

GENERAL ORDINATION EXAMINATION 1973

Part I

Please answer one of the questions in each of the three groups. Note that each group calls for a particular style and length of response. Don't sign your answers; use your registration number.

Candidate's
Registration
Number

GROUP A: RESPONSE TO SITUATIONS

Choose one of the three pastoral situations. Try to limit your answer to 1,500 words, if you can deal fairly with what you want to say within those limits.

1. A young couple, recently graduated from college, come to you for preparatory counselling before their marriage. They share the belief of many that a limitation upon population growth is essential for the well-being of society and its quality of life in the future. They have also been much impressed by the position of their Biology professor (who is a Christian) that the need for such limitation is so acute as virtually to demand that married couples agree to have no children at all, or at most only one, and to adopt others if they wish a larger family.

How would you counsel them on this issue?

Give attention in your response to the petition in the Prayer Book rite "Bestow upon these thy servants, if it be thy will, the gift and heritage of children" (or the parallel phrase in Services for Trial Use) and to the declaration in Canon I 17 sec. 3 which the couple are required to sign. The Report and Resolutions of Committee 5 of the 1958 Lambeth Conference are also germane.

2. A 28-year-old man, a teacher in a local elementary school, has been a recent but regular attendant at services in your parish. He was raised in the Episcopal Church since childhood and, for the most part, has been a regular communicant since confirmation. He makes an appointment for the specific purpose of informing you that he is a homosexual -- to clear the air, so to speak, and to explain that if he and his partner are welcome in your congregation, both would like to become active supporters of and participants in parish life. They assure you that although they are sympathetic to the aims of activists in regard to ending the persecution and stigma attached to homosexuality, they are not militant about it and have rejected the idea of joining the Gay Liberation Front.

Several months later the man asks you if you would be willing to perform a ceremony which would affirm the relationship between him and his partner. Noting that there have been private baptisms and funerals, house weddings, confirmations, etc., and in keeping with his sense of discretion, he wishes the ceremony to be held in their home rather than in the church. But he does wish the ceremony to constitute, in some clear sense, a "blessing" of the union.

What do you tell the man?

What are the theological presuppositions which inform your response?

3. A man comes to you who is convinced that he is possessed by a demon, and asks for exorcism. He is deeply troubled about his recurrent and seemingly uncontrollable behavior which causes evil consequences to others. You are convinced of his sincerity and in fact you know about some occasions when people have been hurt by his actions, apparently without any justification.

How would you proceed to counsel such a person?

What would be your procedure, if you are persuaded that the person needs exorcism?

What would be your procedure, if you are not convinced that the person is demonically possessed?

In answering this question, indicate your understanding of the relevance of the New Testament concept of demonic possession, and also your understanding of the history of the practice of exorcism in the Church.

GROUP B: ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS

Choose one of the two situations described. Your answer should, if possible, be not longer than two pages. Specifically you are asked to do three things:

- a. *List the issues you perceive in the situation, with an indication of their relative importance.*
 - b. *Indicate the resources, including Biblical, theological and historical material, you would bring to bear on the issues.*
 - c. *Outline how you would plan to use or apply these resources and what you would intend to accomplish in resolving the situation.*
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1. At the request of an adult study group which has been wrestling with the prophets, you preach one Sunday on Isaiah. In the sermon you use some present-day examples to explain the prophet's concern for Israel's international affairs. It is, you think, a well-done sermon -- one of the best you have ever given. In the discussion period immediately afterwards, however, a hot debate develops. One group argues forcibly that clergy have no business even mentioning from the pulpit such issues as our involvement in Viet Nam or the Arab-Israeli conflict. The other group argues with equal force that they are tired of hearing about the Old Testament. They see no sense in wasting their time discussing what happened so long ago. Some bitter exchanges take place. As the discussion breaks up you hear someone muttering that her ulcer is acting up. Someone else leaves sardonically whistling, "Gim mee that old time religion . . . "
 2. You are a curate in an inner-city parish where the majority of the parishioners are black. One Sunday after Sunday School, a young man approaches you with the following question:
"Is God black ?"

GROUP C: EXEGETICAL

Choose one of the two problems. The answer should be not more than 4-5 pages long, briefer if possible. Outline and summarize as much as possible.

1. The Metropolitan of Mt. Lebanon, a distinguished Orthodox figure in the Middle East, recently made an address to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches on the subject "Christianity

in a pluralistic world". He spoke strongly against the "exclusivism" he found in western Christianity, pleading for the recognition that the work of Christ is not limited to its historical unfolding in the Church but rather is seen wherever men and women are made participants in the very life of God. He quotes with approval Iranaeus' sentence: "There is only one God who from beginning to end, through various economies, comes to the help of mankind".

The following sentences from Metropolitan Khodr's address are a particularly strong statement of his position: "Christ is everywhere hidden in the mystery of his lowliness. Any interpretation of religions is an interpretation in Christ. It is Christ alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a Buddhist or a Moslem reading his own scriptures. Whoever dies a martyr being persecuted for what he believes is just, dies in communion with Christ. This salvation that is at work outside Israel according to the flesh, as well as outside the historical Church, is the outcome of the Resurrection which fills everything with the fulness of Christ."

Outline your response to this statement, including your estimate of its effect on your theology of mission and evangelism. Use in your response one of these Biblical passages: Colossians 1:9-15, I St. John 1:1-7 or Hebrews 2:1-10.

2. A devout and theologically perceptive parishioner of yours is troubled by the meaning of the Collect for the First Sunday after Christmas, in Services for Trial Use, p.480: "Almighty God, who revealed in the incarnation of your eternal Word, our Savior Jesus Christ, the source and perfection of all true religion: Grant that we may entrust our lives to him, on whom is built the whole salvation of mankind, and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory evermore".

You have decided to preach a sermon on this Collect (not necessarily in the Christmas season), and have selected one of the following texts as a basis for the sermon: John 1:9, or John 14:6, or Acts 4:12.

Write out a synopsis of your sermon, in which you note:

- (1) the theological issues raised by your text and the Collect;
- (2) the problems which these raise for Christian missionary and evangelistic work today in non-Christian cultures;
- (3) your explanation and solution of these problems.

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Part II

Please answer one of the questions in each of the three groups. Note that each group calls for a particular style and length of response. Don't sign your answers; use your registration number.

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GROUP A: THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

Choose one of the three questions in this group. You may write as much as 2,000 words in answering. Remember that each question covers more than one field of study and try to present a broad selection of ideas and material.

1. Discuss the "Windsor Statement" on the Eucharist issued by the Theological Commission of Roman Catholics and Anglicans in September 1971 (enclosed), giving special attention to the following three methodological principles prepared in the follow-up of this Statement by the American Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation:
 - (a) "Theological language never adequately corresponds to the reality to which it refers."
 - (b) "Past doctrinal utterances were made in definite cultural situations that are not our own . . . A Christian today, in order to be orthodox and to maintain continuity with the tradition expressed in the language of another day, may need to find new language and even new concepts to express the same truth."
 - (c) "Because the same mystery can sometimes be conveyed more effectively by different formulas in different cultural contexts, one may support a variety of theological expressions among different groups of Christians."
2. Prof. James H. Cone, in his book Black Theology and Black Power (p.38), makes the following statement: "Christianity is not alien to Black Power; it is Black Power . . . Black rebellion is a manifestation of God himself actively involved in the present-day affairs of men for the purpose of liberating a people".

How do you respond to this statement? Give a full explanation of your agreement or disagreement with it. Include in your discussion your estimate of the significance of Dr. Cone's position and why you feel that way.

3. In February, 1973, the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus will be celebrated, and there will be some conferences arranged to give thought to the significance of Copernicus, and to sum up the significance of his work for Western culture.

The local university is planning such a conference, and inviting astronomers and others to read papers. They invite you to present a paper on the theological significance of Copernicus and of post-Copernican cosmology in general. The chairman of the conference writes to you as follows: "Copernicus once and for all removed man from the center of the universe, and showed that he was only a dot on an insignificant planet of a small sun in a minor galaxy. We now assume that in the universe there may well be many inhabited planets, and that it is probable that there are beings 'out there' far superior in intelligence (and in other ways) to us. This revolution of thought, and even more of the imagination, makes belief in the ancient Christian cosmology difficult, if not impossible. We would like you to deal with this in a short paper."

You decide to accept.

What would you say in your paper?

GROUP B: ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS

Choose one of the two situations described. Your answer should, if possible, be not longer than two pages. Specifically you are asked to do three things:

- a. *List the issues you perceive in the situation, with an indication of their relative importance.*
- b. *Indicate the resources, including Biblical, theological and historical material, you would bring to bear on the issues.*
- c. *Outline how you would plan to use or apply these resources and what you would intend to accomplish in resolving the situation.*

1. A doctor has called you to consult with a family, whose son of 23 years has had a serious accident. His brain has been damaged and there is no hope of his regaining consciousness. He can live as a "vegetable" by the use of machines for up to two years -- while he wastes away. The parents are realistic and able

to face the problem. They can meet the cost of the machines for four months without being overwhelmed by debt. The doctor would like you to advise the family about turning off the machines that keep their son alive, whether immediately or at a later time. While talking to the family you meet the young man's girl friend. In a private interview, which she has arranged with you, she tells you that she is seven weeks pregnant with the young man's child. They had been considering marriage when the accident occurred. She wants to know if she should tell his parents, or if she should terminate the pregnancy.

2. A married couple, members of your parish, both of whom are in good health and in their mid-thirties, are upset that the wife, in spite of the use of contraceptives, is expecting a fourth child. They have just learned that she is pregnant and are considering a legal abortion in another state. The husband does not have strong feelings about having or not having another baby, and leaves the decision to his wife. The wife has recently made plans to return to work and does not want to enlarge the family. Her upbringing and religious training have left her with conflicting and confusing attitudes about the morality of an abortion. She has come to you for help in making her decision.

GROUP C: EXEGETICAL

Choose one of the two situations. The answer should be not more than 4-5 pages long, briefer if possible. Even though these are exegetical questions, you are expected to identify other considerations which would be included in your presentation - cultural, historical, theological et al.

1. A group of young people who are holding "consciousness-raising" sessions on changing sexual roles in our society invite you to speak to them on St. Paul's attitude toward women. They believe that he is probably responsible for much of our cultural bias against women, but they tell you in advance that they don't want just your opinions. They want to know what Paul actually said on the subject, and why. You agree to make a presentation to them, and then engage in a discussion period.

Outline your presentation - what passages you would use, and what you would say about them. Summarize what you would say when asked in the discussion period for your own personal reaction to the passages.

2. Many persons in your congregation are deeply troubled by pronouncements of Church leaders or Church conventions on subjects which they believe to have only political or economic significance and no proper relevance to the duty and concern of the Church.

Outline a sermon on one or the other of the following texts in which you attempt to give guidance to your people on this problem:

(1) Mark 12:17 or

(2) Romans 13:1-2

Your sermon should reveal both a careful exegesis of your text, and also some appropriate illustrations from Church History. (You may, if you wish, confine the thrust of your sermon to a particular issue rather than treat the subject in general.) Please indicate briefly the nature of the congregation (urban, suburban, rural).

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Part III

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GROUP A: RESPONSE TO SITUATIONS

Choose one of the two pastoral situations. Try to limit your answer to 1,500 words, if you can deal fairly with what you want to say within those limits.

1. You are meeting with the vestry of an Episcopal parish in a city of some 18,000-20,000 people. They are interested in calling you as rector. The parish has about 300 communicants and is one of the oldest churches in the city. They explain to you that the parish has not been growing for some years, and that several conservative-evangelical Protestant churches, oriented to Biblical fundamentalism, are flourishing, and their members dominate the teaching in the public schools. The vestry asks you how you would plan to meet this situation and revive the influence of the Episcopal Church in this community.

How would you respond to their inquiry?

What would your plan be, and why?

2. A sensitive and intelligent man, who has been trying to keep his faith and find the way to justify his love for the Church and especially for its services, sends you a clipping from The New York Times and a despairing note. The clipping is a quotation from Prof. Richard L. Rubenstein of Florida State University. The underlined words are these: "It is my faith after Auschwitz . . . that we have nothing to hope for beyond our bodily lives, and that our religions with their impressive rituals are but the distinctive ways we share and celebrate a condition entirely enclosed within the fatalities of an absurd earthly existence."

In his note he asks you "Is this what the Eucharist really is -- entirely enclosed in absurdity? When you say those prayers at the altar, are you saying anything to Auschwitz?"

What do you say or write to him?

GROUP B: ANALYSIS OF SITUATIONS

Choose one of the two situations described. Your answer should, if possible, be not longer than two pages. Specifically you are asked to do three things:

- a. List the issues you perceive in the situation, with an indication of their relative importance.
- b. Indicate the resources, including Biblical, theological and historical material, you would bring to bear on the issues.
- c. Outline how you would plan to use or apply these resources and what you would intend to accomplish in resolving the situation.

1. You are the rector of a small parish. A seminarian from that parish, having spent two years in seminary as a postulant, has just learned that the commission on ministry have not recommended him for candidacy "at this time". The bishop has discontinued his postulancy. The seminarian very much wants to be ordained and asks your help, support and guidance.
2. In the church where you are serving your diaconate, a good deal of polarization has occurred because the rector has used the Third Order for celebrating the Holy Eucharist (Services for Trial Use, pp.79ff.) several times at vestry meetings and other gatherings. While many approve, many others are deeply concerned at the departure from traditional Anglican insistence on fixed forms for Eucharistic celebration. "What standards does the Church uphold, if anybody can design his own Communion service" is the way one parishioner puts the issue. As a recent ordinand, you are asked to speak to a group of those most concerned, specifically about the questions of plural rites and extempore prayer.

GROUP C: EXEGETICAL

Choose one of the two situations. The answer should be not more than 4-5 pages long, briefer if possible. Outline and summarize as much as possible. Even though these are exegetical questions you are expected to identify other considerations which would be included in your presentation – cultural, historical, theological et al.

1. A parishioner has been reading Rollo Mays' Love and Will. While she likes the book generally, she is disturbed by one passage in it: " . . the terms 'will power' and 'free will' are dubious, to say the least, and perhaps no longer even helpful if they were available. 'Will power' expressed the arrogant efforts of Victorian man to manipulate his surroundings and to rule nature with an iron hand, as well as to manipulate himself, rule his own life in the same way as one would an object."

It seems to her that such a scornful appraisal of "will power" cuts across the whole heart of ethics and religion, and she asks you to preach a sermon that would respond to her concern.

Outline such a sermon, indicating the Bible passages you would use, and also what other material from history, the Prayer Book and contemporary life you would use.

N.B. This and the following question are not directly aimed at evaluating your own theological position but rather your ability to communicate a reasonable and relevant answer to these people.

2. A Bible study group in your parish has had difficulty with the statement of St. Paul in I Corinthians 15:3: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (King James version) -- "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (Revised Standard Version). They have asked you to meet with them and explain this passage.

What would you say to them?

Be sure to read the note following question 1. above.