

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 1974

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 on the top of each page.

Here, and elsewhere in the examination, be sure to cite your sources if you make use of any quotations, even of your own previous work.

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PART A

"Of making many books there is no end" for such subjects as the ones in this question, but your answer need be no longer than about 1500 to 2000 words.

In your instruction to parents and godparents, or to adults preparing for Baptism, you are faced with explaining the meaning of the New Testament words that underlie the three renunciations of the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Compare the forms of these renunciations in the Book of Common Prayer and in the new proposed rite of Holy Baptism (Prayer Book Studies 26) and discuss the adequacy of these forms as translations of the New Testament terms.

Which of these forms do you prefer, and why?

Can you suggest a better way of translating or paraphrasing them?

Prayer Book: Dost thou...renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?

*Holy Baptism: Do you renounce Satan and all the powers of wickedness that rebel against God? Do you renounce all evil forces that exploit and destroy the creatures of God? Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw us away from the love of God?
(Prayer Book Studies 26, page 11.)*

PART B

Choose one of the two situations concerned with illness, death, and decision and write with conciseness (perhaps a couple of pages) how you would respond.

1. A 75 year-old woman has been told that she has cancer and cannot live much longer. She has been a regular attendant at worship and is a communicant in your parish. She has always made a pledge to the Church from her modest income, but has not been active in parish activities and organizations and knows relatively few people. Her family live in distant parts of the country -- a son, a sister, and several grandchildren, grandnieces and nephews-- and they may not be able to come to see her before she dies. She sees you as her main help in answering these questions: "How do I die?" "What is on 'the other side'?"

What do you say in answer to her questions?

How do you minister to her in this situation?

2. You are the pastor of a 54 year-old man who has chronic kidney disease, which has cost him one kidney and is likely to take the other within the next 24 months. He has instructed you and his family that he does not want to be put on a kidney machine, if and when his remaining kidney ceases to function. His argument is that the cost would exhaust the family's resources, and that the machine should be reserved for someone younger. As he told you of his wishes, he was obviously shaken. His wife has asked you to try to convince him to "go on the machine", if and when it is necessary.

What are the major theological questions raised by this problem?

What are the moral and ethical questions raised?

Basing your approach on your understanding of these theological and moral issues, outline what you would do and say to the patient and to his wife.

PART C

Choose one of these three questions, which look with varying perspectives across the preceeding centuries of Church History. Comprehensiveness rather than precise detail is expected. Your answer should be no longer than 2000 words.

1. You are a newly ordained priest who has been asked by the Bishop to participate in a conference for young men and women, entitled "Forms of Christian Ministry." Your segment of the program is meant to deal with the ordained priesthood.

How would you respond to this group in answering the question, "What is a Priest?"

In your answer, you should bear in mind the following:

1. *The concept of priesthood in non-Christian and Jewish religion.*
2. *The concept of priesthood in the New Testament.*
3. *The development of concepts of priesthood in the history of the Church.*
4. *The relation of the presbyterate to the concept of "the priesthood of all believers."*
5. *Priesthood as it is exercised in the Church today.*

2. Many students of contemporary society see a parallel between the current development of "communes" and the rise of various Religious Orders in the history of Christianity, both in response to their respective contemporary societies, and in motivations and goals of community life.

Do you consider this a valid comparison? Give your reasons, with concrete illustrations, for your position.

3. In the town in which you are the Episcopal priest, you develop a friendship with a Roman Catholic priest and a Lutheran pastor. The three of you decide to engage in informal study of the issues of Church unity in which your respective Communion are involved.

The three of you have decided that you should lead the first meeting by presenting the position of Anglicanism. In particular, they wish you to state what you consider to be those aspects of Christian faith and order which Anglicans deem to be "essential and non-negotiable," and those aspects of Anglicanism which are considered "non-essential" to the unity of the Churches.

Prepare a detailed outline of your presentation. In your answer you should cite not only official statements concerning the Anglican position, but also refer to the historical circumstances that have shaped the Anglican tradition and to the diversity of theological opinion within Anglicanism.

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SET II

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X PART A

"Bible" in the sign language for the deaf is the combination of the signs for "Jesus" and for "book." The whole Bible is "Jesus book." Your answer to this question should not be that condensed but should perhaps again be plus or minus 1500 words.

You are a curate in a college town. A student who has been a faithful and unquestioning Christian most of his life asks for an appointment with you. When he arrives for the appointment, he tells you that he is undergoing a crisis in faith because of a course he is taking in college entitled, "The Bible as Literature." The professor has discussed numerous passages in the Old Testament which deal with the prophecies concerning the coming of a Messiah, and has tried to show that the Christian writers in the New Testament have twisted the meaning of these passages into specific references to Jesus of Nazareth. The student wants to know whether a prophet can really predict the future or not, whether any prophet knew that Jesus was to be the Messiah, and how do we understand the way in which the New Testament writers used the Old Testament?

What do you say to this student? Discuss specific passages from the Bible to illustrate your points.

PART B

Choose one of the two situations concerned with the ramifications of public and private morality from Christian perspectives. A few pages of your writing will be sufficient in length.

1. The historian Charles Norris Cochrane remarked that one of the effects of Constantine's establishment of Christianity as a state religion was the "use of legislation to improve moral and social conditions, with its

inevitable concomitant, a growing confusion between the notions of sin and crime."

Though there is a theory of separation of Church and State in America, there are still remnants of this long history of the establishment of Christianity in our contemporary society -- both in State legislatures and in the national Congress, and also in the pressures upon them from Christian Churches and groups. There is still "confusion between the notions of sin and crime."

Select two issues in our contemporary American scene in Church and State where this confusion exists, and discuss them with reference to:

1. Their historical roots;
2. Their theological and ethical implications for the involvement of the Church in political activity.

2. The Watergate hearings before the Senate Select Committee have revealed many dimensions of evil in our society, as well as the specific illegal and immoral acts of certain individuals.

Some concerned people in your congregation ask you to help them sort out the theological and moral questions of importance for them as Christians. Are they themselves implicated in any way in these evils, and if so, what are their responsibilities in seeking to correct them?

Outline a sermon you would deliver as one way of helping them in this dilemma.

If, on the other hand, you do not think that a sermon would be appropriate, give your reasons, and outline an alternative method for dealing with their concerns.

PART C

Choose one of the three ways the multifaceted tensions between continuity and change have been illustrated. Answer as briefly or as extensively as you feel necessary, the time factor being what is for you.

1. About two years ago, a Black couple moved from the inner city to a predominately white parish in the suburbs, of which you are the curate. The couple are in their mid-forties, economically and educationally at home in the community and parish. Their move to the suburbs represents an accomplishment for them. There are, however, moments of mutual embarrassment occasioned by insensitivity of white fellow parishioners.

One Sunday in an adult discussion period following the service, the wife tells the group about their daughter, a college freshmen who has just discovered James Cone's writing. The girl has come home with many questions prompted by her reading. The woman asks you, "What do you think of Black Theology?"

How do you respond? In your answer, take into account the couple's situation in this parish and their need to respond to their daughter.

- 1/2. You are preaching a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer during Lent. You have been using both the Book of Common Prayer and the I.C.E.T. translations in the sermons. You have reached the phrase "lead us not into temptation."

Write a synopsis of this sermon which deals with such issues as the meaning of temptation itself, the moral issues involved in the process of temptation, and the accuracy of both the BCP and ICET translation of this phrase. Describe briefly the character of the congregation to which this sermon would be preached.

In preparing your sermon, you may use a Concordance of the Bible in English (or Greek, if you have studied this language.)

3. The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer states in its first paragraph

It is a most invaluable part of that blessed "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," that in his worship different forms and usages may without offence be allowed, provided the substance of the Faith be kept entire; and that, in every Church, what cannot be clearly determined to belong to Doctrine must be referred to Discipline; and therefore, by common consent and authority, may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of, as may seem most convenient for the edification of the people, "according to the various exigency of time and occasions."

A significant minority in your parish are disturbed by the changes proposed in the Prayer Book, by the experiments with Services for Trial Use, and have anxiety about the revision of the liturgy. You have agreed to meet with them about this.

As you think about the people in your parish—those concerned and anxious, as well as those eager for the liturgical changes, what do you see as being important to be considered (a) liturgically? (b) pastorally? Identify the primary issues and outline the steps you will undertake to come to grips with the situation.

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SET III

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X PART A

As "I believe...in the Communion of Saints" has inexhaustible implications, perhaps this question could elicit from you an answer ranging through more areas of ministerial concerns than any of the others. 1500 to 2000 words.

The 64th General Convention set aside February 13* on the liturgical calendar as the date commemorating Absalom Jones, first Black priest of the Episcopal Church. You have been invited to preach on this occasion.

How would your sermon deal with the historical situation which has produced Black congregations and institutions, and the question of their continued witness today?

*The Calendar of the Church Year

February 13: Add a new entry: "Absalom Jones, Priest, 1818"

(The first Black priest in the Episcopal Church, ordained by Bishop William White of Pennsylvania in 1804; in charge of St. Thomas' Church in Philadelphia. His name was given in 1972 to the Absalom Jones Theological Institute, established by the Episcopal Church, in affiliation with the Inter-denominational Theological Center in Atlanta, for theological training of persons seeking Christian ministry and service.)

(from the report of the Standing Liturgical Commission to the 64th General Convention, page 244.)

PART B

Choose one of the situations on which both Christians and other have had diverse experiences and hold varied opinions. Two to four pages should suffice to give enough scope for your answer.

1. An active and involved layman from another parish approaches you and relates in detail his involvement in the Pentecostal or Charismatic movement within the Church. He tells you that he has received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and has spoken in tongues. He further relates that others of his parish have had much the same experience, but that the rector of their parish expressly forbids the "perpetration of such nonsense." He asks you as a priest of the Church, "do you agree that this is nonsense?"

How will you reply?

What pastoral advice can you give him?

What references from the Bible or from the history and tradition of the Church will you use in making your reply?

2. A young couple, both of whom have recently graduated from college, come to you and ask you to marry them. The young man in his youth had been an active member of your congregation. His fiancée has attended various churches but has never been baptized.

The couple wish to write their own ceremony, but ask you to help them in this assignment. They are open to many suggestions from you, but they are agreed in wishing to omit from their vows the phrase "until we are parted by death." This, they feel, ignores any possibility that either of them might grow or change in such a way during the years that the dissolution of their marriage might be desirable, if not necessary.

If you choose to accept the couple's request, indicate in your answer what you believe are the essential elements to be included in the ceremony which you design, stating why you believe so. How would you remain faithful to the Church's teaching about marriage, while dealing with their conviction about the phrase "until parted by death"?

If you decide to decline the couple's request, state your reasons and indicate how you would best communicate these to the couple and what advice you would give them.

In your answer, make use of the Church's Canons and the rubrics of the liturgy.

3. At a Vestry meeting which is considering the "Quota" assigned to the parish for its diocesan pledge, several of the influential members of the Vestry are unhappy about some of the items in the budgets of both the Diocese and the national Church. One of them sums up their position by saying, "Instead of sending all this money for projects elsewhere, let's spend it right here where we know it will do some good."

What would you say to them?

PART C

Reflect on one of these two quotations, each of which has been read by thousands or hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens. Write what you will and as time allows drawing on the resources of your theological education.

- X1. "Our understanding of OK is ^{NOT} bound to our own personal experiences because we can transcend them into an abstraction of ultimate purpose for all men." (Harris, I'm OK, You're OK, p. 50; p. 74 paperback.)

Compare this with the Old Testament and New Testament understanding of what it means to be "OK".

2. You are the Rector of a parish serving the surrounding community of some 200,000 people. The Humanist Manifesto II, highlights of which are printed below, appeared a few days ago in your local newspaper (circulation 40,000). It was signed by over one hundred people, many of whom are faculty members of various universities.

A parishioner, a member of the local Rotary Club, asks if you have seen the Humanist Manifesto II and would you, as Rector of his parish, be willing to answer it next week in a speech to the Club? You will be given about 20 minutes to speak.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MANIFESTO II

We believe that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.

Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from self-actualization and from rectifying social injustices.

We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stem from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life.

We strive for the good life here and now.

Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses. There is no substitute: neither faith nor passion suffices in itself. The controlled use of scientific methods, which have transformed the natural and social sciences since the Renaissance, must be extended further in the solution of human problems. But reason must be tempered by humility, since no group has a monopoly on wisdom or virtue.

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults.

To enhance freedom and dignity, the individual must experience a full range of civil liberties, in all societies. This includes...a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.

We must extend participatory democracy in its true sense to the economy, the school, the family, the workplace and voluntary associations.

We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government.

We must extend communication and transportation across frontiers. Travel restrictions must cease. We thus call for full international cooperation in culture, science, the arts and technology across ideological borders.

The commitment to tolerance, understanding and peaceful negotiation does not necessitate acquiescence to the status quo nor the damming up of dynamic and revolutionary forces. The true revolution is occurring and can continue in countless nonviolent adjustments.

The New York Times, August 26, 1972.

Write the speech you would give to the Rotary.