

# **A** Word from Bishop Rindy: Challenge & Change

Over the centuries, the Church has undergone many challenges and changes. If we were all able to back out a few notches, we would have a God's eye perspective on the transitions our world, our nation, and our church are experiencing. That perspective presents both challenge and opportunity for us. As I reflected on our synod mission plan/budget, a question came to mind: What does our mission plan say about our perspective of ministry?

I am looking forward to being with you at the synod assembly. God is both refining and redefining our mission in the world. Some parts of this mission will never change. Other ways of "being church" will have to give way to God's renewed mission for the eastern North Dakota "US." The question is changing from "How do we keep doing what we've been doing?" to "What would God have us do in this time and place to do God's will?" These are radically different questions. The question we choose to answer will make all of the difference, not only in the world, but in the Kingdom of God.

My hope, serving as your Bishop, is to keep this part of God's church focused on the mission God has set before us. Anytime a person/congregation/synod begins to turn its focus inward, seeking to save its life, it begins to lose it. When we are turned outward to the mission of God and love of the neighbor, losing our lives for Christ's sake, we are renewed.

As I have spent time with President Andre Golike of our companion synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Central African Republic, wondering and praying about our role as "companion", my world view is being both challenged and changed. Last year, the C.A.R. was the 7<sup>th</sup> poorest nation on earth. This year, it is THE poorest. As I looked at our synod mission plan, there probably wouldn't be enough evidence to convict us of being their companion synod if we were to be put on trial.

What about our brothers and sisters in the C.A.R.? They have the ability to help us gain perspective, to help turn our eyes, our lives, our sense of mission outward, where we can both lose our lives and begin to find them. Every time I have tried to give God something, God has given me more joy and purpose than I ever could have imagined in return. We have much to offer them, but I have a strong feeling that they have much more to offer us, if we are willing to live deeper into our God-given relationship.

Stay tuned in to be a part of God's challenge and change!

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