

# Scientology Volunteer Ministers: Looking Back—Ten Years After the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami

*Despite the threat of nuclear disaster after the 2011 Japan tsunami, Scientology Volunteer Ministers responded to the needs of the ravaged country.*

SHINJUKU, TOKYO, JAPAN, May 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- First were the images of 30-foot walls of water wiping away entire towns and lifting 20-ton ships, propelling them 100 yards inland. Next was the news of the meltdown of three nuclear reactors. But with 20,000 people dead or missing and some 500,000 displaced, Scientology Volunteer Ministers immediately mobilized to help despite the danger.

A supply base was established at the [Church of Scientology Tokyo](#) to oversee the delivery of aid. Local Scientology Volunteer Ministers contacted officials to find out what assistance they needed.

A 17-man team of the legendary Mexican Los Topos search and rescue specialists, who have partnered with Volunteer Ministers disaster response teams since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, were immediately flown to Japan by International Scientology Volunteer Ministers headquarters in Los Angeles. Los Topos met with the Japanese army and began searching for survivors trapped beneath the



First to respond were local Scientology Volunteer Ministers who surveyed the damage and coordinated what assistance officials needed and wanted.



Los Topos founder and president Hector "Chino" Mendez (right), with lead Japanese Scientology Volunteer Minister as interpreter, coordinated with the military in the aftermath of the 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami.

wreckage—work memorialized in a National Geographic documentary.

Some 140 Volunteer Ministers from Japan, Australia, Canada, Mexico, Taiwan, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States helped run shelters in Kesennuma, Sendai, Watari, Onagawa, Ishinomaki and Idda. They organized delivery of food, water and supplies. They took part in the arduous cleanup of towns and villages that were destroyed.

In a city where elderly residents were stranded in their homes by floodwaters and impassable roads, Volunteer Ministers organized a fleet of bicycles loaded with supplies to bring vital provisions.

But while the physical needs were dramatic, the shock and loss survivors experienced was even more intense.

Volunteer Ministers are trained to provide Scientology assists—techniques developed by Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard that help address the spiritual and emotional factors in stress and trauma.

"I cannot believe I have received such a helpful service in a time like this," said one person after his assist. "It eased my feeling of shock," said another. A man whose inn was swept away in the tsunami began his assist in sorrow and walked away humming, telling the Scientology Volunteer Minister he planned to rebuild as soon as possible.

The Scientology Volunteer Ministers provided more than 12,000 assists and trained 1,500 volunteers from other relief organizations, community groups and schools in Volunteer Minister techniques. A Hashikami City Councilor told a Volunteer Minister that theirs is an important service the Japanese people can find nowhere else.

The official in charge of the Onagawa Town disaster effort expressed his appreciation for the help of the Scientology Disaster Response Team in a letter stating, "I have heard many disaster victims say they feel good, relaxed, relieved from body pain and healed from the trauma of this disaster after this group delivered the technology called assists developed by L. Ron Hubbard."

Four years later, at the grand opening of the Church of Scientology Tokyo in Shinjuku, Mr. Masami Saito, then a member of the legislature for Miyagi Prefecture and recently elected mayor of Ishinomaki City, recalled his own experience with the Scientology Volunteer Ministers. "Following the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami that swept my city away, your members, the Volunteer Ministers, were there clearing away debris from our collapsed house in the hope that our family members were there," he said. "Your humanitarian attitude was touching to the core. You even provided bicycles to people through the city that had this little message that meant so much to us: 'Don't give up, Japan!'"

The Church of Scientology Volunteer Ministers program is a religious social service created in the

mid-1970s by Scientology Founder L. Ron Hubbard. It constitutes one of the world's largest independent relief forces.

With the events of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, Scientology ecclesiastical leader Mr. David Miscavige called on Scientologists to redouble their efforts to aid their fellow man. He issued a directive entitled "The Wake-Up Call," which inspired astonishing growth within the Volunteer Minister program and its international disaster response.

A Volunteer Minister's mandate is to be "a person who helps his fellow man on a volunteer basis by restoring purpose, truth and spiritual values to the lives of others." Their creed: "A Volunteer Minister does not shut his eyes to the pain, evil and injustice of existence. Rather, he is trained to handle these things and help others achieve relief from them and new personal strength as well."

To learn more about Scientology Volunteer Ministers disaster response, watch an episode of [Voices for Humanity](#) on the Scientology Network. To learn more about Scientology in Japan, visit the website of the Church of Scientology Tokyo or watch [Destination Scientology: Tokyo](#) on the Scientology Network.

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