

To all the members of the Reformed Church in Japan:

I send you greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ from the disaster zone.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the countless greetings, inquiries and words of encouragement so many of you have been sending from the time immediately after the gigantic earthquake struck us.

By the providence of the Lord, we have ascertained that all of the pastors and families in the Northeast Presbytery, and as far as we know at this time, all of the believers and families are safe. I realize that this is due to our Lord's mercy.

On the other hand, how are the churches and everyone in the Kanto area? We are not able to receive news at this point, so we have no way of knowing, but we send our best wishes to all of you who may have suffered loss. We are deeply grieved by the untold and unknowable damage and loss suffered by countless brothers and sisters in the Pacific Coast areas who were struck by the monstrous tsunamis.

The extent of the damages is still unknown. We are resigned to living in a difficult situation for a long time to come. The possibility of additional destructive aftershocks is ongoing. There is also the secondary damage that will result from the nuclear plant accidents that we can't see with the naked eye.

The writer in Psalm 46 says, "though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging," and almost seems to be describing what we have experienced. And even though he could not have imagined the additional emergency situation we now face due to the spreading of radioactive material in the environment, we still find his words most appropriate: "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear." Can we profess this faith? This is certainly a time when that faith is being put to the test.

Please pray for us that we will stand firm in our belief that in life and in death, everything is in our Lord's hands. Please continue to pray for those churches that have suffered tremendous losses. Please pray for those who are laboring day and night to rescue even one more life that is threatened ("For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord"). And let's pray that those of us who have been spared may put this life to use for the Lord and for our neighbors.

May the grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

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Takashi Yoshida, moderator

The Reformed Church in Japan

(Pastor of Sendai Reformed Church)