

LDR Focuses on Long-Term Recovery

By Pastor Richard Spande

In September 2004 Freeborn and Mower counties received heavy rains and extensive flooding. When I went to the next synod council meeting and Bishop Usgaard asked about the damage in Albert Lea, I explained what was happening. He said, "LDR should be there too."

I was too embarrassed to tell him I didn't know what LDR was, although I assumed he wasn't referring to the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation. (You have to be of a certain age to understand that reference, which I am.) I now know what LDR is and represent the synod at LDR meetings.

What is LDR? It stands for Lutheran Disaster Response. In Minnesota, Lutheran Disaster Response is part of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota.

How does LDR differ from the Red Cross and the Salvation Army? This is an important question. The goal of the Red Cross and the Salvation Army is to relieve immediate suffering. LDR also works to relieve immediate suffering, but it focuses more on long-term recovery. But because long-term recovery doesn't make headlines, LDR doesn't generate the big news stories the other organizations do, which makes fundraising more difficult. What the Red Cross and Salvation Army do is great, but the job is not done when

they leave. That's where LDR comes in.

In Freeborn and Mower counties, LDR provided funds for our interfaith groups to hire a caseworker for 6 months. She helped people receive their FEMA benefits. She gave emotional support and provided guidance on clean-up and rebuilding. Under the direction of LDR, our interfaith groups were able to access funds from various denominations. These funds were then turned over to victims according to the policies established by the interfaith board.

It is obvious that our disaster in Freeborn and Mower counties was infinitesimal compared to what is happening in Pakistan, Mexico, or New Orleans. I would not suggest my limited knowledge of relief work relates to such disasters except in one way. I know Lutheran Disaster Response will be there. Please support Lutheran World Relief, World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, and Lutheran Social Service in any way you are able.

For more information about Lutheran Disaster Response, visit www.elca.org/disaster/ or www.lssmn.org/disaster/index.html ; call 800-638-3522 (ELCA Churchwide – ask for Disaster Response) or 1-800-987-0061 (LSS Minnesota – ask for Disaster Response).

Camp Noah Needs Volunteers, Sponsors

"How can we help the children?" is a question many churches and organizations across the country have asked after seeing the disturbing images of destruction and trauma following hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Since 1997 Camp Noah has been providing the unique gift of intentional outreach to assist children in their long journey of emotional and spiritual recovery following natural disasters. A program praised for its effectiveness in a 2004 study sponsored by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Camp Noah is a fun-filled, faith-based, week-long day camp for children kindergarten through sixth grades who have experienced disaster.

Camp Noah is being requested by numerous disaster-impacted communities as a means to help their children. In an effort to meet the needs of thousands of children, congregations and organizations across the country are being asked to help sponsor a week of Camp Noah for Summer 2006. Groups can provide the crucial volunteer leadership needed for a week and/or provide financial or in-kind support. To find out more about how your group can help provide a week long gift of healing and hope that will last a lifetime, visit www.campnoah.org, call 1-800-987-0061, or e-mail campnoah@lssmn.org. **Group sponsorships are needed by December 15, 2005.**

Camp Noah is a program owned and coordinated by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota. It is offered in

communities through partnerships with other faith based and secular partners. Camp Noah welcomes children from all religious backgrounds.

Mission Snowbird Trips Assist Florida Survivors

Thousands of people of the Southern United States hit by last fall's hurricanes continue to struggle to recover. That is why Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota and its partners have decided to again work with the people in Charlotte County, Florida for the 2006 Mission Snowbird trips.

The three trips are scheduled to run Saturday – Saturday, January 21 to February 11, 2006. Minnesotans who are already planning to be in Florida and want to help are also encouraged to sign up to be a part of a team.

A downloadable bulletin insert is available at www.semnsynod.org.

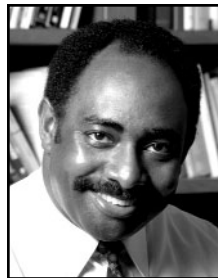
For those who don't want to make the journey to Florida, there are opportunities to help support these mission trips by organizing "tool showers" in your congregations so volunteers can have the tools they need to do the jobs and so LDR in Minnesota has tools for future use after disasters.

If you are interested, please visit www.lssmn.org to find out more details about Mission Snowbird, or call Audrey Zellman at (651) 969-2289.

LSS also continues to encourage contributions to the ELCA Domestic Disaster Response.

Rostered, Lay Leaders Learn About Self-Care

Rev. Dr. Kirk Byron-Jones keynotes conference full of fellowship, learning, sabbath time



Rev. Dr. Kirk Byron-Jones

By Annie Lynsen

Addressing an audience of over 150 pastors, associates in ministry, lay staff, and their spouses at the Synod Theological Conference, the

Rev. Dr. Kirk Byron Jones advised the audience to get in the back of the boat.

Referencing Mark 4:35-39, where Jesus is found sleeping in the back of the boat, Jones used the story to demonstrate that Jesus didn't do ministry at the breakneck pace today's clergy are expected to.

"When Jesus was in the back of the boat, he was NOT doing ministry," said Jones. He then referenced several other parts of the Bible which mention Jesus not actively engaged in ministry – when he was "walking along," "sitting by the well," "standing beside the lake," and when he "went home." Jones said we often miss these references, because they're followed by a comma and then talk of Jesus doing something.

"Observe the comma, not only in the Bible but in our lives," said Jones. "We miss the margins and the 'back of the boat time' because we rush past the comma."

Jones encouraged those in attendance to take "back of the boat" time daily – time when they are not thinking about or doing ministry.

Jesus did not rush

He went on to address the story again, and noted that Jesus takes his time waking up when the disciples try to rouse him from his sleep. "Jesus does not rush into action," said Jones.

The rushed pace expected by our culture today, Jones said, is a form of self-violence. "It destroys our inner capacity for peace," he said. "It's violence to God's gift of body, God's gift of soul."

He said we are carried away by today's pace because of cultural, organizational, and personal forces that conspire together.

To help pace their lives more moderately, Jones challenged participants to live at a "savoring" pace; in other words, living at a pace that gives you a chance to savor life. He also challenged them to take time each morning to simply be still, as Jesus tells the storm to be in the Bible.

The author of several books on clergy self-care, Jones wowed the audience of the synod Theological Conference with his energy, boisterousness, and sense of humor. More information is available at www.savoringpace.com and www.brewseries.com.

continued on page 6