

# Chile • Earthquake Situation Report #1 March 4, 2010



ELCA Disaster Response  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

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## I. Highlights

- 8.8 magnitude earthquake on February 27
- 6.1 magnitude aftershock on March 3 shook the Concepcion area in the afternoon and another one of similar intensity shook the area north of Santiago in the evening
- Estimated 800 are dead
- 1.5 million people are displaced
- ELCA mobilizes \$40,000 immediately for ELCA companions, IELCH, EPES and the Inter-Church Emergency Committee Chile 2010
- ELCA Disaster Response Appeal is receiving gifts [at www.elca.org/chiledonate](http://www.elca.org/chiledonate)
- ELCA Disaster Response blog at: <http://blogs.elca.org/disasterresponse/>

## II. International Situation

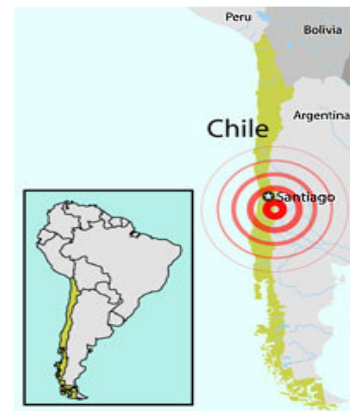
A massive earthquake, with a magnitude of 8.8 on the Richter scale, struck central Chile in the early morning hours Feb. 27, 2010. The earthquake is the biggest to hit Chile in 50 years. As a result of the earthquake, a tsunami warning was issued Feb. 27 for the entire Pacific basin, including all of the Hawaiian islands.

According to news reports in Chile, the earthquake damaged 1.5 million homes, 500,000 very seriously damaged. Phone service was not available for some period of time. Death toll from the earthquake and associated tidal waves is currently estimated at 800.

Aftershocks and the fear of a tsunami are keeping the Chilean people in a state of alert. An tremor of 6.1 shook the Concepcion area on Wednesday afternoon, March 3 and Another of similar intensity hit areas north of the capital of Santiago late Wednesday night.

Looting and violence in the aftermath of the earthquake has led to curfews and a heavy military presence in the most affected areas. In the southern city of Concepción there are approximately 14,000 troops and a curfew from 6 p.m. until noon. While these measures are helping to restore stability to the city, they also stir deep emotions and memories in a country that lived under the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet from 1973 to 1990.

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet said that 2 million people had been affected by the earthquake. It is feared that the damage may cost tens of billions of dollars. One major rescue effort is in the City of Concepcion. Villages in the area have been flattened, highways sliced in two and bridges collapsed.



The relief effort in the most affected areas includes government food distribution of a ration that includes milk, tea, flour, sugar, pasta and canned goods. Other priorities of the relief effort include restoring communications, electricity, gas and water supply. The Chilean government is deploying mobile medical facilities, including field hospitals and medical posts in the most affected areas.

The earthquake in Chile has struck at a time of political transition: the turn-over of presidential power from President Michele Bachelet of a left-wing coalition to President-elect Sebastián Piñera of a right-wing coalition is scheduled for March 11.

Chile is receiving large shows of international support and solidarity, including from other Latin American countries such as Bolivia which is sending large quantities of water, and Argentina, Cuba and Peru which are sending medical professionals to work in mobile hospitals. Humanitarian assistance from the United States government includes \$1.4 million in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funds, water treatment units, and satellite phones for use by the Chilean Government

#### IV. Coordinated Response

- The ELCA's two companions in Chile are playing a vital on-the-ground role in the emergency response in the Concepcion area. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) has 3 congregations, 2 communities are various diaconal projects in Greater Concepción.
- Popular Education in Health (EPES) has been working in Concepcion for more than 27 years where they have a center and a team coordinated by Lautaro Lopez, a medical doctor. EPES' expertise in health promotion and community organization will be of vital importance in this devastated area that now faces serious public health problems due to the scarcity of water, electricity, gas, medications and food. A sign of hope has sprung from a well in the patio of the EPES center in Concepcion that is providing water for 150 people in the neighboring communities.
- On Monday, March 1, in the offices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH), the Inter-Church Emergency Committee Chile 2010 was formally established. The Committee's principal goal is to coordinate national and international actions and support on behalf of people affected by the earthquake. The inter-church committee includes the IELCH, Popular Education in Health (EPES), the Methodist Church of Chile (IMECH), Christian Fellowship of Churches in Chile (CCI), Support to Children and their Rights (ANIDE), the Chilean National Evangelical Union (Mesa Ampliada UNE Chile), The Foundation of Social Aid of Christian Churches' (FASIC), the Evangelical Development Service (SEPADE), CREA, and the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) Chile.
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has committed an initial \$40,000, through ELCA International Disaster Response, for this past weekend's powerful earthquake in Chile. The ELCA allocated \$10,000 to assist the *Iglesia Evangelica Luterana en Chile* (IELCH or Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile), an ELCA companion church with 10 congregations; \$10,000 to assist another long-time companion in Chile, *Educacion Popular en Salud* (EPES or Popular Education in Health

Foundation) as it responds to survivors; and \$20,000 for an ecumenical response through the Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance.

- On Thursday, March 4 a team of members from the Inter-church Emergency Committee Chile 2010 will travel by land (approximately 450 km) from Santiago to Concepción, the second largest city in Chile and area most affected by the earthquake and aftershocks. This trip, initially planned for March 2 was postponed until the risk of traveling on the highways and entering the city of Concepción with materials that could be looted was more fully assessed.
- The team will conduct a diagnosis to assess the best way to channel national and international support being received by the Committee. The most immediate needs that committee has identified are water, food and shelter. Pastor Gloria Rojas, President of the IELCH and ELCA Missionary Karen Anderson assigned to EPES are members of this delegation. The delegation is bringing a generator, food, medication, gas for the return trip, and kits that include emergency instructions on water purification and hygiene. Members of the delegation will also be providing pastoral care and moral support to affected communities.

## VI. Fundraising

Gifts are encouraged for ELCA Disaster Response and specifically for Chile Relief. Additional gifts are encouraged and anticipated as congregations hold special events and offering opportunities. Gifts are needed for the work of continued relief and for long-term community rehabilitation and other recovery activities.

Thanks to the ongoing faithful giving of Lutherans for mission and world hunger, the ELCA pledges that 100% of these gifts will be spent for the Chile earthquake response.

Contributions can be made to ELCA Chile Relief by:

Check or money orders sent to:  
ELCA Disaster Response  
39330 Treasury Center  
Chicago, IL 60694-9300  
write "Chile Earthquake Relief"  
on your check's memo line.

Contributions [online](http://www.elca.org/chiledonate) at [www.elca.org/chiledonate](http://www.elca.org/chiledonate) or call 800-638-3522.

## V. Communication

The week of March 1, 2010, included many communications of thanks, encouragement of continued support, and provides updated information about the situation in Chile. These communications include:

- A Chile e-alert to all congregations, World Hunger and Disaster Response donors
- A bulletin insert
- Updated content and photos on [elca.org/disaster](http://elca.org/disaster)

- A text message to 4000 ELCA youth and youth leaders
- News stories

Future communications include:

- Regular ongoing communication through ELCA.org and facebook.com

Recognizing the connections between ELCA congregations and individuals with Chile, ELCA Global Mission will be in contact with those known to Global Mission to receive emerging news from Chile. Other congregations and individuals with connections in Chile are encouraged to email Mary Campbell in Global Mission with news they are receiving from their companions.

Websites:

- For more information on ELCA Disaster Response: [www.elca.org/disaster](http://www.elca.org/disaster)
- For more information on ACT Alliance: [www.act-intl.org](http://www.act-intl.org)
- For more information on international aid: [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

## VII. Contact

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