

The General Board of Examining Chaplains

A. MEMBERSHIP

Bishops

- The Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Sims, Atlanta GA (1985), resigned 1984, *replaced by* the Rt. Rev. J. Mark Dyer, Bethlehem, PA.
- The Rt. Rev. William J. Gordon, *Vice-Chairman*, Midland, MI (1985)
- The Rt. Rev. Richard F. Grein, Topeka, KS (1988)

Clergy with Pastoral Responsibilities

- The Rev. William H. Baar, La Grange, IL (1985)
- The Rev. Donald E. Bitsberger, *Chairman*, Newton, MA (1985)
- The Rev. J. Mark Dyer, So. Hamilton, MA (1985), elected bishop 1983, *replaced by* the Very Rev. Robert E. Giannini, St. Petersburg, FL.
- The Rev. Herman Page, Topeka, KS (1988)
- The Rev. John D. Lane, New Orleans, LA (1988)
- The Rev. Canon Frederick B. Williams, New York, NY (1988)

Members of Faculties

- The Rev. Boyce M. Bennett, New York, NY (1985), resigned 1983, *replaced by* the Rev. L. William Countryman, Ph.D., Berkeley, CA.
- The Rev. Robert M. Cooper, D.Div., Austin, TX (1985)
- The Rev. William B. Green, Ph.D., Austin, TX (1988)
- The Very Rev. John Booty, Ph.D., Sewanee, TN (1988)
- The Rev. Holt M. Graham, Th.D., West St. Paul, MN (1988)
- The Rev. Louis Weil, S.T.D., Nashotah, WI (1988)

Lay Persons

- Dr. William Gaines, Chicago, IL (1985)
- Mrs. Evelyn Shipman, Freeland, WA (1985)
- Dr. Thomas Matthews, Tulsa, OK (1988)
- Dr. Thomas Bartlett, University, AL (1988), resigned 1985.
- Mrs. Barbara Wolf, Falmouth, ME (1988)
- Dr. Ann Diemer, Pontiac, MI (1988)

Representatives of the Board at General Convention

The Rt. Rev. William J. Gordon, House of Bishops, and the Rev. Donald E. Bitsberger, House of Deputies, are authorized by the Board to receive nonsubstantive amendments to the report.

B. SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S WORK

During the triennium, the General Board of Examining Chaplains:

1. Convened at the College of Preachers in each of the three years to prepare an annual General Ordination Examination, and arranged for these examinations to be administered to between 315 and 348 candidates each year, in about 45 locations each year, including one or two outside of the United States.
2. Participated annually in overseeing the work of 158-175 persons, clerical and lay, convened in eight centers, to read the examinations and write evaluations of them.

3. Reported examination results and recommendations to all candidates, their bishops and commissions on ministry, and made the required canonical report to seminary deans.
4. Visited several seminaries, dioceses, and parishes to interpret the work of the General Board of Examining Chaplains.
5. Worked on various subcommittees, both during the year and in the annual meetings, to accomplish the canonical work of preparing and evaluating the examinations, and evaluating the processes of administering the examinations.
6. Elected a Planning Committee to review the Board's work and prepare for its Annual Meeting (beginning in 1984).
7. Introduced a new category of questions in the GOE. For the first time in 1984, the examination included a substantive *closed-book* question, requiring as much as an hour to answer; the candidate could refer to no resources other than the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.
8. Collaborated with other agencies which are accountable for the education and development of the ordained ministry in and for the Church—such as the Council for the Development of Ministry; the Board for Theological Education; the Committees on Theology and on Ministry of the House of Bishops; the Council of Seminary Deans; the Program, Budget, and Finance Committee; and the General Convention and national Church staff through Canon James Gundrum. In particular, the Board sought help from all of the above in attempting to formulate guidelines for theological education as mandated by the 1982 General Convention;
9. Reported through its chairman, or through bishops who are Board members, to the interim meetings of the House of Bishops in Spokane, WA, and Jackson, MS, as required by the Canons.
10. Is reporting at this time a summary of the evaluations of 2768 GOE's for the years 1977-1985. This is in response to the first part of the resolution passed at the 1982 General Convention in New Orleans, *viz.*, "That the General Board include in its reports to the House of Bishops the results of the decade of testing candidates for ordained ministry. . . ."

NOTE: Much of the administration of the Board's work is in the portfolio of the Rev. Richard T. Loring, D.Th., of Chelsea, MA, who manages the work of the GBEC with grace, dignity, and careful attention to detail. Dr. Loring succeeded the Rev. R. Emmet Gribbin, S.T.S., of Northport, AL, who served as Administrator of the Board from 1974 to 1983.

TABLE 1

General Ordination Examinations Administered, 1982-1985

	1972-82	1983	1984	1985	Triennium totals 1983-85	Totals 1972-85
Candidates examined						
Essay examination	2898*	317	348	317	982	3880
Multiple-choice test**	2280	316	348	317	981	3261
Dioceses represented***	92*	84	83	81	93	98
Readers participating		158	174	160		

*The figures for candidates taking the essay examination and dioceses participating in the early years may not be completely accurate since some essays were evaluated by dioceses and not by the national readers.

**A multiple-choice machine-scored test on *The History, Literature and Vocabulary of the Christian Tradition* became part of the GOE in 1975.

***Every diocese but one in the United States has its candidates take the GOE's, but small dioceses do not have candidates every year. In the last six years, 98 out of 99 dioceses have used the GOE; this count includes Navajoland and the Convocation of American Churches in Europe, but not the new Diocese of East Tennessee.

TABLE 2

Results of the General Ordination Examinations, 1977-1985

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Number of candidates	300	295	318	286	279	308	317	348	317
Proficient in <i>all seven</i> areas	191	174	176	143	157	173	170	193	147
Proficient in <i>six</i>	44	42	88	92	82	NA	86	79	48
Proficient in <i>five</i>	43	50	44	60	39	NA	56	41	28
Proficient in <i>four</i>	7	16	23	13	10	NA	25	31	25
Proficient in <i>three</i>	12	7	9	12	7	NA	4	13	22
Proficient in <i>two</i>	8	5	4	2	3	NA	1	10	14
Proficient in <i>one</i>	1	2	2	2	4	NA	5	5	14
Proficient in <i>none</i>	5	13	11	6	4	NA	13	10	19
To be reexamined in area of:									
Scripture	35	27	39	37	26	49	44	75	73
History	43	50	53	37	41	57	48	59	71
Theology	44	58	66	49	41	59	68	75	73
Ethics	42	64	90	84	44	68	78	90	93
Liturgics	33	35	37	63	27	34	50	37	59
Theory and Practice	51	68	48	56	50	58	59	60	88
Contemporary Society	38	55	51	50	53	57	70	58	95

NOTES: No distinction has been made in this summary between full-time students in seminaries and those who are preparing for Holy Orders privately, nor is there a distinction between students judged to be "not proficient" and those whose GOE's have shown "insufficient material to make a judgment."

During the nine years for which results could be summarized, candidates demonstrated greatest proficiency in Liturgics and Holy Scripture and least proficiency in Ethics, Contemporary Society, and Theory and Practice of Ministry.

C. FINANCIAL REPORT

Statistics—1983-1985

	<i>1983 Actual</i>	<i>1984 Actual</i>	<i>1985 Budgeted</i>	1983-85 Total
Expenses				
Board expenses	\$25,034.95	\$29,084.10	\$33,460	\$ 87,579.05
Meetings				
Administration				
Secretarial assistance				
Reading expenses	47,080.61	52,854.49	52,117	152,052.10
Conferences				
Honoraria				
Other expense	9,610.66	17,443.86**	11,112	38,166.52
Office				
Printing				
Copying				
Postage				
Total Expense	<u>\$81,726.22</u>	<u>\$99,382.45</u>	<u>\$96,689</u>	<u>\$277,797.67</u>
Funding*				
Examination fees	\$50,666.00 (@ 167)	\$69,167.00 (@ 200)	\$64,000 (@ 210)	\$183,833.00
Convention:				
Budget	23,583.00	30,215.45	32,689	86,487.45
Funding of deficit	<u>7,477.22</u>			<u>7,477.22</u>
Total Funding	<u>\$81,726.22</u>	<u>\$99,382.45</u>	<u>\$96,689</u>	<u>\$277,797.67</u>

*Program, Budget, and Finance directed in 1983 that funding will be one-third from General Convention Assessment Budget and two-thirds from examination fees. Hence fees have increased substantially during the past three years.

**Includes purchase of a word processor and printer.

D. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

In Title III, Canon 7, the responsibilities of the General Board of Examining Chaplains are clearly stated: to develop annually a General Ordination Examination; to administer said examination to registered candidates; to evaluate the results of the examination and to report the results to the candidates and their bishops, commissions on ministry and the deans of their seminary or education agency.

The objectives during the 1986-88 triennium will be to carry out the same tasks in ways that are balanced, responsible, and of benefit to the candidates and their bishops, as well as to the Church at large. In addition, work will continue on the development of Guidelines for Theological Education, with the help and cooperation of other agencies mentioned earlier. The Board's Planning Committee will continue to evaluate the Board's work and suggest improvements and economies.

One suggested economy is that the honorarium paid heretofore to the readers of the examinations be discontinued as of the 1986 GOE. The majority of readers, according to a poll informally taken in 1985, is in agreement with this change, which will save about \$12,000 per year. It should be noted, however, that, with the steadily increasing

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costs for air travel and accommodations, the readers' conference will absorb much of this saving.

E. PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE TRIENNIUM

	1986	1987	1988	1986-88 total
Expenses				
Board expenses	\$34,000	\$35,500	\$37,000	\$106,500
Meetings				
Administration				
Secretarial assistance				
Reading expenses	43,000	45,000	47,000	135,000
(assuming that				
honorarium is dropped)*				
Conferences				
Other expense	12,000	13,000	14,000	39,000
Office				
Printing				
Copying				
Postage				
Total expense	<u>\$89,000</u>	<u>\$93,500</u>	<u>\$98,000</u>	<u>\$280,500</u>
Funding**				
Examination fees	\$59,334	\$62,334	\$65,334	\$187,002
(assuming 320 candidates)	(@ 186)	(@ 195)	(@ 204)	
Convention Budget	<u>29,666</u>	<u>31,166</u>	<u>32,666</u>	<u>93,498</u>
Total Funding	<u>\$89,000</u>	<u>\$93,500</u>	<u>\$98,000</u>	<u>\$280,500</u>

*If the honorarium were retained, expenses would climb by about \$12,000 per year, and funding would have to be adjusted accordingly.

**The Program, Budget, and Finance Committee has directed the GBEC that the Convention Budget will fund only one-third of the GBEC budget, and that GOE fees must fund the balance.

F. REQUEST FOR BUDGET APPROPRIATION

Resolution #A—66

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the following amount be appropriated from the General Convention Assessment Budget for the General Board of Examining Chaplains:

\$29,666 for 1986
31,166 for 1987
32,666 for 1988
\$93,498 for the triennium.

Resolution #A—67

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the authorization for the General Board of Examining Chaplains to charge a fee, not exceeding \$225 per candidate, for the General Ordination Examinations be continued for the next trien-

nium, with the provision that candidates for whom the fee is not paid, but who are otherwise qualified, shall also be examined.

G. APPENDIX

The General Board of Examining Chaplains was canonically created at the General Convention of 1970. Since 1972, when the first General Ordination Examinations were given, some 3,880 candidates have been examined by means of the GOEs, as shown earlier in Table 1.

The General Ordination Examinations require five days of writing each January. Candidates must respond to the questions with a quality of work which will enable the GBEC to certify them as having demonstrated satisfactory proficiency in the seven canonical subject matters. These are: Holy Scriptures; Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement; Christian Theology; Christian Ethics and Moral Theology; Studies in Contemporary Society, including Racial and Minority Groups; Liturgics: Christian Worship, and the contents of the *Book of Common Prayer*; and Theory and Practice of Ministry.

The General Ordination Examinations are meant to be helpful—educationally, pastorally, and structurally. The examination does not decide whether or not a given person should be ordained. That is the prerogative of the bishops and diocesan structures. The purpose of the examination is to measure readiness for ministry, to lift up those areas where weakness might be recognized, and to assist persons in a collegial way to overcome such deficiencies through re-examination in the diocese, or a continuing education program, or a reading or mentoring process. The results of the General Ordination Examinations, in the view of the Board members, are only part of the data which bishops, standing committees and commissions on ministry may use to assist them in making decisions in matters of ordination and the pastoral support of the persons involved.

The first General Ordination Examinations were based entirely upon situations which one might encounter in the practice of ordained ministry. They were “open-book” and required long, essay-type answers which tested primarily the candidates’ awareness of resources and their use. Through the years other types of questions have been added to the examinations and now include: (a) a multiple-choice, closed-book examination which tests knowledge in five canonical areas (not including Contemporary Society and Theory and Practice of Ministry), (b) several short-answer, closed-book questions (in the jargon of the GBEC, “questions at the church door or during the coffee hour”), and (c) a new category of closed-book questions which require more substantive responses than (a) or (b) and which test more in-depth knowledge of the candidates, knowledge which an ordained person might reasonably be expected to know without reference to resources other than the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

The objective part of the examination, instituted in 1975, is an area of some confusion and criticism. A multiple-choice test entitled “The History, Literature and Vocabulary of the Christian Tradition” was prepared in consultation with the Educational Testing Service, revised several times, and in 1982 was completely re-designed with the aid of testing experts. The test indicates whether candidates are knowledgeable in some detail about the content of subjects studied in theological education. Readers evaluating performances of candidates on the rest of the examination do not have the scores on this multiple-choice test; the chaplains at the several area meetings, however, do have these scores to assist them in the decisions about a candidate’s proficiency in the canonical subjects, especially if there does not otherwise seem to be sufficient evidence on which

to base an evaluation in a particular subject. The Board is assessing the best manner in which to communicate the scores on this test to the bishops, seminaries, and others. Besides raw scores, comparative rankings have been given in terms of percentiles, quintiles, and (most recently) median scores in the subjects which the test covers.

In 1982, General Convention placed upon the GBEC the responsibility to "prepare guidelines for theological education to supplement the canonical list of seen fields." This has proved to be a difficult and demanding task and one which could not be accomplished by the GBEC alone. During the past year there has been, however, great progress toward publication of at least a first draft of Guidelines for Theological Education. This progress is the result of the willing and helpful collaboration of the Board for Theological Education, the Council for Development of Ministry, the Council of Deans, the House of Bishops Committees on Ministry and Theology, and the gracious interest and support of the Presiding Bishop himself.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation for the dedicated efforts of Dr. Emmet Gribbin, who retired as our Administrator in 1983, and of his successor, Dr. Richard Loring; and our gratitude for the work and time of the hundreds of readers who, through this triennium, have helped the Board and the candidates with their skills and energies. We wish also to thank the seminaries and other agencies which have helped to administer the examinations and have hosted the annual Conferences of Readers.

Respectfully submitted

Donald E. Bitsberger,
Chairperson