

Dear All,

Pray for Sichuan. As we are still working out help for Myanmar.

Shalom,

+Moon Hing

The Rt Rev Ng Moon Hing, *Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia*

Huge Earthquake Hits Central China

By Stephanie Ho

Beijing

12 May 2008

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake has struck the central Chinese province, Sichuan. Initial reports say between 3,000 to 5,000 people are known dead, with official Chinese media predicting the death toll will continue to rise. VOA's Stephanie Ho reports from Beijing.

The large earthquake struck after midday. The epicenter was 90 kilometers from the Sichuan provincial capital, Chengdu. The Vice Director of the Sichuan Earthquake Bureau, Deng Changwen, spoke to China Central TV by phone. He said the large earthquake cut all communication to the disaster area, hampering official attempts to determine the real situation.

In one example, the official Xinhua News Agency says more than 900 students were buried when their high school collapsed in Dujiangyan, about 100 kilometers from the quake's epicenter. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao immediately flew to the affected areas, to oversee disaster relief efforts. He said Chinese government leaders will stand at the front lines of disaster relief work and unite with the people to overcome what he called a "very large disaster."

He says Chinese leaders are not afraid of sacrificing their lives or of making mistakes.

Chinese troops have been dispatched to help with disaster relief work.

The powerful quake was felt as far away as Beijing, 1500 kilometers to the north, as well as in Bangkok, Thailand 3300 kilometers to the south.

Tremors were also felt in the east coast metropolis, Shanghai, where authorities temporarily evacuated China's tallest building, the Jinmao Tower. In other parts of China, buildings swayed and some even collapsed.

Chinese authorities say the quake did not affect the Three Gorges Dam, which is several hundred kilometers away from Chengdu.



Hospital patients wait outside after an earthquake in Fuyang, in China's Anhui province, 12 May 2008



Rescuers search rubble of collapsed Juyuan middle school in Dujiangyan, Sichuan province, 12 May 2008

The hardest hit county, Wenchuan, has more than 110,000 people and a large ethnic-Tibetan population. Wenchuan County is also home to the Wolong Nature Reserve, China's leading research and breeding base for endangered giant pandas.

In 1976, more than 270,000 people died when an earthquake struck the northern city of Tangshan. That temblor also measured 7.8 on the Richter scale.