

Response of Ordination questions – Robert Newman

Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?

My pastoral efforts of furthering the peace, unity, and purity of the church is an active endeavor of furthering the peace, unity, and purity within myself and living the grace given through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The saying you cannot love another until you love yourself may be familiar and helpful in grasping this effort. It is this very reason that I hold dear a section of our Brief Statement of Faith concerning the Holy Spirit which essentially says, The Spirit frees us to accept ourselves in order that we may love God and neighbor. Thanks be to God for the Spirit, because to accept one's sinful, selfish nature and its results is a difficult act. It has become my joy to seek God's people in professional and personal settings in times where there is a disconnect of personal peace and unity within myself. For, I have noticed in moments when the world's sufferings seem overwhelming to me, too much to bear, that it is really the suffering inside myself that is too much to bear. It is the suffering inside myself that I am either unconsciously aware of or conscious avoiding as I place absolute focus on the television screen or an ear to the radio. I model this life journey of self awareness and seek to be an active participant in others' lives to be self aware, to experience healing, and shed light upon appropriate professional guidance as needed. In terms of purity, I not only testify to God making and calling us good, but restoring all through the grace of Jesus Christ even as a people who tend to separate ourselves from God, one another, and ourselves; a sinful people. Once the self has been addressed then one can actively seek God's justice for peace, unity, and purity of the church, because peace, unity, and purity are not passive things. I witness the justice of peace, unity, and purity occurring when people acknowledge where these aspects of lacking and seek first to be prayerful and not reactionary. I seek places where God is working and pray that I may join with the mindset that I will not step back an inch from the Gospel message, understanding that peace, unity, and purity is a process on humanity's end, but a realization on God's end.

Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

The key word here is seek; seek people and seek God. I feel that to serve the people is to seek them with love where they are and with love journeying with them to new places. Serve the people is about helping them live into the grace given to all through Jesus Christ. Through meeting people where they are in mind, body, and spirit with genuine acceptance and not forcefully leading them, I feel I am witnessing to the freedom grace gives us to accept ourselves, repent, and seek to serve others as disciples. We learn that in Greek disciple means learner, so I feel that the best way for me to serve others is to learn from them. It is my deepest effort to learn from others how to teach, love, touch or not touch, journey from one place to another, and so on.

As a pastor I am still fully human and sinful. Seminary did not cure me of this condition as some people are surprised when I mention my flaws, but I digress. I seek God to work in me, through me, around me, and in spite of me. With the Spirit's help, I may share the gift the energy for those who hunger for it; a voice to lift their voice, passion to insight their passion. With Jesus' help, I may seek out people who are lonely, rejected, undesirable, lost, and forgotten with love. With God whom Jesus called Father, I may see all as God's good creation and encourage all as they journey with imagination into what they are created to do. In all, service for me is about putting relationships before the task.