


2011 MINISTRY REPORT

SAMARITAN'S PURSE



 SOUTH SUDAN | EMERGENCY FOOD DROP



LAND OF THE RISING SON



IN JAPAN, SURVIVORS OF ONE OF THE WORST DISASTERS IN HISTORY ARE DISCOVERING THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE COMPASSION OF THOUSANDS OF CHRISTIANS SERVING WITH SAMARITAN'S PURSE.



QUICK RELIEF

Samaritan's Purse loaded 93 tons of emergency aid on a 747 jumbo jet bound for Japan (below), where American and Japanese soldiers (left) and church partners (above) helped distribute relief supplies to people in need.

Shinich Ogata lost everything in the tsunami that hit the northeastern coast of Japan on March 11, 2011. The first Sunday he walked through the doors of Kesennuma First Bible Baptist Church, the coat on his back and the shoes on his feet—everything he had—had been given to him.

“Samaritan's Purse was the first group who came to rescue us,” he said. “Only the churches came to help. I saw how the Christians not only said good things but did good things too. I received so much hope from them.”

The giant tsunami, triggered by a powerful offshore earthquake, had left nearly 20,000 people dead or missing, and deprived hundreds of thousands of their homes, possessions, and livelihoods. Within days, Samaritan's Purse chartered a 747 jumbo jet to airlift 93 tons of emergency supplies to Japan. Our teams on the ground partnered with the few small churches in the hard-hit Tohoku Region to minister to thousands of vulnerable survivors like Ogata. Starting in the major port city of Sendai, we worked our way north along the coast to assist devastated communities around Ishinomaki and Kesennuma.

As the massive relief effort went on, Ogata had another encounter with Samaritan's Purse, this time with American volunteers we sent to Japan to rebuild hundreds of houses. Ogata's life reached a turning point when one particular volunteer challenged him about his Shinto beliefs.

“I realized that what I was doing was meaningless if it was not for the living God,” he said. “My eyes were opened that I needed to seek the true God.”

The volunteer patiently shared the Gospel with him, explaining the meaning of the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not long after that, Ogata prayed to receive Christ, led by Pastor Hiroshi Minegishi of Kesennuma First Bible Baptist Church.

“When I believed in Jesus, my heart was totally changed,” Ogata said. “It has made a huge difference in my life.”

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“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.” —John 3:17, NIV



RESTORING A HOME

Volunteers from the United States, Canada, and the Philippines gutted this apartment so it could be rebuilt. The woman who lives there lost her husband and only son in the tsunami.

Japan's population is only two percent Christian. In the aftermath of the catastrophe, however, many thousands of Japanese have witnessed the compassion of Christians and been blessed by relief efforts coordinated through local churches. In the Land of the Rising Sun, God's risen Son has become known like never before.

Samaritan's Purse has worked in partnership with Japanese churches and pastors to furnish the resources to minister to their neighbors, including bicycles for people without transportation and small trucks for ministry partners who organized crews to clean mud and debris out of damaged houses.

Yoshio Usui, pastor of Japan Baptist Kesennuma Church, has used the truck we gave him to distribute vital supplies and help hundreds of homeowners in the community.

"The Japanese tend to have a mentality of 'mind your own business,' and often avoid getting involved in other people's lives," Usui said. "Through Samaritan's Purse coming and showing God's love, we have seen that He wants us to be more proactive in showing His love to others."

Hiroshi Minegishi is another pastor in Kesennuma who has seen a great move of God's Spirit among local congregations since the disaster.

"I am so grateful for the attitude of Samaritan's Purse to work with churches in this area," Minegishi said. "They have made it easy to make relationships with people so that we can share the Gospel with them."

Minegishi helped deliver some 1,800 household kits to families living in temporary shelters or on the second floor of flood-damaged homes. These kits—including basic items



FINDING HOPE

Araki Hideo (above) joined Samaritan's Purse as a volunteer and became one of our staff carpenters, leading teams of volunteers as they rebuilt homes in Kesennuma. Mr. and Mrs. Konno (below, left) each prayed to accept Jesus Christ as Savior after hearing the Gospel and witnessing the compassion of Christ through our home reconstruction project.

such as kitchenware and bedding—were gratefully received by people who were unable to find or afford the materials on their own. Each kit included a Bible in Japanese to bring the hope and comfort of Christ. Samaritan's Purse provided these kits to 4,110 struggling families throughout the Tohoku Region.

The catastrophe in Japan has led to one of the most remarkable international volunteer responses in the history of Samaritan's Purse. By the end of the year, 3,658 individuals—including thousands of Japanese and dozens from around the world—served in the Name of Jesus. Our volunteer teams have been working out of bases in the towns of Shichigahama, Tome, and Kesennuma. During 2011, we completed 265 mud outs and reconstructed 156 homes with the goal of finishing at least 525.

Though language and cultural barriers have presented challenges, the tangible expression of Christ's love has built a bridge to the hearts of Japanese men and women. Hundreds of people made public professions of faith in Jesus through Samaritan's Purse projects and related evangelistic outreaches leading up to the Tohoku Celebration of Hope with Franklin Graham in March 2012.

Our teams also helped plant the first church in the Watanoha suburb of Ishinomaki—Watanoha Christ Church, led by Pastor Shuzo Suzuki. Ten new converts were planning to be baptized on Easter Sunday in 2012.

“My hope is that this church will be built with a firm foundation and that there will be many Christians in this area one day,” Suzuki said. “This is an important and opportune time to spread the Gospel.”

As the reconstruction progresses, Samaritan's Purse plans to continue to meet spiritual needs in Japan by supporting churches and ministries in this largely unevangelized nation. Our work is effectively building up local believers for the ministry of the Gospel, preparing the way for an even greater harvest for the kingdom of God. As Jesus said, “*Look, I tell you lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest*” (John 4:35b, ESV). ■

