

YWAM Sees Opportunity Amid the Crisis in Japan

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake and tsunami which hit the northeastern part of Japan last week, reports from YWAM teams have been coming through describing the impact of the disaster and explaining how they are getting involved in the recovery process.

Cancelling all other plans, YWAM leaders in Japan decided to support the work of CRASHJapan, the official networking response of missions and churches in Japan to earthquakes and other natural disasters. It is an authorized ministry of the mission network, Japan Evangelical Missionary Association of which YWAM is a member. The aim of CRASH is "to equip Christians in Japan to be ready when disaster strikes to show the love of Jesus in practical and effective ways."

Joining YWAM teams in Tokyo are a first response team from RescueNet US and volunteers from YWAM-initiated news network, GrassRoots News.

The threat of radiation from damaged nuclear facilities is restricting access to some parts of the disaster area, but resident YWAMers anticipate that there will be many opportunities to serve the survivors and help them restore their lives once basic services have been restored and the rescue effort is completed.

Immediately, YWAMers in Japan are asking for a prayer response alongside donations via CRASHJapan to get vital supplies of food to those in need. David McDaniel, leader of the Tokyo Discipleship Training School, explains the need:

"This is a country with a strong infrastructure-they are the experts on disaster response, because of their culture..." McDaniel says. "The reality is, right now a lot of people want

to get on planes and come here. I appreciate your heart and desire, but right now we don't need a tonne of people to come-the biggest thing we need is prayer!"

He specifies that prayer is especially needed for the rescue efforts, for the dangerous situation created by damage to local nuclear facilities to be brought under control, and for peace for the people of Japan at this time.

"The Japanese character for crisis is a combination of two kanji-one for danger and one for opportunity," says McDaniel. "In this crisis, God wants to do what He always does-He wants to take something that is dangerous and horrible and He wants to redeem it, and turn peoples hearts towards Him. That's what we're believing for-this nation to come to know the incredible love their God has for them as a people."