

## McGinty Prayer Update December 9, 2011; Letter 14 from Mike and Rowena

Dear Friends & Family,

What do hundreds of 5kg. bags of rice, a thousand pairs of warm socks, a couple dozen crates of apples, countless blankets, laundry detergent, mountains of used clothing, back scratchers, 2012 calendars, hand towels, books, hand warmers, clothes racks, and 1,500 electric lap blankets have in common? These have been among the major items we have been distributing on a daily basis among the hundreds of temporary housing units with the help of volunteer labor. At times we feel like Santa Claus making these deliveries and we even have a list we check, not to determine who's been naughty or nice but to make sure the right things go to the right places. ☺ In recent weeks we have stepped up an already frenetic ministry pace to take advantage of the **opportunities presented by Christmas** as we have sponsored Christmas parties in many of the community rooms associated with the temporary housing places. The Japan Forestry Service has provided a Christmas tree for each of these places and we have been recruited to help the residents decorate them. Although these trees are usually of the Charlie Brown Christmas tree variety, we do our best to make them look special and cheer people up with homemade cookies, drinks, Christmas songs, games and a short explanation of the meaning of Christmas.

Our decision last month to move more aggressively into the devastated town of Yamada means we have been visiting a lot of new places in the past few weeks distributing relief goods and sponsoring Christmas cafés as we endeavor to make our presence known which will in turn hopefully lead to further ministry opportunities. While we expand our activities in this area we are **pursuing the idea of acquiring a base** there to enhance our ministry platform. We are seriously considering the offer of a piece of land on which we could erect a temporary building. It is located very close to the Yamada town hall so it would be very visible, particularly since there are no other buildings left standing anywhere near it. This would be quite a project to set up so we would appreciate your prayers.

The **Honmas** have been real troopers as they continue to 'camp out' in the team room while waiting for their apartment to be built. Hopefully they will be able to move in on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month so they can ditch their "Homeless Honmas" nickname! Not a day goes by without our thanking the Lord for providing such quality workers and dear friends to serve with us in this very unique ministry. We wish we could say similar rosy things about our partnership with the **pastor of Miyako Community Church** but to be honest, the wheels seem to be coming off of this relationship. This comes as a huge disappointment to us but we are still asking God to intervene and rescue the situation. Please pray as this has been a very difficult and stressful matter.

We praise the Lord for the first fruits of the ministry here as Rowena and Mrs. Honma meet weekly for Bible study with **grandmother Karaki and her daughter, Erika**, who seem to be believing. Grandma and the little girls have been coming recently to church while Erika is at work. I'm also thankful that the **stress fracture in my foot** seems to be slowly healing after several weeks of using crutches while trying to help with deliveries. Hopefully I can start running again soon but not at a marathon pace for quite some time.

Our Christmas present to ourselves this year is to **return to the States** (Dec. 20- Jan. 20) to spend some time with our kids as a substitute for our cancelled home assignment plans. I am looking forward to holding our granddaughter for the first time, but at least we have been able to see her and watch her grow thanks to the amazing technology of Skype on our computer. Once again many kind friends are generously providing what we need while we are home and even a place in the country for us all to get together and celebrate the joy of Christmas. As we spend each day ministering to people who have lost

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so much, we are constantly reminded of how blessed we are. If you would like the opportunity to hear directly about our ministry, our home church, Cypress Bible Church, is hosting a lunch for us on January 15<sup>th</sup> following the church service. Please contact us for details if you are interested in attending.

May the Lord fill each of you with the joy of Christmas.

*Mike & Rowena*