



# *The Bishop's Journal*

## **A Renewed Vision for Mission in the Eastern Synod 2006-2008**



*This is the fourth and final part series of articles where Bishop Pryse comments on the mission plan for the next biennium that will be presented for adoption at our biennial synod assembly. This month we will look the final two of the six priorities that have been identified.*

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### **We want to be a synod that is generous.**

*As a generous synod, we will faithfully share our resources of time, talent and treasure in partnership with the ELCIC, our Companion Synod the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana and other partner churches. We will strive to allocate resources in ways that provide evidence of our commitment to being in mission for others. We will encourage our congregations and general membership to become more generous in sharing their resources both with and beyond the synod.*

In my life experience, those persons who are most generous tend also to be the most spiritually mature and alive. Conversely, I have never met an ungenerous person whose Christian witness clearly and demonstrably exhibited the signs of a full and robust life in the Spirit.

When compared to other denomination families in North America, Lutherans tend to be counted among those who are least generous when it comes to sharing financial resources in support of the life of the church. Fortunately, that is not the case for all Lutherans! Many of our members are extremely generous, but not enough of us. We need to do better; certainly, for the continued well being of the life of the church, but also for the individual spiritual well-being of our members!

### **We want to be a synod that is engaged by challenging questions.**

*As a synod we will promote a spirit of reflective and respectful deliberation on significant questions of life and faith. We will regularly and critically evaluate the programmes and structures of the synod to assess*

*their relevance to those questions. Although the engagement of these questions might change us, we will faithfully explore them and modify our mission in light of them.*

Right or wrong, many Christian churches are perceived as being "check your brain at the door" operations where there are precious few opportunities to engage in significant theological exploration or questioning. Some questions, it seems, ought not to be asked; and when they are, can only be answered according to pre-determined responses and formulas.

As mainline Christians, we are the stewards and custodians of a faith tradition that provides generous and broad parameters for ongoing theological reflection and discourse. Are we willing to more courageously explore those parameters? I sure hope so! Because if we don't, we will have very little success in communicating the essence of the Christian Gospel to the vast majority of people in the society in which we live.

We need to follow Jesus' example and open ourselves to the honest questioning of those who come seeking a new truth. We need to equip our members with the tools needed to engage in responsible and mature theological reflection, confident in the knowledge that our faith tradition is strong enough to bear the weight of our critical self-reflection.

And that's it! If you're interested in further exploring these and some of the other specific hopes that are included in our Synod Council's proposal for a Renewed Vision for the Eastern Synod 2006-2008, I invite you to review the full text of our working document on our synod website [www.easternsynod.org](http://www.easternsynod.org).

+ Michael