

Update 1: Pray for Chile

1st March. Melvin Rivera Velázquez, UBS Americas Area Secretary, writes:



Dear colleagues:

The massive earthquake that occurred in the early hours of Saturday has paralysed the country. The earthquake is the biggest ever they have experienced. At 3:34 in the morning this Saturday, a strong earthquake (magnitude 8.8) shook the central and southern areas of Chile.

This earthquake has been the biggest of the decade around the world. In Santiago, it registered at 8.8 degrees and 300 to 500 km south of Santiago, it reached 9 in the Mercali scale. Not only was it intense but incredibly long, lasting almost over 3 minutes. In addition, there have been aftershocks all day long. After the earthquake, power was cut in a large part of the country, leaving the streets in the dark.

Bridges connecting the city of Concepción over the Biobío River present structural damage. Two of them collapsed: one, completely and the other one lost one whole section. Several cities in the south are experiencing strong swells. The sea has advanced inland about three to four blocks. At this time, there is no power or water supply, or Internet service in most of Santiago and the south of the country. In Juan Fernández Island, waves reached over three meters.

No news from certain Bible Society staff

Up to this point, 4:00 PM (Miami time on Saturday February 27), ***there has been communication with only part of the staff of the Bible Society of Chile. In particular, there is no news yet of the employees of the Concepción branch, and the Santiago staff who was visiting there***, the most affected area.

We were able to get in touch with Francisco Viguera, Executive Director of the Bible Society of Chile, who was well and so was his family. Francisco said, “We are worried for José Miguel and two representatives who were visiting a couple of supermarkets in precisely the most affected area, and I have not heard from them at all. I don’t have any news from the three employees of the local branch and the part time staff who was covering for the staff that was on vacation. We have not heard from Claudio González (part-time Americas Area Finance Consultant and employee of the BS of Chile), who travelled yesterday to the Concepción branch. Claudio’s family doesn’t have news either.”

Gonzalo Ibarra, Fundraising Consultant for the Americas, is doing well and so is his family. In the early morning hours they had to run from their home and take shelter in their car, because the aftershocks continued afterwards.

Francisco told us, “Almost 80 per cent of the city does not have power and water. The situation from 300 to 600 km south of Santiago is very serious. Some towns were levelled almost completely. Santiago held up pretty well; we have good constructions. The earthquake was very long, over three minutes and so intense that seemed unbelievable. At home we had to dash for the yard because everything was falling on us, even TV sets.”

As soon as we have more information on Chile, we will let you know. Meanwhile, **please pray at home, at church, and your Bible Society, for the people of Chile, the Bible Society staff and the Board.**

Cordially, Melvin (Pictured)

