

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 2005

Please review the General Instructions before you begin work on this set of questions and again when you put your answers in final form.

Set 1: Contemporary Society

Monday, January 3, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

LIMITED RESOURCES: Bible

One of the most widely recognized problems in American society today is addiction, which a contemporary psychiatrist defines as "a state of compulsion, obsession, or preoccupation that enslaves a person's will and desire" (Gerald May, *Addiction and Grace*). Current understanding of addiction sees it as addiction to behaviors (for example, gambling, sex, eating or shopping) as well as to substances (for example, alcohol, tobacco, food or drugs). Members of the clergy often deal with the problems of addiction in their congregations and sometimes in their own lives.

Write a three-page essay offering a Christian perspective on addiction. Your essay should include, but is not limited to, consideration of the following:

1. What are the consequences of an addiction for the individual, the family and society? Choose a specific addiction and give concrete examples.
 2. There is a widely held view that addiction partakes both of the nature of sickness and of the nature of sin. What are the spiritual aspects of addiction (for example, grace, repentance, loss of free will)?
 3. What biblical resources support your understanding of the spiritual aspects of addiction?
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Set 2: Liturgy and Church Music

Monday, January 3, 2005, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CLOSED BOOK

You are the rector of a pastoral-size congregation in a small town (average Sunday attendance of 115 at two services, one Rite One, one Rite Two). Senior citizens compose seventy-five percent of the congregation. The vestry has worked hard over the years to make the church physically accessible by installing a ramp at the main entrance and completely accessible bathrooms.

The vestry voted several years ago to provide similar access to the lectern, communion rail and altar, which are all separated from the nave by four steps. At the same time, there was a discussion about removing the front pews (in a ca.1900 building such as the one illustrated in

Figure 3) to provide more liturgical space. None of these changes has happened. A handful of people want to take out all the pews, move the altar down into the middle of the church and replace the pews with chairs that can be configured in a variety of ways. Please address the following in three pages.

1. Using the accompanying drawings as illustrations, write the text of a short slide-lecture to present to your parish summarizing the development of Christian worship space from the house churches of the pre-Constantinian communities to the use of basilicas for worship beginning in the fourth century. Give examples of how these earlier architectural arrangements have been used as models for modifying the liturgical space in many churches during the past fifty years.
 2. How does changing the worship space affect the enactment and theology of the liturgy? Be sure to include an analysis of the effects of such changes on liturgical music.
 3. Given the congregation described in the introduction, what recommendations would you make to the vestry as it considers reshaping the worship space? Include both 1) recommendations about the decision-making process for making the changes, and 2) recommendations about the specific changes that you believe would make the space more conducive to public worship for this congregation.
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Set 3: Holy Scripture

Tuesday, January 4, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

LIMITED RESOURCES: An un-annotated Bible, concordance, Book of Common Prayer, and approved hymnals. An un-annotated Bible means an unmarked, non-electronic Bible without any notes or commentary.

In the liturgy of the eucharist we declare, "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." In the Nicene Creed we recite, Christ "will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead." This question will ask you to analyze the scriptural basis for the idea of the Second Coming and to articulate the implications of eschatology for Christians today. Your response to the following four questions should be a total of three pages in length.

Read 1Thessalonians 4:13-5:11

1. What are the scriptural concepts (OT) behind "the day of the Lord" to which Paul refers?
2. What concerns in the church in Thessalonica does Paul address in 1Thessalonians 4:13 - 5:11? How did he expand on "the day of the Lord" tradition?
3. Cite two other NT texts that deal with eschatology, using passages from two separate books, including one from a gospel. How does each passage expand or contrast with Paul's understanding of the Second Coming in 1Thess. 4:13-5:11?

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4. What are the consequences of NT eschatology for Christian life and worship today? Use at least two of the three passages from part 3 in developing your response.

Set 4: Church History

Tuesday, January 4, 2005, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

OPEN BOOK

Since the days of the early church, Christians have struggled with the concept of the return of Jesus Christ to earth, the timing of that return, and the consequences of such an event, both for the Christian community and for the broader course of human history. During the intervening centuries between Christian beginnings and the modern era, changes in apocalyptic thought have often correlated with social and intellectual upheavals in the broader society. This question concerns the development of apocalypticism in Great Britain and the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. In a three-page essay, be sure to give roughly equal consideration to Parts A and B.

1. During the second quarter of the 19th century, a modern form of apocalypticism known as Dispensational Premillennialism (or Premillennial Dispensationalism) arose in Britain, crossed the Atlantic to the United States, and subsequently played an important role in the development of Protestantism in this country.
 1. Briefly identify the origins and major features of this type of apocalyptic thought.
 2. Trace its history in the United States from the later 19th century to the present, noting major developments and situating them in the context of their times.
2. A distressed teenage parishioner comes to see you. Friends have taken her to see the film, The Omega Code, and she is now worried that, when the Rapture comes, she will be left behind. Other parishioners indicate that they have been exposed to similar ideas: for instance, by reading copies of the Left Behind series that they have found on sale at the local supermarket. Recalling the expectations that briefly accompanied the advent of the year 2000, you begin to recognize that contemporary American popular religion and culture have become saturated with apocalyptic themes, and you decide to address this by offering a series of programs for the parish focusing on Premillennialism from an Anglican standpoint. How, specifically, would you use biblical, theological and historical materials from the Anglican tradition in explaining this phenomenon to your congregation?

Set 5: Christian Theology

Thursday, January 6, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

OPEN BOOK and properly cited internet resources

"Holy God, heavenly Father, you formed me from the dust in your image and likeness, and redeemed me from sin and death by the cross of your Son Jesus Christ. Through the water of Baptism you clothed me with the shining garment of his righteousness, and established me among your children in your kingdom. But I have squandered the inheritance of your saints, and have wandered far in a land that is waste.

"Especially I confess to you and to the Church ...

"Here the Penitent confesses particular sins.

"Therefore, O Lord, from these and all other sins I cannot now remember, I turn to you in sorrow and repentance. Receive me again into the arms of your mercy, and restore me to the blessed company of your faithful people; through him in whom you have redeemed the world, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen." (BCP, 450)

This prayer from the rite for The Reconciliation of a Penitent reflects an understanding of the church's teaching on sin and forgiveness. Using this excerpt and other appropriate texts from scripture and tradition, write a single, integrated essay of six pages responding to the following three questions. In your answer, use the work of at least one theologian and also of one author in the ascetical tradition.

1. What is sin?
 2. What is forgiveness?
 3. What is the role of ongoing repentance in the spiritual life of Christians?
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Set 6: Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

Friday, January 7, 2005, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

OPEN BOOK, but no use of web or internet sites.

Much has been made in Christian ethics concerning Reinhold Niebuhr's tendency to separate love and justice. He sees agape (complete other-regard) as the appropriate virtue for the private sphere and the family, and justice as the appropriate virtue for society. Love as agape is completely self-sacrificial. Justice concerns competing self-interests; it has checks and balances to limit others' selfishness. Selflessness in the home is the ideal, but it remains too high an ideal

for the social order. Justice must take its place.

Recent theological discussions present different approaches to the relationship of love and justice. Their goal is to deal with some of the problems possibly presented by Niebuhr's paradigm. Critics see a need for a more complex relationship between love and justice. They seek to unite love and justice, public and private.

You are the rector of a parish with many families. You are asked to give an adult education class on the relationship between love and justice. In a three-page essay, write a presentation, reflecting on the information above. Include in your presentation the following:

1. The relationship between love and justice as it relates to the discussion of these issues among theological ethicists. Consider whether Niebuhr's distinction between the two is more exact, or whether there is a need for reformulations.
 2. The challenges of the historical split between the private and public spheres.
 3. Identify one "private" issue and one "societal" issue and apply justice and love to each.
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Set 7: Theory and Practice of Ministry

Friday, January 7, 2005, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 pm.

CLOSED BOOK

Note: Of the following seven questions, choose SIX to answer. Each question calls for a response of approximately a half-page, for a total of three pages.

1. A relative newcomer to your parish says, "There are so many options for spiritual development that I am confused. Can you give me some perspective?" In your answer, articulate some fundamentals of Anglican spirituality and ideas for giving this parishioner direction.
2. A member of the congregation asks you to schedule baptism on a Saturday afternoon in August because that is the occasion for the family reunion. Describe at least four considerations that guide your ensuing conversation with this person.
3. Following the national elections, a member of your parish tells you he feels isolated and hurt by other parishioners' insensitivities. They assume he shares their political views, but in fact have made disparaging comments about his politics. He wonders if he should stay. How would you respond pastorally to this individual?
4. The parish finance committee is preparing next year's budget and will present it at an informational congregational meeting. Previously, this meeting left tempers frayed and spirits exhausted. Explain why it is important to run a meeting based on Christian tenets and offer at least five practical ways to maximize cooperation and minimize bickering.

5. You are the rector of a small isolated parish. You feel discouraged, weary and alone. You have little money for continuing education or other paid respite. Identify at least four options that are supported by an overarching theological rationale that would help restore you.
6. During the question and answer session of an adult education class, one parishioner expectantly asks you when the church might revise the Book of Common Prayer. A second parishioner asks if it's really necessary to change the prayer book again. In responding to the whole class, address both the personal and communal aspects of liturgical change.
7. A teenage girl asks, "Should I see The Passion of the Christ?" How is your response informed by your understanding of the theory and practice of ministry?