

Earthquake: Pray for the People of Myanmar

Gospel for Asia is deploying Compassion Services teams to offer relief after a 6.8 magnitude earthquake hit Myanmar (Burma) March 24. The *Bangkok Post* reported that the first quake was followed by a 5.0 aftershock about 30 minutes later, according to Thailand's Meteorological Department. A smaller aftershock hit the country the next morning.

Gospel for Asia supports hundreds of workers in Myanmar. They serve as pastors of churches and work at Bridge of Hope centers scattered throughout Myanmar.

The Compassion Services teams will be comprised of GFA-supported workers throughout Myanmar.

"The test of the depth of our love for Christ is understood in the response to those suffering and who are in desperate need of Jesus' love," says Gospel for Asia president K.P. Yohannan. "The Lord loves these precious people so very much, and it is our joy to show them His love in action."

Since the earthquake hit a remote, rural area of Myanmar where communication is limited and travel is difficult under normal circumstances, GFA has not been able to communicate with any of its workers.

CNN reports that the earthquake hit eastern Myanmar about 55 miles north of Chiang Rai, Thailand. Tremors were felt hundreds of miles away in both Bangkok, Thailand, and Hanoi, Vietnam.

The epicenter of the quake was near Myanmar's border with Thailand, Laos and China—an area known as "The Golden Triangle." The triangle was notorious for supplying the world with opium for many years.

An official in Thailand told the *Bangkok Post* that Thursday's earthquakes were a direct "consequence of the Japanese quake causing movement of the tectonic plate in Burma."

The death toll Friday morning was reported at 120 according to most major news agencies. Dozens of homes and public buildings were also destroyed by the quake.

The earthquake is the latest in a series of natural disasters to strike Myanmar, beginning with the deadly cyclone Nargis in 2008 that took more than 100,000 lives. During 2009, the people suffered after an explosion in the rat population stripped crops from the field. Another cyclone hit Burma last summer.

"It's heartbreaking to see the people of Myanmar suffering through one crisis after another. I am so grateful the Lord has allowed us to be His hands and feet to these precious people," Yohannan says. "Our ministry to the cyclone victims and those suffering from the rat infestation will continue along with meeting the needs of those who now face this new crisis."

News reports indicate that Thursday's earthquake was of about the same magnitude as the one that hit Haiti in January, 2010.

Please pray for the people affected by the earthquake. Also, pray for the Compassion Services teams to be able to determine what kind of aid is needed.

Pray for the peace and love of Jesus to be on display during this crisis.

"It is so easy to overlook and forget those who are suffering. We must pray with deep conviction that these people will come to know the love of Christ," Yohannan says.