

# connections

Working Together to Grow the Kingdom

LEADERSHIP NETWORK®

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## A Quick and Continuing Response to Hurricane Katrina

WORKING  
TOGETHER TO HELP  
THOSE IN NEED

### FEATURED CHURCH:

NewSong Church

### LOCATION:

Three U.S. locations: Irvine, Los Angeles and North Orange County, California; One international

location in Bangkok, Thailand

**ESTABLISHED:** 1994

**SERVICES:** 6 weekly services

**AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:** 3,800

**N**ewSong Church, based in Irvine, California, is centered on outreach. It reaches out to all types of people, regardless of location, ethnicity, background or belief. In fact, NewSong believes an ethnically diverse church can change the global village one life at a time.

Although this young, motivated church serves its community in many ways, perhaps its recent efforts assisting the victims of Hurricane Katrina best tells the church's story. Through relationships with ministries around the country, NewSong was able to make an immediate—and lasting—impact in the lives of storm victims.

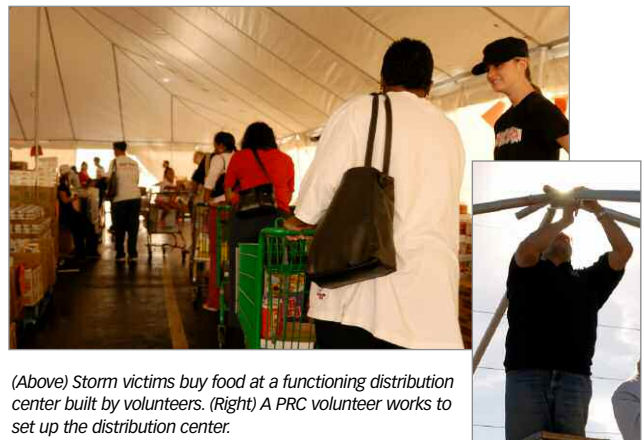
### READY TO SERVE

Hurricane Katrina changed the way many churches think of outreach. Believers from around the world asked themselves, "What can we do to help?"

NewSong's leadership and members asked themselves that same question. But they added, "And how quickly can we do it?"

Through its involvement in Leadership Network's Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community, NewSong had developed some strong relationships with churches in its region and around the country. NewSong leveraged these relationships to connect with several churches hit hard by the hurricane.

Just hours after Katrina struck, NewSong contacted Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, which was putting forth great efforts to serve hurricane victims. Within a few days, church leaders from NewSong traveled to Healing Place to check out the facilities, assess the immediate needs and offer much-needed assistance.



(Above) Storm victims buy food at a functioning distribution center built by volunteers. (Right) A PRC volunteer works to set up the distribution center.

They also sent a professional videographer and community development expert to tour hurricane-ravaged areas. Using the first hand information and compelling video gathered on this trip, the leadership made a presentation at church that next Sunday.

The pastors asked for money and volunteers. But they received so much more.

## HELPING HANDS, OPEN HEARTS

NewSong's first goals were to help fill Healing Place's short-term needs. In addition to donating cash and supplies, they began sending three to five church members each week to help provide support.

NewSong members are asked to prayerfully consider taking a trip to the Gulf Coast as a short-term mission. They are required to raise money to pay for the trip, attend pre-trip training and participate in a debriefing session upon their return. To date, nearly 40 people from NewSong have lent a hand in Louisiana.

## 'WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP? AND HOW QUICKLY CAN WE DO IT?'

Church members who haven't been able to make the mission trip have shown they can make a difference at home as well. One member who owns a hotel has housed 10 families displaced by the storms. A restaurant owner has provided jobs for people temporarily located in the area.

In addition, NewSong has partnered with other churches in Orange County to make a greater impact. These churches share information and resources, and develop strategies for long-term support.

### WHAT LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEANS TO ME

We were able to quickly provide relief to the Gulf region because of our affiliation with Leadership Network. We never would have gotten the connections—and credibility—on the front end of our efforts without Leadership Network's help. We were at ground zero weeks ahead of other organizations because of these strong connections and relationships.

In addition, Leadership Network has helped our church by requiring us to be accountable. They measure our progress to make sure we are living up to our promises and potential. Leadership Network helps with strategic planning so we can grow the right way for the long term. They provide professional development and allow us to network with other pastors on the same journey.

—Sabastian Huynh, Cause Circle Pastor, NewSong Church



## LOAVES AND FISHES

NewSong is assisting Healing Place Church and other ministries in conjunction with the Pastor's Resource Council (PRC) Compassion organization. PRC is a coalition of churches and pastors that addresses community needs and distributes relief.



Churches such as NewSong and Healing Place have partnered with PRC Compassion to make the following miraculous contributions:

- 1,950,235 people have been helped
- 459,200 evacuees have been sheltered
- 374,691 hours of labor have been volunteered
- 20,020 tons of resources have been distributed

These numbers continue to grow—and go to show how individuals and churches working together can truly make a difference in our world.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Although its members have graciously volunteered time and money for relief efforts, NewSong realizes it has to plan now so it can continue its support of ministries in the still-troubled Gulf Coast in the future.

"We don't want to leave anyone hanging after our year commitment of service is up," says Sabastian Huynh, NewSong's Cause Circle Pastor. "We are actively putting together plans on how to keep our outreach efforts strong for the long term."

And although Sabastian says the church members' hearts "are right there with the victims," their resources are being stretched. To ensure the church delivers on its promise of long-term support, Sabastian has asked several lay leaders in the church for a one-year commitment to serve as champions of the relief efforts. Sabastian knows he has to find people who can truly inspire others to share their talents, while also excelling at management and fund-raising.

Sabastian's ministry mission says it all, "We are an outward expression of our inward transformation." Storm victims and affected churches will continue to benefit from NewSong's outward expressions of service for years to come. **LN**