

# Cardboard structure may replace earthquake-damaged cathedral in New Zealand

by [David Crampton](#)

August 2, 2011

Christchurch, New Zealand, August 2 (ENInews)--New Zealand's second biggest city could have a temporary Anglican cathedral as soon as February--but the 700-seat structure will be made of recyclable cardboard. It would replace ChristChurch Cathedral, which was destroyed in the 22 February earthquake that killed 181 people.

The \$4 million portable A-frame building is to be created primarily out of cardboard tubes, with shipping containers as the foundation. Architecture students will assist in its three-month construction. A \$50,000 feasibility study is currently being undertaken, which could include an extension of planned capacity to 1000 at additional cost.

A site has yet to be found, but the dean of ChristChurch Cathedral, Peter Beck, said it would be in the inner city, "offering a sign of hope and confidence and a thing of beauty in the midst of all the desolation."

"We want to have a presence in the central city where there is foot traffic," he said. Some Christchurch residents were critical of the four million dollar price tag, asking whether an interim cardboard Church was really needed.

"It's a ludicrous waste of money, far better spent on the more Christian gesture of caring for the needy," Julian Tyerman wrote on a local television news station's Facebook page.

"They are building a four million dollar cardboard box to give glory to God?" asked Claire Mooiman.

But Beck praises the project. "It's almost tent-like, and I like the idea of pitching our tent," he told 3 News. "It's a very Christian concept actually; pitching our tent in the middle of the city." He said that a New Zealand artist is expected to design a stained-glass window, replicating the famed rose window destroyed in February.

The building could be completed in time for the first anniversary of the earthquake, and used until a permanent structure is built in the central city, "which could be five years, 10 years, we just don't know," said Beck.

The cathedral was designed pro bono by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, who designed the Takatori Catholic Church, nicknamed the "Paper Dome," in the aftermath of the 1995 Kobe earthquake. It was moved to Taiwan in 2006 to replace a church destroyed there in a 1999 earthquake.

ChristChurch Cathedral's 12 earthquake-damaged bells may require specialist repairs in England, where they were manufactured. Beck said he hoped to recover them next week after further assessment by consultants, "but they will be too heavy for the cardboard structure."