

Samaritan's Purse responding in Japan

Christian relief organization rushing to help after earthquake and tsunami rock Asian nation

CALGARY, AB, March 14, 2011 — Samaritan's Purse has deployed a team to Japan, at the request of Japanese church leaders, to provide emergency relief to people affected by the deadly earthquake and tsunami that hit the northeastern coast of the country on March 11.

Samaritan's Purse staff members, including two Canadians, are now in Japan and will be working with local churches to distribute food, water, blankets, hygiene supplies, and other aid to people who have lost virtually everything.

"The people of Japan need help and we are going to help them however we can," said Ken Isaacs, Samaritan's Purse International's vice president of projects. "Our partners there called us to ask us to bring our expertise and it is our privilege to serve alongside them."

Samaritan's Purse President Franklin Graham has conducted evangelistic Festivals in the Japanese cities of Osaka and Okinawa, and we have hundreds of church partners in the country. Reverend Yoshikazu Takada, who was chairman of the Osaka Festival committee, requested our assistance.

"Please come. We need your help," Takada said.

We are organizing a 747 cargo jet to airlift emergency relief materials such as hygiene kits, blankets, plastic, and water filtration systems. Our Japanese church partners have secured five trucks and begun purchasing supplies such as blankets, hygiene supplies, food, water, and first aid items. Our partners have secured permission for us to enter the disaster zone. Local believers are being mobilized to volunteer to help with the response.

The massive tsunami, triggered by an 8.9-magnitude earthquake, saw giant waves engulf coastal towns and swept away houses, cars, boats, and trains. The quake has been followed by dozens of strong aftershocks. Japan's prime minister called the crisis the most severe challenge the nation has faced since World War II. Officials have declared a state of emergency for a nation grieving the loss of so many lives while gripped by fear of more quakes and possible radiation leaks from damaged nuclear reactors at two power plants.

"I ask that all Canadians continue to pray for the people of Japan," said Fred Weiss, executive director of Samaritan's Purse Canada, "and to support Samaritan's Purse in our relief work there."

Donations Needed

To support this urgent relief and recovery work, call **1-800-663-6500** or visit www.samaritanpurse.ca.

About Samaritan's Purse Canada

Samaritan's Purse Canada is an international Christian relief and development organization working in about 70 countries to provide aid to victims of war, disease, disaster, poverty, famine, and persecution. The Calgary-based charity also operates the well-known Operation Christmas Child program that sends gift-filled shoe boxes to needy children around the world each year, and the Turn on the Tap initiative that raises funds for life-saving BioSand Water Filters in the developing world. Go to www.samaritanpurse.ca for more information.

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