

Love. Teach. Heal. :Who is My Neighbor?

Join the conversation at Diocesan Convention as we examine this and related questions with keynote speaker the Rev. Raymond Bonwell

Mainline denominations have suffered tremendous decline over the past two generations in membership, societal impact, and cultural relevance. If successful ministry is defined solely by counting members and money, then the outlook is grim. But if success is measured by faithful discipleship to Jesus Christ and the ways in which that discipleship has impact, then signs of hope can be seen from individual, congregation, and diocesan points of view. But how do we measure growth in loving, teaching, and healing?

LOVE. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that “many continue to knock at the door of church at midnight, even after the church has so bitterly disappointed them, because they know the bread of life is there.” Instead of leaving people knocking alone at the door, what if they were welcomed inside and purposefully gathered where God’s kingdom is demonstrated in love? When were you the one knocking at the door? Who invited you in and loved you? Are you now equipped to invite your friends (and family members, coworkers, or strangers) to come and see what the church has to offer? How might we measure these invitations in love?

TEACH. In his final commission, Jesus announced that Christians are called to teach the self and others “to obey everything that I have commanded of you” (*Mt 28:20*). To teach about Jesus is first to know Jesus. Do you know Jesus the way you know your mother or your best friend? Do you understand Jesus’ hopes for you? Do you know Jesus because of your deep familiarity with the Bible and prayer life? How can resources such as the *Book of Common Prayer* support you in learning Jesus by heart? To know Jesus is to connect Sunday morning with the rest of the week.

HEAL. “Love God and love neighbor,” Jesus says (*Lk 10:27*). How is your church empowering the people Jesus gathers together in your parish, so that what is happening *inside* your church is reflected *outside* your walls? How are you and others in your congregation measuring the ways you love God and neighbor, in both what you say and what you do? Information about the ways we experience healing and bring healing to others builds each of us up with purpose, encouragement, and energy for life in the world God has envisioned since the beginning.

The Reverend Raymond Bonwell

We welcome the Reverend Raymond E. Bonwell, III, as our keynote speaker for Diocesan Convention to help us explore how to measure growth in loving, teaching and healing.

Raymond is the Corporate Secretary of The Board of Pensions for the Presbyterian Church (USA). He is an ordained PC (USA) pastor and a minister member of the Philadelphia Presbytery.

He graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in economics and had a twelve-year career in finance. While working full-time in finance, he earned the Certified Investment Management Analyst designation from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

All through his career, though, Raymond felt the call for a deeper study of faith and theology. So, again while working full-time, the Rev. Bonwell graduated from an intensive two-and-a-half year lay certification program. He still wanted to study theology more intensely and felt God calling him to attend Princeton Theological Seminary as a full-time student. Raymond left his career in finance and relocated to Princeton with his wife and three children.

After graduation from Princeton Seminary, the Rev. Bonwell served as the Director of Programs for the Continuing Education Department, where he coordinated hundreds of conferences for lay and clergy leaders. Raymond has been invited to serve as guest preacher for hundreds of churches and to serve as a keynote or guest speaker in a variety of spaces around the country.

The Rev. Bonwell has a love for explaining things and wants to use his gifts to impact others, especially in the intersection of faith and finance. A few years ago, Raymond found a job where his love of finance and faith found its match. He was hired as an Educational Specialist for the Board of Pensions and has since been promoted to Corporate Secretary. The Rev. Bonwell has had a great impact on others, having had a live call-in radio program, published articles, and receiving awards for his faithful work and ministry.