Adventists respond to New Zealand quake

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ADRA to cut staff at world headquarters
President cites three years of revenue decline

'Blue Zones' icon Jetton dies at 106
Represented promise of good living, Adventist lifestyle, author says

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22 Feb 2011, Sydney, Australia
Pablo Lillo/Adventist Review staff

In the wake of devastation and death spawned by a magnitude 6.3 earthquake that struck Christchurch, New Zealand's city center today, Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific are responding with material and spiritual support.

At least 65 people are known to have been killed, and another 100 are trapped in collapsed buildings, the New Zealand Herald reported. Unlike the 7.1-magnitude quake, which hit the same area last September, this temblor struck closer to downtown Christchurch, and in midday, when office workers and shoppers were abundantly present.

The denomination's Sanitarium Health Food Company in Papanui has been asked by Emergency Services in Christchurch, New Zealand, to provide a triage center for the injured. The Christchurch Hospital, the largest tertiary teaching and research hospital in the South Island, was evacuated due to safety concerns and is now only admitting people with serious injuries.

Pierre van Heerden, general manager for Sanitarium in New Zealand, said the site has been made available.
"We're blessed to have little damage to our buildings and to serve the wider community in times of devastation. The Christchurch factory in Papanui has a large garden and extra space for people to congregate and use as a triage center. We have a borehole on site that is functioning and that will give us an opportunity to provide fresh drinking water to the Christchurch community." Sanitarium also plans to provide Weet-Bix, milk and bottled water for those in need.

Craig Gillis, president of the church in South New Zealand said, "At this time it is difficult to get much information about what has happened due to communication channels being blocked and overloaded. Our office staff are all fine. Christchurch Adventist School students, teachers and staff are fine, as are the preschools."

At this stage there aren't any reports on church members.

The earthquake is reported to have lasted approximately a minute with extreme violence -- rocking buildings back and forth. There are reports of absolute devastation in the city center of Christchurch as buildings have collapsed.

There are reports of people trapped in rubble in the central business district and emergency services report there aren't enough ambulances to serve the injured and fatalities.

"We're shocked at what's happening in Christchurch," said Barry Oliver, president of church's South Pacific Division. "We want to assure the people of Christchurch and our Church community of our support. I invite everyone to pray for safety and a sense of peace."

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**ADRA to cut staff at world headquarters**

*President cites three years of revenue decline*

22 Feb 2011, Silver Spring, Maryland, United States
ANN staff

The president of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency today announced the agency will cut staff and adjust its management structure at its international headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States.

In an e-mail, President Rudi Maier said the move follows three years of "gradual decline" in revenue. No figures on finance or proposed staff cuts were immediately available.

ADRA International currently employs 77 people, said John Torres, an agency spokesman.

Most of the agency's revenue comes from United States government contracts, such as the United States Agency for International Development, Torres said. About 10 percent of the agency's income is received from donations of private income, he said.

Maier said many NGOs reduced staff in 2009 because of the downturn in the economy, while ADRA instituted a temporary hiring freeze and cut administrative expenses. "However ADRA continues to struggle to keep operational and management costs balanced," Maier said.

This is ADRA's second management shift this month. On February 10, the agency replaced two of its vice presidents -- Vice President for Programs Mark Webster and Vice President for Finance Gideon Mutero -- with Ken Flemmer and Robyn Mordeno.
Marge Jetton, a retired nurse who garnered national attention for her longevity and healthy lifestyle, died February 15 at a board-and-care home in Loma Linda, California. She was 106.

In recent years, Jetton drew widespread attention after being featured in writer Dan Buettner's 2005 National Geographic article and subsequent book, which focused on "blue zones," areas of the world where people live longer and have a high sense of well-being. Loma Linda -- and, specifically, the already closely studied Adventist community there -- was one of the four zones.

The spotlight on Jetton led to several national television appearances, including the Oprah Winfrey Show in 2008, which featured her workout routine: pedaling several miles daily on a stationary bike and lifting five-pound weights.

Buettner described Jetton as "the poster girl" for the Adventist lifestyle, embodying its best practices, such as having a strong sense of community, volunteerism and keeping the Sabbath.

"She was an emblem," Buettner said. "You could tell her story, and it kind of reflected what people should be doing to reach her age. She represented the promise of good living."

Jetton also was one of several dozen centenarians participating in the Adventist Health Study, an ongoing research project at Loma Linda University that is funded by the National Institutes of Health and examines why Adventists tend to live an average of 10 years longer than other Americans.

Dr. Gary Fraser, who is co-leading the study, recalled that the years had done nothing to dull Jetton's sharp mind. "She was so quick-witted and funny," he said. "She was very impressive."

Ora Marge Hodge was born to a muleskinner and ranch cook in Yuba City, California. She attended Sutter Union High School, where she was a member of the debate team, according to a biography by granddaughter Shawn Casey-White. She graduated in 1921.
Long into retirement, the State of California regularly renewed Jetton's driver's license, even into her 100s.

While a nursing student at St. Helena Sanitarium and Hospital in California's Napa Valley, she met a bellhop who would later become her husband, James Aston Jetton. The couple married in 1926, after a three-year, chaperoned courtship. Jetton then worked as a nurse in Walla Walla, Washington, and later, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Santa Rosa, while her husband was in medical school.

They spent their nearly 77 years of marriage opening and running the first clinic in the small community of Fallbrook, California; offering their services to the Army during World War II; establishing Woodruff Community Hospital in the Long Beach area; and serving as medical relief missionaries in Zambia and Ethiopia.

Jetton's active lifestyle continued into retirement, Casey-White said: She worked at the Loma Linda University Medical Center library and volunteered for Voice of Prophecy, an Adventist radio broadcast.

Jetton was preceded in death by her husband in 2003. She is survived by two children, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.