

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 1977

SET I

Please answer the question in PART A, one of the questions 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.

Candidate's
Registration
Number

PART A

What is your Church?

You are the Episcopal Chaplain at a large university. A class in the university's Department of Religion is studying American denominations and has asked you to speak about the distinctive qualities of the Episcopal Church. Drawing on your knowledge of Anglican history, doctrine, discipline, and worship what would you say? Do not write a 50 minute lecture, but give a substantial summary of the points you would make.

PART B

Who is your God?

1. In Myth, History and Faith: The Remythologizing of Christianity, Morton Kelsey says:

"... We Christians need to look carefully at the ancient idea of Jahweh usually depicted in the Old Testament, and realize that this is basically different from the God revealed by Jesus.

The older view pictures a God who is capricious or fickle and depends upon law; the other view pictures one who is steadfast and brings grace. One takes action for reasons of justice, the other out of love. One sends sickness; the other brings healing. One stands by the lex talionis, the rule of an eye for eye and a tooth for a tooth; the other stands for forgiveness." (p. 48)

How would you, as a pastor, guide a Bible study group which is discussing Kelsey's comment?

- (a) What specific Biblical passages would be pertinent to the discussion?
- (b) Give examples of how theologians have dealt with this distinction as valid or as invalid.
- (c) How is the validity or the invalidity of this distinction reflected in the worship of the Church?
- (d) What effect would the validity or the invalidity of such a distinction have on ethical understanding and behavior?

2. In every age Christians have been challenged to give an answer to Christ's own question to His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Beginning in the 19th century and continuing into our own time, some very distinguished Biblical critics have found what they think is a contradiction between the Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the Gospels and the Christ of faith in the Epistles of St. Paul. This raises some crucial questions: Do the Gospels give us an authentic account of the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth? Is there a conflict between these accounts and the Christology of St. Paul as found in his Epistles and affirmed at Nicaea and Chalcedon?

How do you answer these questions for yourself?

PART C

What is your ministry?

1. A layman tells you this story: An aging sheep dog, fearing that his master plans to replace him because the shepherd now doubts the dog's ability to protect the flock, explains his plight to a passing wolf. The wolf offers to make a great show of attacking the sheep and then allowing the dog to drive him off. The scene occurs; the shepherd, reassured, keeps the dog on the job. A week later, the dog catches the wolf carrying a chicken out of the henhouse. The wolf says, "Now it's my turn. You owe me a favor."

The layman concludes by remarking that this is the way politics and business are run, that the clergy have no way of understanding this, and that they should stay out of such affairs.

How do you respond?

2. Last year in a newsletter from a Church group one article was headlined, "The Preacher is the Message."

Write an article for your Diocesan paper which might be published under this headline.

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SET II

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PART A

What is your moral authority?

Respond to the following questions about conscience and then apply what you have written to the particular situation mentioned.

What is conscience? How is it formed? What are some authoritative sources which inform conscience? Does conscience have a universally specifiable content? If so, what? If not, why not? Some say that "Conscience is the voice of God." Some say that it is completely determined by culture. What do you say?

Drawing upon your answers to the above questions, how would you respond to the following situation.

You have received conclusive knowledge that your parish treasurer is carrying on an adulterous relationship. You approach this person to express your concern; and you are told that they are not doing any harm, nor do they experience guilt.

PART B

How do you worship?

Outline the substance of three talks you would give in a Lenten series in your parish, in preparation for the use of the Proposed Book of Common Prayer adopted by the General Convention in Minneapolis and authorized for use until the next General Convention in 1979.

PART C

What is of value to you?

1. "...If we go forward in love, as I know you will do, then I think something of a new revelation may well await us. But our two unchanging points must be: love of the Brethren (and the word Brethren, I take it, embraces Sisters) — love of the Brethren and the unity of the Church. Hold to these two things tenaciously, and out of the tension of our debates and our differences, the music will come."

The Archbishop of Canterbury
from an address to the House of Deputies,
Minneapolis, September 17, 1976

A group of parishioners come to you expressing their concerns about the ordination of women. In spite of the General Convention's recent decision on this matter, they reiterate what you already know, that feelings are still intense and convictions firmly held on both sides of the issue. In light of the remarks made by Archbishop Coggan, how do you respond to these persons? What would you do?

2. An adult Church School class in your parish discovered in a recent Sunday morning's discussion that they were puzzled by, and concerned about, a comment made on a widely viewed national television program. A celebrity, who has also become known for outspoken political views, said on that program: "In my personal life things have value because I find them meaningful. And I believe that the best kind of state, or society, is one in which the government supports and encourages the --- sort of --- sum total of all the individuals' values, and that is what is truly meaningful to the people."

The class has asked you to meet with them next Sunday to discuss the implications of these remarks from Christian perspectives. To clarify your own thinking as you prepare to meet with the class you write a summary of what you plan to say and how you will specify the sources one draws on for making judgments of value.

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SET III

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PART A

What is your mission?

At the Minnesota General Convention a significant number of urban bishops issued the "Isaiah 58:12 Proposal." Among other challenges it stated: "... the crisis of our cities today is the crisis of the nation tomorrow and that we as leaders must not allow either our church or our nation to move blandly and blindly through business as usual as if no crisis exists. We believe this constitutes the number one domestic mission field before our church today."

An observer with special experience in rural life has written: "Approximately one-third of the American people live in comparatively small towns and rural areas. This is the third of our nation with the most limited resources for education, health, and other social services. It is the sector of American life with the most extreme poverty and the least public assistance. In the average diocese, about half of our congregations are located in small communities. Most are missions or aided parishes which cannot meet the customary Episcopalian standard for self support by employing the full time services of a clergyman."

You have been asked to speak to your diocesan convention on the Church's mission strategy today. In the light of scripture, history, and contemporary society you are requested to suggest some goals, objectives, and perhaps even strategies for the national, diocesan, and local church. Write a speech which would take 15 or 20 minutes to deliver.

(Note: Though some may think it unlikely that one newly ordained would be asked to address the convention, in at least one diocese every deacon is assigned by the Bishop to do just that.)

PART B

How do you understand human sexuality?

1. A parishioner asks you, "Doesn't Genesis 2:18-25 (the creation of Adam and Eve) support the idea that woman is, and should be, subordinate to man?"

In your reply to this parishioner, give illustrations of exegesis, exposition, and possibly "eisegesis" (see note below) in the interpretation of this passage which will enable the parishioner to understand how you yourself deal with the text of the Bible.

Note: The person who submitted this question when queried about the meaning of the word replied:

"Eisegesis" is not a real word! It is a special made up word to make a contrast with "exegesis". It is made up from the Greek "eis" -- "into", and the point of making up such a word is to contrast "exegesis" -- "drawing out the meaning" with "eisegesis" -- putting in meaning that really never was there. In other words it is used to illustrate bad exegesis, or the reading into passages meanings that were never intended by the author and which are in no way legitimate.

2. A parishioner asks you, "Doesn't Romans 1:26-27 support the contention that homosexuality is contrary to the will of God?"

In your reply to this parishioner, give illustrations of exegesis, exposition, and possibly "eisegesis" (see note above) in the interpretation of this passage which will enable the parishioner to understand how you yourself deal with the text of the Bible.

3. The General Convention in 1976 called for a study of human sexuality to be ready for consideration by the Convention in 1979. You are a clerical member of your diocesan committee beginning its own study of this subject. Your particular task is to prepare for the committee a report on the kinds of knowledge needed for such a study. That is, you are (1) to specify the nature of information needed, suggesting specific disciplines which ought to be consulted, e.g. medicine, law, theology, etc., (2) to justify and illustrate how and why information from these sources can contribute to an informed theological view of human sexuality.