

Report of IARF Donation to the Earthquake Victims

On Monday September 5th, 2011 1:00 – 2:00 PM

At Hotel Metropolitan Sendai (cafeteria)

[Participants]

Rev. Naoya Kawakami

- Minister of the United Church of Christ in Japan, in charge of Sendai City
Secretary General of the Liaison Council by the Religious Cooperation in Miyagi

Dr. Takeshi Okabe

- Professor of clinical medicine of Tohoku University
Director of the medical Cooperation Soushu-kai
General Manager of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room”

Dr. Iwayumi Suzuki

- Professor of science of religion of Tohoku University,
Secretary General of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room”

Dr. Kyouinin Sakurai

- The medical cooperation Soushu-kai, Treasurer of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room”

Rev. Mitsuo Miyake

- Head of Konko-kyo church of Izu, President of IARF

Rev. Keiichi Akagawa

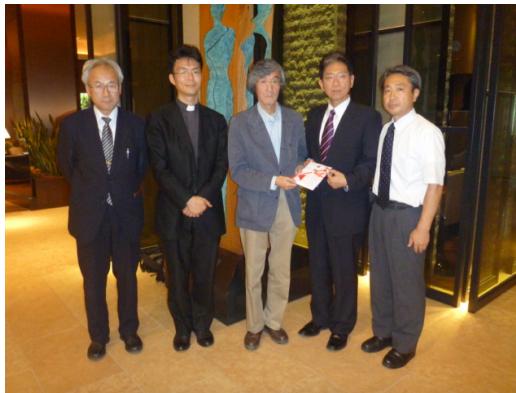
- Deputy Director of External affairs group of Rissho kosei-kai, member of JLC

(written in random order and honorifics omitted.)

[Total amount of donation] : 545,879JPY

[Reporter] : Rev. Keiichi Akagawa

Firstly, the main purpose of our trip to Sendai was to bring donations from IARF members of the world to victims of the East Japan Earthquake, which was handed over by President Miyake to Dr. Okabe, the general manager of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room”. Dr. Okabe expressed his appreciation saying that transfer of donation had already been confirmed on 2nd September by Dr. Sakurai, treasure of the counseling room. The amount of donation was 545,879JPY (all donations from foreign countries were converted to Japanese



yen).

After the presentation of the donation, President Miyake and I provided explanation to three members of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room” regarding IARF and JLC’s history, the background of its foundation, purpose and activities to get their basic understanding of IARF and JLC.



Rev. Kawakami who introduced us the program of “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room” has been serving as a secretary general of the Liaison Council by the Religious Cooperation in Miyagi, and had been receiving helps of multi-religious groups since the disaster while having contact with Religions for Peace Japanese Committee. There was also an explanation that “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room” is affiliated with the Liaison Council by the Religious Cooperation in Miyagi. Therefore Rev. Kawakami has mediated our donation to be received by “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room”.

Secondly, Rev. Kawakami gave us the explanation about the “Mental Healthcare Counseling Room” project to which IARF’s donation will be utilized. The term of the project would be about three month from 1st October to 31st December this year. It will provide 30 minutes program on weekend morning once a week, totally 14 times, through Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima’s local private radio station. It also plans to distribute its content by the internet which allows everyone who understands Japanese language, and who lives even outside of the three prefectural regions to receive the program. This project will have several religious and spiritual leaders from all quarters, beginning with Rev. Sokyū Genyū(Author, Priest of Rinzai Zen Fukuju Temple, and Member of The Reconstruction Design Council in the Great East Japan Earthquake), Rev. Jakucho Setouchi(Author, Tendai Buddhist nun and Priest of Tendai Zenkobo temple), and Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara(Doctor of Medical Science, Director of St. Luke’s International Hospital) for their radio personality and the program is going to approach people’s problem resolution by listening attentively to their concerns happening due to the disaster and various related sufferings.

Dr. Okabe also shared us his experience, as a medical doctor. He faced so many bereavements through this damage and felt that there are clearly limitations for medical institutions to care for disaster victims only by themselves. Thus he has reached the conclusion that it is

absolutely necessary to cooperate with people in faith who works on people's mental relief. Calculated simply, the total population in Miyagi Prefecture is about 2 million and there are far more than 10,000 people killed by this disaster. This means that the number of the family members and friends of those victims are up to multiple and they might be buried in citizens with having some mental wounds, he thought. That is why he chose "radio" as a tool to get opportunities to connect with those people in serious need. We are hoping that the ongoing individual support works will relate to each other and spread widely by getting opportunities of having religious personalities in the form of telephone counseling.

In addition to the above-mentioned radio program, they are planning to hold a seminar by "Mental Healthcare Counseling Room" at Rissho Kosei-kai Sendai Dharma Center on 19th October and will present their progress report of radio program. You are welcomed to attend it.

What we firmly believed through this assistance activity is that we reached a common understanding with medical experts on the necessity of mutual cooperation by all sectors through the work of religious cooperation. Dr. Okabe said "We can respond to care illness or injury by ourselves. However, for this time, I was searching the way to cooperate with religious people under the serious circumstances of increasing the number of the dead and missing day by day. To face the number of dead body carried into the hospital, I was sure we absolutely need the joint collaboration with religious people." In this sense I felt our assistance for "Mental Healthcare Counseling Room" through the help of the Liaison Council by the Religious Cooperation in Miyagi has achieved great results as an effort of interreligious cooperation.