

Mercy mission to Italy

Rotary clubs help earthquake victims dig out.

LIKE a nightmare come true, the ground began to tremble. Then for thousands of Italians, tragedy began with a single convulsion . . .

Last November a killer earthquake—Italy's worst in 65 years—rocked the ground from the Mezzogiorno region near Naples to the Alps in the north, with most of the destruction concentrated in the ankle of the "Italian boot."

Gradually the breadth of devastation came into focus. Villages and rural hamlets by the scores had been leveled across 25,900 square kilometres (10,000 square miles).

Entire communities lay in rubble. Thousands of victims were trapped in the wreckage of their homes, cars, churches, and businesses. Frustrated rescue workers in many areas were slowed for days by the impassable roads and the bleak winter weather.

It gradually became clear that the November quake had delivered the greatest destruction to the countryside. Most of the victims perished in the tiny villages that cling to the hilltops along Mezzogiorno's narrow, hard-to-reach valleys. Hundreds were buried alive when the quake sent the close-packed stone walls of old farm homes tumbling down.

Just 96 kilometres (60 miles) east of Naples, the village of Conza della Campania lost 80 percent of its 2,500 inhabitants. Only three buildings were left intact in the hilltop hamlet of Laviano, founded in Norman times, and 30 percent of its 3,000 residents were missing. In other regions east of Naples, entire villages were destroyed, and no one knew how many people were buried in the rubble.

The Italian government estimated that 3,105 persons died in the quake, with 7,671 injured and another 1,575 never found. News of the destruction scrambled around the world, and relief began to pour in. Rotary clubs in Italy and other countries responded immediately, investing huge sums of money and personal labor into the digging-out process.

One of the first Rotarians to sound the cry for assistance was Rudi Lupoli, then governor of District 210 (Italy). He offered this report of Rotary's response:

"All Rotary clubs of these stricken areas, some of whom were personally hit by the earthquake, have immediately and fully responded. A few hours after the alarm, many local Rotarians were already present in the disaster area, ready to give help and ready to inform the authorities, who lacked news because of a communications blackout.

"Rotarian physicians, engineers, builders, and others, often under dramatic and dangerous conditions, worked feverishly and without regard of time, offering their services as well as the financial aid to face the most urgent needs, to secure drugs, surgical equipment, to unearth survivors, to recover what could be recovered. No aid requests passed unnoticed, thanks to the clubs of the Campania and Lucania regions, as well as to the generosity of all Italian clubs.

"Within eight hours of the catastrophe, a call came from an



Australian club offering help; within 12 hours, a Rotarian of New York City, U.S.A., called to offer assistance. During the days succeeding the quake, the Rotary world was working with unimaginable solidarity. From clubs in Japan and Canada, from the United Kingdom and South Africa, from France and Argentina, a cavalcade of aid offers poured in. It would be an arduous task to report all the material help.

"However, the British Rotarians deserve a special acknowledgement for the extent of their contributions. Hundreds of caravans, live-in trucks, and 'prefabs' (shelters) were taken to the disaster sites. They were driven by the Britons, who handed over driving responsibilities to Italian Rotarians once the Italian border was reached.

"Tons of foodstuffs, clothing, tents and heaters were distributed to victims, thanks to the cooperation of John Campbell, British consul general and member of the Rotary Club of Naples. As of April, 120 clubs throughout RIBI (Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland) had contributed more than 100 million lire (\$100,000 U.S.)."

David Shelley Nicholl, editor of the regional magazine *Rotary*, which serves clubs in Great Britain and Ireland, offered his own account of the British response to the disaster:

"No central call had gone out, yet clubs and districts—some with large resources, some with small—had acted as

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FABRIZIO PALLOTTA



Left: Last November's earthquake struck southern Italy with cruel efficiency, as in this photo, taken in the village of Conza. Entire villages were obliterated, and thousands were buried alive under the rubble. Across the countryside, survivors dug with their hands, frantically searching for relatives.

Below: Food, clothing, tents, bedding, and every imaginable form of relief poured into Italy following the earthquake. Rotarians from many nations responded. In this photo, Tom Holden (left) and fellow British Rotarians pack a relief truck with supplies.

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one, often unknown to each other. Within days a type of Dunkirk spirit was alive throughout the 24 districts (of RIBI), a joyous unity in a clear and desperate cause.

"No district reacted more quickly or more generously than District 108 in Suffolk and Norfolk. But at the very district council meeting which announced that the East Anglians had raised more than £24,000 and despatched convoys of more than 40 caravans to the disaster zone—meaning an average contribution of £9.45 per Rotarian—Governor Ron MacLeod urged no let-up.

"Members of the Rotary Club of West Worthing bought a supply caravan which club president Roy Dutton helped to drive out, and which now houses about four families for sleeping. The Rotary Club of Westbury raised £100. Agremont raised £640, and both clubs sent caravans.

"In an unofficial 'matching' project, the Rotary clubs of Verona (Italy) and Wellington (England) combined to get a 9.6-metre (32-foot) caravan to Salerno. Rotarians in Weston-super-Mare (England), with neighbouring clubs, sent 200 emergency supply boxes and more than 32,000 kilograms (40 tons) of blankets and clothes."

District 747 in New Jersey, U.S.A., has joined other Rotary districts offering assistance. Clubs in District 747 have undertaken a fund-raising campaign to generate \$30,000 to as-

sist in the reconstruction of a girls' orphanage in Lioni. The Vocationist Sisters and the 33 girls living at the home survived the quake, but their facility was leveled, forcing their temporary relocation to another orphans' home near Naples.

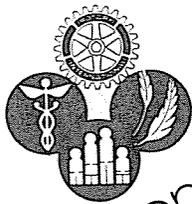
The stories of Rotary efforts in Italy are far too many to recount in this short space. They all share an underlying desire of individual Rotarians to help others in distress, and to help disaster victims bring about the return of normal living conditions to their communities. Rotarian John Campbell capsuled many of these feelings in a speech at the spring conference of RIBI in Blackpool, England:

"It was above all the Rotarian effort which maintained momentum and inspired us (the disaster workers). At the hub of the wheel in Naples, I was always encouraged by the knowledge that there were people, friends, Rotarians all over the country who cared.

"I have been convinced throughout that what has mattered more than anything else for the people who had lost relatives, homes, and possessions so abruptly and unexpectedly was the evidence, particularly in the early days after the quake, that other human beings were concerned about them . . . and were trying and would go on trying to restore their shattered lives."

—HERBERT J. JORDAN

3-H



happenings

Safety on the shifting earth

In last month's issue of THE ROTARIAN, we discussed earthquakes, the most devastating cataclysm in all nature and looked at Rotary response to the massive quake that leveled much of southern Italy in November 1980. As in other disasters, Rotary aid was characteristically prompt and efficient; the global goodwill of the world's most international service organization allowed Rotarians to rush life's necessities to many of the thousands left injured and homeless.

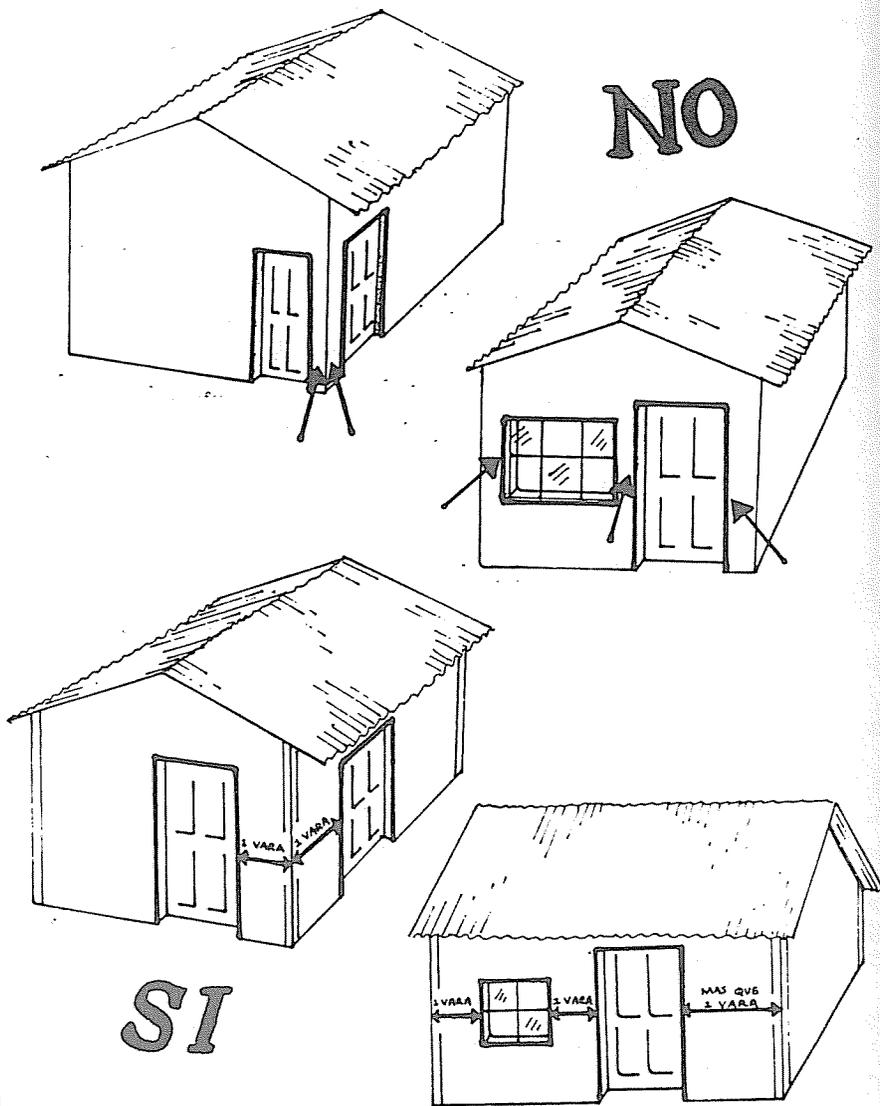
But there is another, better way to limit the suffering quakes inflict. Studies have shown that, in less developed rural areas, nearly all earthquake deaths are caused by poorly constructed dwellings collapsing and crushing those inside. Yet, with a knowledge of a few basic principles, even people with very limited resources can build simple homes which will withstand very severe quakes.

This earthquake resistant construction technique (ERCT) was developed by World Neighbors, Oxfam/England, and Intertect, following the tragic 1976 earthquake in Guatemala, which killed nearly 23,000 people and injured more than 76,000—all in less than 40 seconds.

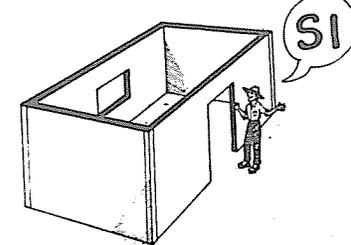
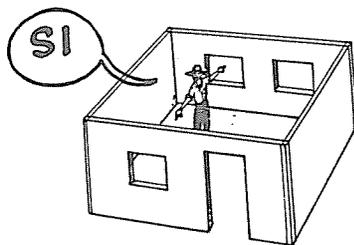
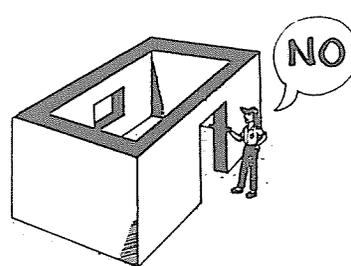
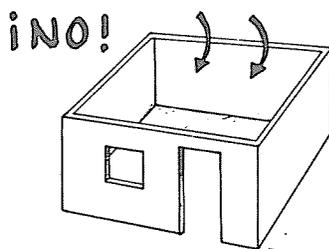
In early 1980, the Rotary Club of Antigua, Guatemala, proposed that the 3-H Program adopt as a project the teaching of ERCT masonry and carpentry skills and design methods to villagers in the Guatemalan highlands. An investigative team consisting of Claxton Walker, a Rotarian building contractor and inspector; Dr. Ben Saltzman, past R.I. director and 1978-80 chairman of the 3-H committee; and Janet Long, of the 3-H secretariat staff, visited the area in August 1980, and unanimously recommended that the project be approved.

However, shortly thereafter, the project was suspended due to unstable social conditions in rural Guatemala.

An individual project may be subject to such influences, but the basic ERCT principles are applicable in many areas of the world and, if widely employed,

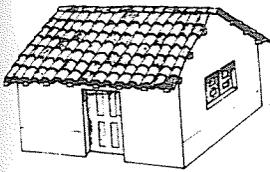


Doors and windows placed too close to one another, or too close to corners of a house, weaken the structure. The earthquake resistant construction technique (ERCT) requires at least one vara (.835 metres or about 33 inches) of solid wall between openings.

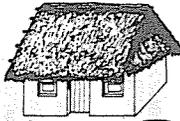


The right and wrong ways to design a home for earthquake survival: a solid, heavy rear wall can collapse inward, pinning occupants beneath. With windows, it is lighter and less likely to fall in one piece.

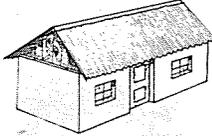
Thick adobe walls are commonly used in many areas, but in an earthquake they turn a house into a death-trap. Thinner, lighter walls are less likely to collapse, and inflict less severe injuries if they do.



iNO!



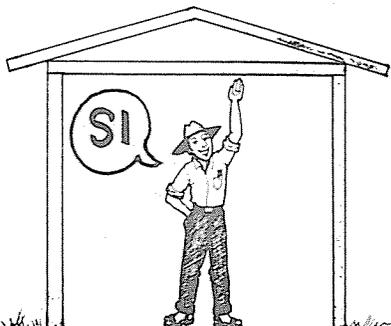
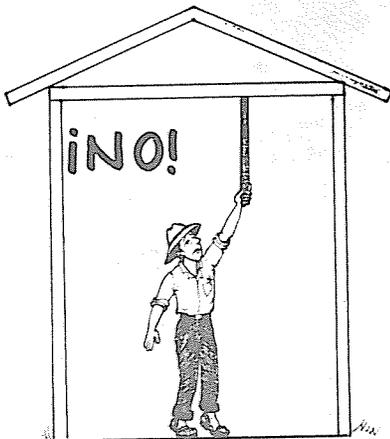
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Above: Red tile roofs are traditional in much of Latin America, but in an earthquake the heavy, brittle tiles can collapse on those within. Lightweight roofs made of thatch or corrugated metal are much safer.

Right: For safe, earthquake resistant construction when building with bricks or stones, use "a little bit of mud" or mortar. A wall like the one in the lower drawing, built with "too much mud," is far weaker, and could fall apart in only a mild earthquake, burying people in the rocky rubble.

Below: In general, a taller building will be less stable in an earthquake than one built lower to the ground. ERCT also includes advice on selection of a level site, separating dwellings, and ways to cross-brace a building using light lumber or steel wire.



could save thousands of lives.

The technique meets these criteria:

- 1) The houses will resist earthquake shock at least long enough for occupants to escape from the building.
- 2) The construction materials are readily available in the locality.
- 3) The methods are cheap enough to be used by needy families.
- 4) They are technically simple enough to be used by inexperienced builders.
- 5) The designs do not require any major changes in life style.
- 6) The houses will protect against

heat, cold, precipitation, and pests.

7) The methods obviate the use of scarce natural construction materials.

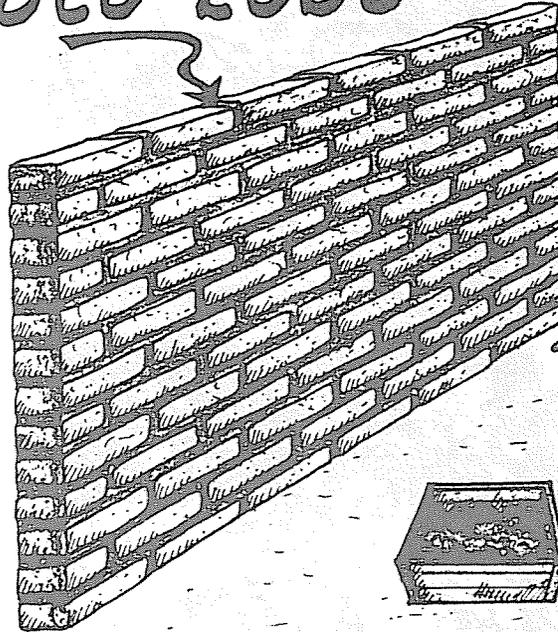
In most cases, these criteria are best met by construction of mud or clay, with a lightweight cross-braced framework of wood, wire, or a combination of the two, plus a lightweight roof.

For information, write:

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