

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 2006

Set 1: Christian Theology

OPEN BOOK

At the First Council of Constantinople, a movement led by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, among others, resulted in the declaration of the Full Divinity of the Holy Spirit and the adoption of the third paragraph of the "Nicene" Creed. In a three page essay:

1. Describe the theological issues concerning the Spirit's divinity at the time of the First Council of Constantinople, the extent to which they were resolved, and how.
2. Identify the ongoing theological implications of the First Council of Constantinople for contemporary pneumatology. Include in your answer appropriate consideration of the doctrine of divine providence.

Set 2: Liturgy and Church Music

LIMITED RESOURCES: Annotated, non-electronic one-volume Bible (e.g., Oxford Annotated Bible, HarperCollins Study Bible); Book of Common Prayer; Book of Occasional Services; Enriching Our Worship 1; Enriching Our Worship 2; Hymnal 1982; Lift Every Voice and Sing; Wonder Love and Praise; Voices Found; The Rite Stuff.

You are rector of a parish in a town in which the major employer is a chemical manufacturing plant. Many of your parishioners work there, both as managers and as laborers, or are related to someone who works there.

Earlier in the week a devastating explosion ripped through the plant killing several people, injuring scores more and causing illness in the town as the toxic fumes spread beyond the site of the blast. You have made pastoral visits to the injured in hospital. Nevertheless, within the parish community there is a need both for individual healing and healing of the congregation which has been torn by mutual blame and recrimination.

Based on the situation described above, design a Public Service of Healing for the congregation. Use any of the resources listed above to make an outline of the entire service, including choices of scripture lessons, prayers, and hymns. Annotate the outline, describing how each item exemplifies the theology of healing embodied in the texts, being sure to provide a theological rationale for the choices of lessons and hymns. You may present the annotated outline in any form that is clear, complete, and treats each item. (Note: you do not need to outline the sermon.) Your answer should be no longer than four pages.

Set 3: Church History

OPEN BOOK

Beginning in 18th-century Britain and crossing the ocean to North America in the following century, the Industrial Revolution brought with it a massive transformation in British and American societies. The urbanization that accompanied industrialization resulted in the large-scale movement of population from farms to villages into cities.

In the United States, this movement was swelled by vast immigration from Europe. This demographic transformation reached its height in the United States in the years 1870-1910, and with it came poverty, crime, disease, racial and ethnic tensions, and other social ills on a large scale. The Church of England and the Episcopal Church, which both enjoyed in different ways a privileged status in their respective countries, had inevitably to confront the consequences of these social changes.

In an essay of three pages:

1. Describe at least one development in theology in Britain and one in the United States that helped provide an intellectual framework for English and American Anglicans during this period (1870-1910) in formulating an effective Christian response to the social issues of the time.
2. Identify some significant institutional responses by the Church of England and the Episcopal Church to these social changes and explain in what ways the American responses are still at work in today's Episcopal Church.

Set 4: Contemporary Society

LIMITED RESOURCES: Annotated, non-electronic one-volume Bible (e.g., Oxford Annotated Bible, HarperCollins Study Bible)

"Affluenza, n. a painful, contagious, socially transmitted condition of overload, debt, anxiety, and waste resulting from the dogged pursuit of more." (John de Graaf, Thomas H. Naylor and David Wann *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic* [San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2002], p. 2.) The term "affluenza" has been coined to name the contemporary societal disease of over-consumption in our culture.

In a three-page essay address the problem of affluenza from a biblical, theological, and global perspective by including the following:

1. What are three examples of affluenza in our society today?
2. What are some of the global consequences of our society's dogged pursuit of more?

3. Choose three biblical texts or stories which help you understand the problem of affluenza, then employ them to answer this question: As a Christian, what is your response to affluenza? Offer biblical and theological rationales for your response.
4. Finally, in the midst of our consumer society, where is the Good News?

Set 5: Holy Scripture

LIMITED RESOURCES: Annotated, non-electronic one-volume Bible (e.g., Oxford Annotated Bible, HarperCollins Study Bible); a concordance; approved musical resources; Book of Common Prayer.

Holy Scripture makes many references to God's anger. In Romans 12:19, Paul alludes to the wrath of God and cites Deuteronomy 32:35: Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (NRSV) The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in alluding to the wrath of God, also cites Deuteronomy 32:35 in Hebrews 10:30: For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." (NRSV)

In an essay of three pages, devote equal space to each of the following questions:

1. How does the immediate literary context of Romans 12:19 elucidate the meaning of the wrath of God? How does the broader context, the whole of Romans, indicate Paul's understanding of the wrath of God?
2. How does the immediate literary context of Hebrews 10:30 elucidate the meaning of the wrath of God? How does the broader context, the whole of Hebrews, indicate the author's understanding of the wrath of God?
3. What place does the wrath of God have in contemporary Christian life? Make use of your analyses of Romans and Hebrews in composing your answer.

Set 6: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

CLOSED BOOK

This is an applied ethics question. In a three-page essay show how you, as an Episcopalian, apply moral theological reasoning to one of the following two questions.

EITHER:

In light of recent natural disasters, attention has been drawn to the practice of "absolute triage"

(the decision to treat some injured persons first, based on an assessment of their likelihood of survival, with the knowledge that delaying or denying treatment to others will likely result in their deaths).

1. How might a utilitarian argument justify the practice of absolute triage? For the purposes of this question, utilitarianism may be understood as the view that we ought to do those things that promote human happiness and reduce human suffering for the most people.
2. How might a Christian moral theological argument justify the same practice? In this part of your answer explain the relevant facts of the case, and the principles, criteria, and authorities, including Holy Scripture, that you would bring to bear on the way in which you approach the question. Explain how these authorities relate to each other.

OR:

Assume technology affords prospective parents the opportunity to decide the sex of their child.

1. How might a utilitarian argument deal with the moral issues this opportunity raises? For the purposes of this question, utilitarianism may be understood as the view that we ought to do those things that promote human happiness and reduce human suffering for the most people.
2. How might a Christian moral theology deal with the same issues? In this part of your answer explain the relevant facts of the case, and the principles, criteria, and authorities, including Holy Scripture, that you would bring to bear on the way in which you approach the question. Explain how these authorities relate to each other.

Set 7: Theory and Practice of Ministry

CLOSED BOOK

The overall length of your response in this set should be three pages, according approximately equal space to each question. Your answers to the questions in each of the two sections should give attention both to the theoretical and to the practical aspects of ministry.

1. The treasurer of the parish where you are rector is also the chief financial officer of the small city where your parish is located. Her husband, her two children, and her mother-in-law have all been very active members for many years. The treasurer has recently been accused of embezzling public funds. This accusation has been reported in the local newspaper, though no official charges have been filed with the judicial system. The accusation and report have divided the congregation, with some members demanding that she resign immediately as treasurer of the parish, while others point out that nothing has yet been proved against her.

1. In what ways would you help the congregation come together and work through this situation?
 2. How would you minister to the accused and her family?
2. You are the rector in a suburban parish. At a vestry meeting the newly appointed stewardship chair outlines enthusiastically his plan for the stewardship program. The slogan he proposes is "Just Pay Your Dues!" because, as he explains, "belonging to the parish is like belonging to a club, and many of us are members of social clubs." The senior warden and some vestry members strongly disagree and contest the analogy. In order to deepen members' understanding of stewardship and address the apparent differences among them, the vestry decides to devote its upcoming daylong retreat to the topic of Christian stewardship. You are asked to plan the day's presentations.
 1. Keeping in mind the dynamics of this situation, outline your plan. What is the theological underpinning of your proposal?
 2. One of the vestry decisions emanating from the retreat is to engage the entire parish, including the youth group and the large number of children in the Sunday school, in the stewardship program. You offer to meet with the leaders of these groups to strategize with them how best to accomplish this plan. What practical ideas would you bring to such a meeting? What is the theological basis for your ideas?