



President Bob Brower

RELIEF RESPONSE

In recent days, the images of the Gulf Coast have reminded us that it is necessary to respond to human need with action, care and compassion. The overwhelming reality of the loss and devastation has been nearly beyond comprehension, yet the great need calls us to respond.

As in the past, the Point Loma Nazarene University community immediately mounted a response and moved to help our brothers and sisters in the hurricane-affected areas. Soon after the winds and rains stopped, Dr. Dean Nelson, professor of journalism, was on site with the president of Heart to Heart International, a nonprofit medical assistance organization, to aid in the response effort.

Dr. Nelson recounted in student chapel what he witnessed in New Orleans, saying, "The epic awfulness of it is heartbreaking." He went on to explain, "Medicine and water are still the direst necessities at the moment, but other needs, such as mental health care and counseling, will arise when the initial shock wears off." To this end, PLNU nursing professor Dr. Larry Rankin has been sought out by Heart to Heart to go to the Gulf Coast as a mental health RN to work with survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

In chapel, Dr. Michael Pitts, university chaplain, extended a challenge to participate in raising funds for the relief effort, and by the end of chapel, nearly \$8,000 was laid on the altars of Brown Chapel. By the end of the week, more than \$15,000 had been committed.

Soon after chapel ended, Dr. Pitts headed to Louisiana to provide counseling and support for rescue workers facing despair, devastation and disease. His trip came at the request of the Louisiana District Church of the Nazarene and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. While there, Dr. Pitts provided counseling, conducted counseling and response assessments, and initiated the planning of PLNU's potential response through the university's LoveWorks program.

Dr. Pitts spent much of his time in Pearl River, Louisiana where rescue workers and evacuees began to confront the realities of the loss. Daily miracles of provisions occurred as truckloads of food and supplies just showed up to the church from all over the country so that nearly 1,000 evacuees and workers were fed two meals a day. Dr. Pitts said, "We seldom knew when the supplies were coming or how they found us, but they were always there." In all of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding much of the early relief and response effort throughout the Gulf Coast, Dr. Pitts remarked, "No one is wondering where the Church is in its response. The Church and its people are here caring, serving and making a difference!"

The PLNU community is assisting the needs in the Gulf Coast through two primary groups. The first is the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), which is assisting students, faculty and staff in schools affected by Katrina. PLNU is one of over 100 schools participating in this effort. The other major recipient of donations is Heart to Heart International, the same organization with which the university partnered to raise \$1 million for last year's tsunami victims.

In addition to the two major fundraising efforts, various student groups are also responding. PLNU Student Body President Sherita Lucky is working with ASB presidents at other Nazarene schools to provide additional support, supplies and aid to hurricane victims. Additionally, students are sponsoring a benefit concert featuring Ginny Owens to raise funds for hurricane victims; ASB is planning a food and clothing drive for displaced survivors who are in San Diego; and students in Point Loma's Finch Hall are collecting and packaging toiletries for "Crisis Care Kits" that Nazarene Compassionate Ministries will deliver to hurricane survivors. In addition, the student prayer ministry, Abba's Arms, is leading dedicated prayer times for hurricane victims.

In chapel, with this fall's focus on "Following Jesus," Dr. Pitts offered a simple reason for all of the activities and efforts across the campus: "Following Jesus means that we respond to human need." While acknowledging that the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina is too big for us to get our minds around, Dr. Pitts concluded chapel by saying, "I pray that we can get our hearts around it."

The Point Loma Nazarene University community seems to agree, once again demonstrating tremendous heart in response to heartbreaking tragedy.



U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT'S BEST COLLEGES 2006 GIVES PLNU HIGHEST RANKING YET

Point Loma Nazarene University has once again been selected as one of America's top regional schools in *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Colleges 2006.

This year, Point Loma is ranked 24th in the top tier of the universities-master's West category. Last year, in the 2005 list, PLNU was ranked 26th in the top tier in the West while in 2004, Point Loma was ranked first in the second tier.

U.S. News ranks colleges and universities within four categories: national universities, liberal arts colleges, universities – master's, and comprehensive colleges – bachelor's. The latter two categories are subdivided into four geographic regions: North, South, Midwest and West. The categories are meant to group schools according to their missions so that rankings will be more meaningful.

Responding to the latest rankings, Vice President for University Advancement Dan Martin said, "I am pleased with the recognition Point Loma received in the latest *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. I believe our steady rise in their survey is reflective of the high caliber of faculty and staff who possess a commitment to educational excellence. Beyond the qualities recognized in the ranking, Point Loma continues to expand in breadth and depth as we not only prepare students with qualities sought in the workplace, such as ethics, integrity, the ability to think critically and analytically and to communicate effectively, but challenge them to prepare for a greater calling—life itself. This challenge is made possible by the distinctiveness of an intentionally Christian educational context." ■