

## GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 1978

### SET I

#### The Mission of the Church

*Please answer the question in PART A, the question in PART B, and one of the questions in PART C. DO NOT sign your name to your answers. Put your registration number at the top of each page. Here, and elsewhere in the examination, be sure to cite your sources if you make use of any quotations.*

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Candidate's  
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Number

### PART A

The Collect from the Ordinal in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer reads:

Let us pray.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light; Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

What are the implications of this Collect for the rationale and strategy of the mission of the Church?

From Biblical, historical, and theological perspectives discuss these implications in the context of an adult study group which you are teaching in your parish.

### PART B

Writing about the theory of vicarious atonement in a book published in 1955, an English theologian says:

"Our relation to God as sinners in this: we must pay a penalty appropriate and adequate to our wrong-doings, we must undergo punishment adequate to our guilt, we must make satisfaction adequate to the affront which we administer to God's honour, and by these means or by direct appeal to His mercy we must propitiate Him... Christ saves us by doing for us what we could never do for ourselves. He pays the penalty for our offences and so vindicates the law of God and His justice in enforcing it; He bears the punishment for our guilt; He makes satisfaction to the offended Father, whom by these means He propitiates... [Some] theories [of the atonement] have in common the conception of Christ as doing something 'for' us, and by 'for' they mean 'instead' of us. What foundation is there in Scripture for this? To tell the truth very little... Nevertheless in the history of Christian devotion, and still more in the history of soteriology, the idea of substitution has played an important part, and it has usually been interpreted on the lines of the theories which we are now considering: that Christ's obedience and Christ's suffering are accepted in place of ours."

From the standpoint of Scripture, evaluate the statement that there is "very little" foundation for a theory of vicarious atonement in Scripture.

On the basis of the Hymnal 1940, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Proposed Book of Common Prayer, discuss the place of one or more theories of the atonement in the devotional life of the Episcopal Church.

#### PART C

(Answer either Number 1, including A and B or Number 2.)

1. Having just graduated from seminary, you come as a Curate to St. Bede's, a suburban parish of 250 families with typical Vestry, altar guild, and other groups. As one of your responsibilities, you are to be in charge of Christian Education and are to be the liaison between the Christian Education Committee and the Vestry.

The lay person who has been in charge of the Christian Education program at St. Bede's has recently moved to another city. The Christian Education Committee has been meeting once a month and is responsible both for youth groups and the Sunday School. One member of the Vestry says to you: "I am delighted that you are here. A number of the parents have mentioned that attendance of the children is declining in the Sunday School. You have no greater responsibility than to restore our Sunday School to its proper place in educating our children."

- A. In this situation, (1) what would be your goals and strategy for this first year; (2) what would be the initial steps or procedures; (3) what role(s) and/or function(s) would you seek to fulfill; (4) what would be your resources; (5) what limits do you foresee?
- B. State the basic philosophy of education you hold – that which would underlie all of the above. What is your style of leadership and how does it fit in with the various aspect of (A)?
2. As Rector of a parish, you are beginning to plan an educational program on world hunger. One of the persons asked to help with the planning comes to you and expresses the hope that this program will be different from the one last year. She points out that last year's program on hunger had "very little effect." She says, "A few people felt guilty for a few weeks and some made contributions to CARE or the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief with money they saved from meatless meals. But that was about all that happened." You agree that a program which actually resulted in lasting changes of behavior and attitudes would be very desirable.

Indicate how you would plan a program which focused attention upon this challenging and complex issue of world hunger. Describe such aspects of the program as pedagogical method, resources to be drawn upon, and indicate topics to be covered and the behavioral or attitudinal changes you consider to be appropriate.

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### SET II

#### The Ministry of the Church

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#### PART A

Your diocesan Commission on Ministry is required by the Canons (Title III Canon I Sec. 5) to ascertain your "personal readiness for ordination." They have asked, prior to their interview with you, that you submit a brief paper concerning your understanding of these questions in the Ordinal.

"And do you believe *his* manner of life to be suitable to the exercise of this ministry?" (p. 538, PBCP).  
"Will you do your best to pattern your life (and that of your family, *or* household, *or* community) in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be a wholesome example to all people?" (p. 544, PBCP).

- (a) When asking you to write this paper, the Chairman of the Commission suggested you might discuss in what ways you see these vows as setting you, as an ordained person, apart from the lay members of the Church. Include in your discussion how you see yourself set apart in such specific areas as spirituality, sexuality, and standards of conduct.
- (b) You might also indicate some sources of guidance and support you, as a deacon or priest, can draw upon in fulfilling this vow and show how these sources would guide and support you.

#### PART B

A successful young lawyer and his wife and two children have been active in your parish for a few years. However, as a result of his participation in a prayer group, he has become far more serious about his religious life and developed a growing interest in Holy Orders. Because of your seminary experiences and recent ordination, he comes to you for advice.

You decide to help him examine his interest in ministry by exploring with him, not just the ordained parish ministry, but such possibilities as lay ministry, and non-stipendiary diaconate and priesthood. You also decide to base your exploration on the following specific areas:

- The difference between the lay and ordained ministry
- The office and work of a priest
- The priesthood as a vocation and as a profession

How would you conduct the exploration? What resources would you use and suggest to him for his assistance? Why would you use and suggest these resources?

## PART C

1. There are a number of special interest groups in existence today, such as Pro-Abortion Groups, Anti-Abortion Groups, Pro-E.R.A. Groups and Anti-E.R.A. Groups, Gay Liberation Groups and Anti-Gay Liberation Groups.

A woman parishioner comes to you and explains that one of these groups is putting pressure on her to "stand up and be counted" by publically endorsing the cause. She is afraid that to do so would jeopardise her position in her family, in her professional life, and in her community.

The woman wants to do the right thing, but she is fearful of the consequences of becoming active in such a movement. She is convinced of the rightness of the cause, and she does not doubt the good intentions of the members of the group, but, nevertheless, she is frightened by the potential cost to herself.

Choose one of the groups mentioned in the first paragraph for the framing of your answer to this question.

What are the pertinent issues which are involved in the stance of this group, and in the situation as posed?

In counselling this person, what would be your objectives, and how would you proceed?

2. Following a sermon which you have preached on "Sin and Forgiveness," a fifty-year old man asks you as his priest to hear his confession. A few years ago he was baptised and confirmed in your parish. He has been a regular communicant ever since. He was born and raised in Europe, but moved to this country about a dozen years ago.

During the confession, the man relates a number of things which obviously are seen to be sins. You have the very strong impression, however, that he is under more emotional strain than is appropriate to these past transgressions. During your discussion of the matter of his confession, he asks counsel about a particular recurrent fantasy which has become more and more persistent in recent weeks. He has developed an almost uncontrollable hate toward a group of Neo-Nazis which has been formed in the past year in your city. He has obtained the names of eight or ten of their members. His fantasies deal with his blowing up their houses one by one in order to stamp out this threat to society. You counsel him in regard to his fantasy, as well as to the other material related to the confession.

Two weeks after his confession has been made, you hear on the radio that a member of the Neo-Nazi Party has been killed by a dynamite blast of his home. You are very troubled upon hearing this news, but you are also aware that "the content of a confession is not normally a matter of subsequent discussion. The secrecy of a confession is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken," (p. 446, PBCP).

Then, within four days, you hear that another member of the Neo-Nazi Party has been killed during a dynamite blast of his home. The police have no clues with which to work. They have asked that anyone having any information about such bombings should call a certain telephone number. They assure the public that such calls will be treated "confidentially."

What are the moral issues involved in this situation? Discuss them.

To what extent is the secrecy of a confession absolute?

What is your duty in regard to the possible preservation of human life in this situation?

After you have analyzed the issues thoroughly, make a decision as to what you plan to do. State that decision and support it.

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### SET III

#### The Authority of the Church

*Please answer the question in PART A, one of the questions in PART B, one of the questions in PART C, and one of the questions in PART D.*

*Since this set contains one more question than did Set I and Set II, you are not expected to answer the following questions in as much detail as you answered the questions in the preceding sets.*

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### **PART A**

#### The Authority of Scripture

*The Bishop says to the ordinand*

Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them? And will you, in accordance with the canons of this Church, obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?

*Answer*

I am willing and ready to do so; and I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the [Protestant] Episcopal Church [in the United States of America].

You are about to be ordained to the Diaconate and will be required to subscribe to this vow. The underscored part of the vow relates to the authority of Holy Scripture.

- (a) Develop the meaning of this part of the vow drawing upon historical and theological resources.
- (b) Explain your personal understanding of this solemn declaration and indicate the precedents and authorities you would use to support your position.

## PART B

### The Doctrine of the Church

1. Two parishioners are arguing. One says, "If Jesus were really a man, he could not have known the future in detail. Nobody knows that. So, it seems unlikely that he could have said, 'Take up your cross and follow me' before he himself actually had to take up a cross."

The other says, "Since Jesus was God, he was omniscient and knew all things. Therefore, he would have been perfectly able to see the future in detail, and could make a statement like that without any difficulty."

Both parishioners come to you to settle the matter.

How would you explain the Biblical and theological issues involved in these divergent perspectives, and how would you respond to the two persons?

2. In the local high school a vigorous "Youth for Christ" type organization puts peer pressure on the other young people to have a conversion experience and become "born again" Christians. Your parish youth group has some members who have joined "Youth for Christ," and some who have become quite hostile to this presentation of the Christian faith.

The youth group's officers ask you to speak to the group about what "born again" means. What are the main points you would make in discussing this with the young people? What varieties of interpretation of "born again" are comprehended in the Anglican tradition?

## PART C

### The Discipline of the Church

1. In preparation for your ordination to the diaconate, you are studying the Ordination Rite in the Book of Common Prayer and in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer, and you read:

*Bishop.* Will you reverently obey your Bishop, and other chief Ministers, who, according to the Canons of the Church, may have the charge and government over you; following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions?

*All are seated except the ordinand, who stands before the Bishop.  
The Bishop addresses the ordinand as follows*

*My brother,* every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

What kind of allegiance does a deacon owe the Bishop? Do you see any potential for conflict between the calling to follow Christ and the calling to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your Bishop? How is it decided that the Bishop's admonition is a godly one? How does this promise of obedience relate to the authority of conscience? Discuss these issues as they are illuminated by your understanding of the Bible, the history of the Church, and theology.

2. The St. Louis Church Congress, called by the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen in September 1977, was widely reported in the public press and in news magazines. The people in your parish seem confused by the continuing contradictory reports concerning the significance of what was said and done in St. Louis.

You have decided to write some explanatory notes in the weekly parish newsletter. These notes explain the issues on which Episcopalians have become so divided that some have resolved to separate themselves from the Episcopal Church as it is presently constituted. Last week you wrote on the doctrinal issues pertinent to the St. Louis Church Congress. Next week you will discuss issues having to do with worship. Your task now is to write the newsletter discussing issues of church discipline and authority.

Newsletter space limits you to a thousand words.

#### PART D

##### The Worship of the Church

1. Several members of the Parish of which you are the Rector have become impatient with the fixed forms of worship in the Prayer Book. They have urged the institution of an evening service consisting of selected passages from the New Testament, Gospel hymns, and testimonies of faith by lay persons. They cite the first paragraph of the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer as warrant for this type of service.

Other parishioners are critical of the new diversity of service forms provided in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer. They assert that so many liturgical options will destroy the fundamental unity which Prayer Book worship has given the Anglican Communion.

As a person in Holy Orders, and drawing on your knowledge of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church, how will you respond to both groups? What issues and liturgical principles are involved, and what is your responsibility as the Rector?

2. The worship committee in your parish has proposed that on those Sundays in the month when Morning Prayer has normally been scheduled that it be replaced by the Eucharist as the principal service on the Lord's Day. They have cited the first paragraph on page 13 of the Proposed Book of Common Prayer in support of this proposal.

Drawing on your understanding of Scripture, doctrinal history, liturgics, and your awareness of the pastoral dimensions of changing a congregation's worship patterns, show how you would guide the Committee through an examination of the issues involved in their proposal, and how you would assist them in reaching a decision about it.