

## Christchurch Earthquake – Update at Day 15

Hammond Peek

Wednesday 9 March 2011 – Day 16 after the Christchurch 6.3 earthquake and I'm still coming to grips with it. I feel tired, emotionally drained, distracted, often unable to concentrate, sleeping doesn't refresh me as it is often broken by the continuing aftershocks (so far 23 quakes today).

I look around at my broken city, so many lives lost, damaged, displaced, changed forever. So much heartache, pain...and now anger and frustration. Tired people trying to make sense of and rebuild their lives.

- 166 dead – half foreign nationals from 20 different countries (with the final death toll expected to be around 200)
- 45,000 people fled the city in the first 5 days by air alone – most seeking a temporary refuge out of the city, but others permanently...they'd had enough
- Out of 140,000 homes in Christchurch 100,000 are damaged with 10,000 to be demolished – and some of those on land so ruined that it will never be built on again
- 50% of the city doesn't have working toilets
- 84% of the city now has water back on
- 9,000 households still without power
- the center of the city still cordoned off with access only allowed to search and rescue, police and civil defense officials. This includes areas familiar to all of you who

attended the Subud World Congress in Christchurch last year...the Christchurch Town Hall, the Caledonian Hall, the Salvation Army building, Crowne Plaza hotel, the Unlimited high-school...and of course – Christchurch Cathedral – where search and rescue workers after continuous searching, thankfully found nobody dead, when there were fears 22 bodies may be lying in the cathedral ruins

- many businesses and jobs have vanished overnight
- the cost of the Sept 2010 quake was around NZ\$6 billion. The combined cost of both quakes now stands around NZ\$20 billion – a tough challenge for our country of 4.2 million people



Map of downtown Christchurch where World Congress was held

Yet amongst all this despair and destruction there is also a great sense of hope, courage, love, generosity, selflessness, individual acts of heroism, and a strong sense of determination, a willingness to pick up the pieces and rebuild...because this is our city, we are proud of it, we love it, and here we stake our claim for our place in the world. The tireless work of the volunteers and emergency

services who continue working around the clock to help people, even when their own houses are badly damaged or destroyed, and their own families are suffering – is worthy of tremendous tribute. This is the kiwi spirit at it's best...people helping each other, with love, tears, humour and our dogged kiwi pragmatism.



Liquefaction crater

The Student Volunteer Army mobilised again, their much appreciated energetic efforts helping clear tons of watery silt that exploded up out of the ground during the earthquake around homes, parks, streets, everywhere – liquefaction – a term we have grown to know all too well. After the September 2010 quake 34,000 tons of this sandy silt was removed from Christchurch properties and streets. This time 260,000 tons have been removed so far...and there's still 1,000s more to get rid of.

I thank God that all of my family are safe and well, as are the Christchurch Subud members. 27 members turned up to a meeting of the Christchurch group on Sunday (interestingly the 6.3.2011 – in NZ we put the day before the month). We did a roll call of damages – people and homes. Most people have had serious damage to their houses, with many living temporarily with family or friends elsewhere in Christchurch or in other towns in New Zealand at the moment.

Sulaiman & Lailani Graham *“are doing OK. Our house was destroyed but we managed to get out along with our daughter Aisha and two grand children Simone & Jasmine here on holiday from Scotland – a nice way to spend a holiday. A very nice lady has given us the use of her house in Woodend (north of ChCh) while she has moved in with her mother... please send our love and best wishes to all our brothers & sisters”.*

Laurentia's house was badly damaged and she's staying with friends and her daughter Caroline, who's own rental house in Lyttleton was destroyed. Some of the Weavers ended up in Queenstown, and some in Blenheim. The Fisher family are currently in Nelson. Lois Tomkin – house uninhabitable.

Simon Murphy – house damaged and has moved to Auckland. Simpsons – water finally back on today. Elysia and Hugo Weaver – gone to Melbourne temporarily, as have Dahlan and Olivia. Sandra and Emmanuel – gone to Melbourne. John Howlett – house damaged and gone back to Australia. Rani, Renata and Eva in Waipara for another week. Seraphine, Matthew and Hana – house ok.

Victor and Dyani – no power or water  
Emmaline Palmer – rental house uninhabitable – has moved to Melbourne



A home close to the Subud property in the Heathcote Valley

Many members are sticking it out in their damaged houses. My place

sustained \$100,000+ of damage, lost power for 5 days, water for 10 days, Renata is still staying with my daughter and grand-daughter at Renata's brother's place 50kms out of town. I treat myself as one of the lucky ones...at least I'm still in my house, now with power, running water, and I can use my own toilet – luxury. I'll never complain about having to use port-a-loos (portable toilets) ever again.

Everyone in the group here has a sense of gritty kiwi willingness to rebuild their lives, whilst cheerfully and tearfully supporting each other. Some members are showering and toileting at friends' places while they wait for their own water supply and sewerage to be sorted out. Many are sharing meals and all are sharing their own quake stories and experiences.

The new Subud hall lost some of the large double glazed windows, as well

as other damage. A bit of damage also in the Subud house. We are using the Grand hall for latihan until repairs are eventually done to the new hall, which is currently unsafe to do latihan in.

Right throughout Christchurch and further afield everyone is incredibly supportive of each other, cuts each other a lot of slack, is very understanding, and more than willing to take time to listen, share...and care.

Thank you to all you Subud members from around the world who have kindly contributed funds to help Subud members in Christchurch get through this crisis. Thank you also for your many messages of love, concern... and for your prayers.

Hammond Peek  
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