous. The Sasaki's farm cultured oysters, and both him and his wife were on the water harvesting shell fish at 1 p.m. on the day of the quake but stopped fishing early that day to do some errands. When the quake began around 3:00 p.m. they had just enough time to get to higher ground before a 60-foot wall of water struck. Their three children are enrolled in a local elementary school and middle school, located on high ground. Some of the children in school were killed by the Tsunami after leaving school but the Sasaki children stayed on the school grounds after dismissal and thus escaped the wave.



Wreckage from airfield near Sendai.

In the shelter where her family is staying, Mrs. Sasaki says the building is kept clean and orderly and that the elderly and the injured are given priority. "Even though we are all at the breaking point -- with no gas, no electricity and little food -- everybody is helping each other," she told Mr. Ohno.

"We feel it was a miracle that we survived, and we thank God and True Parents for that," Mrs. Sasaki said, adding that her heart goes out to the many firemen and emergency medical personnel in Sendai who were killed trying to rescue people on March 11th. "People lost everything. Sometimes you want to cry, but we cannot. We need to keep our eyes open so that we can face the future," she said.

Survivor Testimonies of Unificationists

The following anonymous survival testimonies of Unification Church members were collected in Japan and translated by a Japanese Unificationist in New York.

"When I was driving home from church, my car was swallowed by the tsunami. As it was floating on the water, I thought there was no way to get out. However, my car window broke and I was able to get out of my car. It was a miracle. I hung onto the eaves of the damaged house in the water for about an hour. I thought I would die. But a group of rescuers found me and pulled me up to the second floor of this house. It was a miracle that I was saved." – *Member from Ishinomaki City, Miyagi prefecture*

"The tsunami came when I was evacuating by car. Suddenly my car was taken by the tsunami water and stopped when the car bumped in to the second floor of a house that was damaged by the tsunami. I quickly crawled out of the car and went up on the roof. I still don't know where the car was taken by the tsunami. I am so thankful to God and True Parents for being saved. Later, I was able to find the first floor of my house that was completely smashed by the tsunami." – *Member from Sen Nan City, Miyagi prefecture*

"My father had passed away on March 9, 2011 so we had a funeral planned for him on March 11th when the earthquake and tsunami came. Since the funeral home was on a high hillside, my whole family and relatives were already driving in that direction. Suddenly, we saw the raging tsunami take everything below us away. We were in shock and couldn't believe it." – *Member from Miyako City, Iwate prefecture*



Debris in Sendai. 6,200 buildings were demolished in all cities and towns on Japan's east coast.

"A mother was living by herself in Sendai City in Miyagi prefecture, where the tsunami hit the hardest. Her son and daughter-in-law drove to her house to find her, but she was nowhere in the wrecked house. They searched and searched. Finally, they found a note from her that said she had gone to a shelter. They were so happy to finally meet their mother in a shelter crowded with hundreds of people inside." – *Member from Yamagata prefecture*

"We experienced the tsunami after we returned home after picking up our child. Water came into our house so rapidly, and we escaped from our house quickly with our child by car. The tsunami was about to wash us away, but miraculously we were able to come up on a hill without any obstacles." – *Sugano, Miyagi prefecture*

Japanese monarch, Emperor Akihito, gave his first television address to the Japanese people on Wednesday, March 15, 2011. "His speech marked the first time a Japanese emperor addressed the nation on television. Many compared this moment to Akihito's father, Emperor Hirohito, who announced Japan's surrender at the end of World War II in a radio address. That was the first time most Japanese ever heard their emperor's voice," according to the *Washington Times*.