

McGinty Prayer Update September 23, 2011; Letter 12 from Rowena and Mike

Dear Praying friends,

Greetings from rainy Miyako City on the Pacific coast of Iwate prefecture on the main island of Japan. Yesterday was a national holiday to celebrate the first day of Autumn. It has indeed turned cooler, but we had hot, humid weather for moving day on the weekend. Our container arrived from Hokkaido ok, and we were thankful for some help lugging our things up to the fourth floor (no elevator) of the office building where we are living for the time being. Yes, God did give the needed strength for the packing up of our apartment and for the many "good-byes". We were touched by a special farewell from our Hokkaido OMF family, whom we will very much miss. We have had some [internet issues](#) and we have been busy with moving, but we wanted to send some news about how we are doing.

Thanks for your prayers! What a full week this has been. It has been a very rainy week, too. I don't know where to start. However, I will start with [an item for praise to God](#). It has been so good to have the **Honma family** come with us from Nanae for this week. They have been so helpful, and it was hard to see them leave but they will be back in three weeks. There are **still no leads for apartments for them to rent yet**. Since we couldn't find any alternative housing for ourselves, **we are considering staying in the apartment** set up for volunteers. It is spacious (by Japanese standards), but old and cold. Now we are trying to figure out how much of our stuff we should unpack.

We have been out with teams everyday **holding 'cafes' in the community rooms** connected with temporary housing locations. There are many of these groupings of relocated peoples. Those who are home in the day are so pleased to get out of their little units and have a place to drink tea/coffee, eat cookies and chat. Two hair dressers came from Sapporo and the ladies were so pleased to get their hair cut. A Christian lady also gave a special koto (Japanese stringed instrument) concert. She had a lovely way of gently sharing Christ. Going to the community room is a new thing started this week as the weather has turned cooler. From July until now, one of the main outreaches has been the 'mobile café' set up in the parking lots of temporary housing places. We have been able to listen to stories and have good conversations with folk affected by the tsunami. Many lonely hearts have been warmed and spirits refreshed. Plus, at these 'mobile cafes' we spread out relief goods, such as rice, dishes, clothes, detergent, etc.

The key word has been **FLEXABILITY !!!** Just when we think we have a plan in place, it changes due to any number of circumstances such as the weather, a surprise team showing up, the local pastor changing his mind about where we should go and what time, etc. It would be great if we could establish some kind of a pattern, so that the folk in these places will know when we will turn up for a 'café'. Please pray for direction on these matters and a good working relationship with **Pastor Iwatsuka** who is a great networker. As he is really being stretched by opportunities to come along side of affected people and take volunteers around, it is difficult for him to pastor the church. Mike has been asked to preach this Sunday, and it seems he will be doing this frequently.

Tiredness is kicking in after a full week of serving with various teams, showing them destroyed places along the way and being immersed in Japanese. We have lots of new words to learn and new ways of doing things in this area so it is **information overload** just now. We finally had a bit of a lull in the schedule so we went to Miyako city hall to register our address as foreign residents, sign up for health insurance and then went to the police station to change our driving licenses. The building was familiar as we had seen it on TV numerous times on the news as one of the most impressive pictures is of a wave of black water coming over the sea wall and going through the first floors of the Miyako city hall. Portable

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buildings in the parking lot are still substituting as the first floor of the city hall and at the main police station as well since it was flooded. Below are two video links to scenes of flooding near the city hall. If you type in "Miyako tsunami" in Google's video search you can see even more dramatic footage taken from our newly adopted home. It is quite sad to watch but it is a stark reminder of what people have recently gone through.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wYiNnHEGyY>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y49lu3ZgrMc>

Well, we did ok with the typhoon this week which you probably saw in the news, but the river next to our building looked like it could overflow. Many people in the area have suffered with flooding and land slides.

I wish we could share some of the conversations I have had over these last few days. For example, we were playing with children in an **after school program** earlier in the week. Then we got talking to the woman in charge of the children and she was sharing some stories. We were in the town of Taro and the tsunami really came in forcefully there over the high concrete sea walls. She was saying how she was with the children and looked out the window to see cars and houses rushing by outside. Thankfully, most of the kids were still at school at the time. The children are still unable to play outside on the school grounds as they are deemed unsafe. We are thankful for opportunities to play with children at four after school care centers, and we would like to pursue possibly doing more activities with them. Please pray for direction and God's continued favor with those in charge.

As we are in an area that is generally closed minded to Christian things, maybe God will open doors through the children. We will help with two teams coming from Hokkaido next week and we continue to field various requests from both abroad and from within Japan to come help with relief work. Part of our challenge is to determine the local needs and what **ministry initiatives** we should launch to meet them. Mike also travels to Tokyo next week to attend OMF's field council and the Church Planting Institute leadership meeting. I will host some others coming to help as we continue to get a feel for this new ministry.

Love,
Rowena and Mike