

**CARDBOARD
SHIGERU
CATHEDRAL
BAN**



In Christchurch, New Zealand, an innovative and symbolic structure designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban has just taken shape: a 'Cardboard Cathedral' to stand in for the historic building devastated by the earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011.

An expert in disaster-zone building, Shigeru Ban has been exploring questions about humanitarian and post-disaster responses for decades. *Shigeru Ban: Cardboard Cathedral* backgrounds his remarkable story and documents the construction of the cathedral – his largest post-disaster structure to date – in essays, architectural drawings and specially commissioned photographs.

Originally conceived as a temporary building, the cathedral's construction involved design challenges, structural innovations and help from the community; and the finished, now permanent structure seems set to become an enduring symbol of Christchurch's revival.

This book offers profound insights into great architecture and its social role – vital reading for anyone interested in contemporary architecture and for all those looking to what the future might hold for Christchurch.

Includes a foreword by the Very Reverend Lynda Patterson, Dean of Christchurch Cathedral; an introduction by Shigeru Ban; an essay by Professor of Design Andrew Barrie; architectural drawings by Yoshie Narimatsu and Shigeru Ban Architects; documentary photographs by Bridgit Anderson; full-colour plates by Stephen Goodenough; and an afterword by David Mitchell.



DISASTER RELIEF AS MONUMENT

When I finally acquired a sense of my position as an architect, I was very disappointed to realise that architects do not really contribute to society. This is because most of our clients are among society's most privileged people. Looking back through history, we see that architects have built religious structures or houses for the aristocracy. These days, we design houses for the wealthy, head offices for corporations and large public buildings. We build monuments that display to the world something that is otherwise invisible – wealth and political power. Architects have largely ignored the need to design houses for ordinary people, and we have also been too busy working for the privileged to design temporary housing for the victims of natural disasters. Those people cannot afford to hire architects, and governments are not interested in providing comfortable housing for them. But natural disasters are often 'man-made' disasters. In earthquakes, for instance, people are not killed directly by the shaking ground: they die in collapsing buildings. Their safety is the responsibility of architects; thus, rebuilding after disasters is also our responsibility. And if architects were more involved in designing temporary housing for disaster victims, we could improve its quality.

I have been involved with many emergency housing projects, starting in 1994 when I developed shelters for refugee camps in Rwanda after the civil war. Earthquakes and tsunamis constantly occur around the world, and I have worked to improve shelters and build temporary houses for those who have lost their homes in such disasters. I have also worked on bigger projects for the general public, such as a temporary church in Kobe after the 1995 earthquake (it was only 150 square metres), and a temporary concert hall in L'Aquila, Italy. Although these two projects were larger, they were not monumental buildings – their facilities were meant to help small communities through stressful times.

The story of my involvement with Christchurch and its cathedral began in May 2011. News of the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake had had a huge impact in Japan, particularly because it caused the deaths of many Japanese language students. In recent years the number of Japanese people studying and working abroad had diminished significantly after peaking during the economic bubble of the 1980s. Now this earthquake had taken even more of these students from us. They were people who would have played an active part in the world; there are no words to describe the hopelessness of losing their precious lives. It is especially difficult knowing that the Canterbury Television (CTV) Building in which the twenty-eight students were killed was not properly assessed after the quake the previous year, in September 2010. For that reason, Christchurch was on my mind – it was a place I wished to visit. The Japanese public's concern for Christchurch in early 2011 was erased, however, when an earthquake shook Japan's Tohoku region just eighteen days after the quake hit Christchurch. The Christchurch earthquake disappeared from our news headlines, remaining only in the minds of the families of its victims, and I became busy working on improving privacy for families sleeping in large gymnasias after the Tohoku quake. Then one day I received an email from Christchurch.

Reverend Craig Dixon, who made the first contact with me, had come across a small article about me in a New Zealand design magazine. The article was about the Paper Church in Kobe. In his email, Craig asked what my fee would be to design a temporary building, like the one that I had built in Kobe, to stand in for the collapsed ChristChurch Cathedral. I immediately replied that if the cathedral were to be used for civic events as well as religious ceremonies, I would not charge a fee. Craig asked me to visit Christchurch as soon as possible, so two weeks later, fitting it in with my volunteer efforts in Tohoku, I was on my way.



























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