

Supplemental Report Guidelines for Theological Education A Special Report from the General Board of Examining Chaplains

Preface

During the past triennium comments and suggestions about the guidelines have been received and collated by the Board for Theological Education. These were then reviewed by a select committee consisting of the Rt. Rev. Richard Grein, Bishop of Kansas and chair of the General Board of Examining Chaplains; the Rev. Dr. John Booty, former Dean of the School of Theology of the University of the South and a member of the GBOE; the Very Rev. William Petersen, Dean of Bexley Hall, a member of the GBOE and the Council of Seminary Deans; and the Rev. Preston T. Kelsey II, Executive Director of the BTE. The committee prepared a further revision of the guidelines and looks forward to working with the BTE in its Strategic Planning Project for Theological Education and the Presiding Bishop's special Seminary Deans/Bishops Committee to present the guidelines in their final form to the 70th General Convention.

The guidelines are intended to interpret and elaborate on those canons of the Episcopal Church which govern the formation, preparation, theological education, and continuing education of its clergy. By "guidelines" the General Board does not mean rules or regulations but rather goals toward which candidates for ordination should aspire and by which the Board's preparation of the General Ordination Examination will be informed. Their proper use will be that of assisting the several dioceses as they participate in the formation and education of the Church's clergy. Nor is it intended that the guidelines usurp the proper role of the seminaries in developing and administering curricula for theological education. These guidelines have no canonical authority, and they should not be regarded as part of the selection process by which the Church identifies individuals who are called to—and possess the gifts for—ordained ministry. Therefore, the General Board hopes that these guidelines will contribute to the continuing discussion among and within the dioceses about appropriate, suitable goals for such formation and education.

In the course of its deliberations, the original Advisory Committee (members are listed at the conclusion of the Preface) realized that it is impossible to limit the guidelines to the very few years devoted to formal theological education. Generalizations about the years usually required for such preparation cannot easily be made. In any case, there are advantages to viewing theological education as a process which one begins before seminary and which continues long after ordination. Indeed, such an approach may alleviate the inordinate demand upon seminaries that they "should teach everything."

It is hoped that these guidelines will be helpful to persons preparing for ordination and to their bishops and Commissions on Ministry. Inasmuch as their use and implementation will vary from diocese to diocese, the several dioceses of the Church are urged to share their experience with these guidelines with one another and with the General Board of Examining Chaplains, the Board for Theological Education, and the Council for Development of Ministry.

Advisory Committee - 1984-85

- The Most Rev. John Maury Allin, 23rd Presiding Bishop and member of the committee, *ex officio*
- The Rt. Rev. C. FitzSimons Allison, Bishop of South Carolina and former member, General Board of Examining Chaplains
- The Rt. Rev. John F. Ashby, Bishop of Western Kansas and Chairman, House of Bishops' Committee on Ministry, and Vice Chairman, Council for Development of Ministry
- The Rev. Donald E. Bitsberger, Rector, Church of the Redeemer, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, Chairman of the Board of Examining Chaplains, and Chair of the Advisory Committee
- Ms. Dorothy J. Brittain, Consultant, Syracuse, New York, and member, Board for Theological Education
- The Rev. Dr. John Booty, former Dean, School of Theology, University of the South, and member, General Board of Examining Chaplains
- The Rev. John T. Docker, Field Officer, Council for the Development of Ministry
- The Rt. Rev. J. Mark Dyer, Bishop of Bethlehem and member, General Board of Examining Chaplains and House of Bishops' Committee on Theology
- The Very Rev. James C. Fenhagen, Dean, General Theological Seminary and member, Board for Theological Education and Council of Seminary Deans
- The Rt. Rev. Richard F. Grein, Bishop of Kansas and member, General Board of Examining Chaplains and House of Bishops' Committee on Theology
- The Rev. Preston T. Kelsey II, Executive Director, Board for Theological Education
- The Rev. Terry Meadows, Assistant Rector, St. Paul's Church, Columbus, Ohio, and member, Board for Theological Education
- Professor Joseph H. Smith, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, and member, Council for Development of Ministry
- The Rt. Rev. William G. Weinbauer, Bishop of Western North Carolina and Chairman, House of Bishops' Committee on Theology
- The Rt. Rev. Robert C. Witcher, Bishop of Long Island and Chairman, House of Bishops' Committee on Pastoral Development

Before Seminary

Diversity of Gifts

Selection of candidates for Holy Orders requires recognition of the unique gifts that each offers for the sake of common tasks within the Church. Aspirants are expected to demonstrate faith in Jesus Christ and to bring to the ordained ministry a diversity of personal experience and a broad range of knowledge and skills. Their faith, personal experience, knowledge and skills provide the basis for their theological education and for their personal formation in preparation for ordained ministry.

Dioceses will develop their own standards of excellence for postulants and candidates. These standards should be related to the particular ordained ministries of the diocese and to the social contexts from which those ministries emerge.

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Basic Knowledge

Before they enter seminary, candidates should be expected to acquire a basic liberal arts education and a basic knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the Book of Common Prayer. In the Book of Common Prayer they should be familiar with the rites of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, the Daily Offices, the Church Year with its Lectionary, the Ordinal, and the Outline of the Faith. It is assumed that such knowledge will result from regular participation in the worship of the Church and attentive reading of the Scriptures. Specifically, they should know about: God's calling of Israel and the Church, the contributions of the prophets, the Exile and its consequences, the Scriptures written in the last centuries before Christ, the major outlines of the Gospels, and a general knowledge of Paul's letters.

Essential Skills

Proficiency in the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are essential to the experience of formal theological education and to the practice of ordained ministry itself. The motivation to acquire, and the demonstration of increasing proficiency in these skills should be part of the growth of aspirants, postulants, and candidates, whose formal theological education will be enhanced by their abilities to speak and to write clearly and correctly.

Autobiographical Statement

Although the aspirant or postulant may be required by the diocese to prepare a written life history before acceptance as a candidate for Holy Orders, a separate autobiographical statement, which emphasizes the events that and persons who have been significant in one's spiritual journey or development, is recommended. Such a statement can be an important element in discerning one's vocation. It also requires the kind of personal reflection that is essential to the integration of faith, knowledge, and personal experience.

Supervised Experience

Aspirants are encouraged to seek opportunities to work under supervision in a parochial setting prior to seminary. Such experience makes possible a deeper understanding of the practice of ministry and at the same time provides a setting for more disciplined study of the Scriptures and the Book of Common Prayer. By reflecting upon this experience, which combines both supervised work and basic reading, the aspirants will be prepared for the integration of disciplines that formal theological education requires. Obviously, the specific nature of this supervised experience will vary according to the circumstances, the resources available, and the needs of the individual.

Recommendation

In all of the above it is assumed that bishops, with their Commissions on Ministry, will be responsible for and support aspirants and applicants in their pre-seminary experience. Dioceses are urged to share the programs and policies they develop, in the implementation of these guidelines in the period before seminary, with other dioceses, the Board for Theological Education, and the General Board of Examining Chaplains.

During Seminary

Although there are a number of instances in which seminary students will not become postulants until after matriculation in theological school, the majority will enter seminaries with at least the endorsement of their bishops and Commissions on Ministry. The oversight of their spiritual formation and vocational development during seminary will continue to be a responsibility of their bishops. But in any case, the seminary provides the immediate pastoral oversight for individual growth and formation. The demands of its courses, the requirements of its worship, and the challenges of its community life make up the setting in which postulants and candidates are expected to explore their vocational commitments and at the same time to attain a higher degree of theological competence, pastoral sensitivity, and spiritual discipline.

The canons of the Church specify seven areas in which the candidate for Holy Orders is examined prior to ordination: (1) The Holy Scriptures; (2) Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement; (3) Christian Theology; (4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology; (5) Studies in Contemporary Society, including Racial and Minority Groups; (6) Liturgics and Church Music; (7) Theory and Practice of Ministry (Title III, Canon 7, Section 1 [a]). The General Ordination Examination, which is written annually by the General Board of Examining Chaplains, is based upon these seven areas. In the opinion of the General Board, the guidelines which follow outline the knowledge which candidates should possess in order to demonstrate proficiency in this examination.

I. The Holy Scriptures

Old Testament

Through regular, attentive reading of the Scriptures, candidates are expected to have such knowledge of the Old Testament (including the Apocrypha) that its chronology, history, and important personalities can be described and the general theme of each of its books outlined.

Candidates should be familiar with the values and achievements of biblical criticism, as well as with its limitations. They should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the principles and practice of exegesis and of the historical situations in which the texts were written. Basic understanding of the geography of the lands of the Bible is assumed, as is a grasp of the basic theological themes of the Old Testament. Knowledge of Hebrew is desirable and recommended.

New Testament

Candidates should have such familiarity with the New Testament as would reflect attentive and repeated use in study, devotions, and liturgical reading. General knowledge of the New Testament should include the respective Gospel narratives, the Acts of the Apostles, and the theme and context of the Epistles and of the Book of Revelation. Candidates should have special knowledge of one of the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John and one or more of the following Epistles: Romans, First or Second Corinthians, or Galatians.

Familiarity with different critical approaches to the New Testament is expected. Candidates should be able to discuss the values and limitations of each. Knowledge of the principles and practice of exegesis and hermeneutics is considered very important, as is familiarity with the biblical sources of the Christian creeds and historical doctrines. Knowledge of Greek is desirable and recommended.

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II. Church History

General Church History

Candidates should be familiar with the general narrative of the Church's history from New Testament and Patristic times through the Medieval and Reformation periods to the present. This general narrative should be understood in relation to the wider historical contexts, including pertinent political, economic and cultural aspects, and candidates should also take cognizance of non-Western peoples and other religions. They should know about the development of distinctive church institutions over the centuries and have a general understanding of doctrinal developments, including the formation of the canon of Scripture, the creeds, the major theological controversies, and heresies. They should be familiar with the missionary experience of the Church in its history and recognize the implications of this experience for secular history. Finally, candidates should have a general knowledge of major figures in the Church's history, as well as some familiarity with the great classical writings of Christianity.

The Church of England and American Church History

Candidates should also be able to demonstrate knowledge of the Church of England from its Celtic beginnings to the present. Knowledge in greater detail is expected in the wider contexts of the Reformation period, the Caroline Divines, the Evangelical Revival, and the Tractarians. Candidates ought to be familiar with the expansion of Anglicanism in other parts of the world and with its role in the ecumenical movement.

Candidates are expected to have a sound grasp of the general history of the Episcopal Church in the United States. They should know about its origins, its historic figures, and the factors which influenced its development against the larger background of this nation's history from the Colonial period to the present. They should be familiar with the important religious movements in America, together with the authoritative writings and figures associated with them, and possess a general knowledge of the major denominations. Their understanding of the role of the Church in this society should include appreciation of the contributions of native Americans, Hispanics, blacks, and women.

Christian Mission

Candidates should be able to discuss the history of the mission of the Church and demonstrate an understanding of the theology of mission, including its development from biblical foundations through the contemporary globalization of Christianity. They should appreciate the role of missionary movements in traditions other than the Anglican and recognize the importance of the relationship between the mission of the Church and the ecumenical movement. They should know about evangelism and demonstrate familiarity with developments in both the theology and practice of Christian missionary efforts in the 20th century, including a general knowledge of world religions.

III. Christian Theology

Candidates are required to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the basic Christian affirmations concerning the doctrines of Revelation, Creation, Sin and the Fall, Christology, Atonement, the Trinity, Soteriology, the Church, Sacraments, Missiology and Eschatology. They must be able to explicate these doctrines with clarity and simplicity.

History of Christian thought is another area in which candidates are expected to demonstrate learning and understanding. Emphasis should be placed upon the Church Fathers, the formulation of the Creeds, the development of the Anglican theological tradition, and more recent ecumenical theology.

Candidates should be able to bring together a general knowledge of theology and the applied disciplines of ascetical theology, hermeneutics, apologetics, and ecumenical theology, and also to demonstrate their competence in the application of theology to contemporary understandings of human nature in both its individual and social dimensions.

IV. Christian Ethics and Moral Theology

Candidates should be able to present and discuss critically the most basic systematic issues of Christian ethics and moral theology. They should also be able to state and to respond to the primary objections that have been raised against Christian moral thought and practice. Accordingly, candidates will be expected to demonstrate from a Christian perspective an adequate understanding of the following:

- (1). The sources of Christian ethics and moral theology, including the Holy Scriptures, Christian tradition, reason, and general knowledge and experience.
- (2). Major ethicists and moral theologians, both historical and contemporary, their perspective and major contributions, and the development of Christian social teaching.
- (3). The nature, locus, and justification for "the good," including the relation between God, Christ and the good, what makes "the good" good, the nature of moral good, the relation between moral good and other goods, and the distinction between right and the good.
- (4). The nature and character of moral agency, including an understanding of such issues as freedom, responsibility, obligation, conscience, virtue, and character in relation to both justification and sanctification.
- (5). Moral judgment, including knowledge of the relation between religious belief and moral judgment, the sources of moral perception and judgment, and the place of moral practices in the Christian life.

Candidates should also be able to demonstrate systematic, historical knowledge of some of the basic issues that have confronted Christians and their societies through the ages and continue to confront them today: familial and sexual relations, political and economic justice, war and peace, the relationship of the Church to the State, etc. Although candidates are not expected to have extensive knowledge of all of them, they should be able to describe several representative issues in some depth.

V. Studies in Contemporary Society, Including Racial and Minority Groups

It is assumed that candidates will understand contemporary social issues and the challenges and opportunities which they present for the Church's ministry. They should be able to apply the learning of the other six canonical areas to such issues as poverty, hunger, racism, sexism, justice, and peace. They should be able also to help others recognize the significance of these issues for society and the Church.

Although primary emphasis for studies in contemporary society will be the issues which arise in American society, candidates are urged to learn about a culture other

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than their own and to acquire some facility in another language. They should be able to recognize the contributions which other cultures make to our society and to the Church.

VI. Liturgics and Church Music

Candidates are expected to demonstrate a knowledge of the historical development of Christian liturgical worship from its Jewish origins to present liturgical renewal. This knowledge should be complemented by a theological understanding of the role of worship in the Church's life, including the theology of the sacraments within the context of pastoral ministry and the general and changing cultural framework as they shape the liturgical theology of the Church in various circumstances. For Anglicans, this understanding would encompass an appreciation of the special role which liturgical worship has taken within our tradition and a firm knowledge of the evolution of the Book of Common Prayer from the 16th century onwards, and with special emphasis upon the 1979 Book of Common Prayer for its theological and pastoral significance today.

It is important for candidates to complement these historical and theological dimensions with an understanding of the aesthetic and non-verbal aspects of liturgical worship, with special attention to the role which music has played in the Church's liturgy. This would involve a knowledge of the development and use of the Hymnal 1982 as an integral dimension of the pastoral responsibility of the ordained in each worshipping community.

VII. Theory and Practice of Ministry

Candidates are expected to possess general knowledge of the principles and practice of ordained ministry and of the responsibilities which it ordinarily requires. They should also understand the significance of the role of pastoral care in the life of the Church and its importance to the growth and education of all Christians in their ministries. This understanding should derive from and should be related to theological knowledge, especially the Christian doctrine of humanity and the doctrine of the Church.

Candidates should also acquire basic knowledge and basic skills in preaching, pastoral counseling, theological education, and the Christian life of prayer. Knowledge of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, of the canons of the candidate's own diocese, and of the disciplinary rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer is essential. Candidates should also be able to demonstrate their understandings of stewardship and evangelism, how they are rooted in Scripture, and how they are practiced in the Church.

Candidates should also have a sound understanding of the nature of Christian vocation, its relationship to baptism, and its expression in the lives of Christians. More particularly, they should recognize the distinctive roles of the various orders of ministry—bishops, priests, deacons, and the laity—and have a theology of ministry that shows an appreciation for all forms of ministry and their contributions to "building up the Body of Christ."

Because the category of theory and practice of ministry is comprehensive, it cannot be isolated from other areas of theological study nor from the social sciences (e.g., contributions from such areas as family systems analysis, communication, and learning and moral development). And because "practice of ministry" implies practical experience, the resources of field education, clinical pastoral education, and whenever possible, internships are important to the integration of theory and practice of ordained ministry

and to the individual appropriation of the several disciplines required in the course of theological education and formation.

After Seminary

We recognize that seminaries cannot meet all the expectations that surround preparation for ordained ministry, nor can they accomplish all that is implied in the preceding seven canonical areas. Ordinands must be prepared, therefore, to commence their ministries with a plan for continuing education. Among the resources for developing such a plan would be:

- (1). Evaluations of one's General Ordination Examination;
- (2). Specialized programs of study to supplement or enhance one's practice of ordained ministry;
- (3). The identification and development of skills that are needed in the exercise of ordained ministry in the particular setting to which one is called; and
- (4). One's own special interests.

Responsibility for continuing education rests upon bishops and Commissions on Ministry. Dioceses are urged to identify and to offer such resources for continuing education as seem especially appropriate for their local situations. Seminaries are called to be centers and resources for continuing education. Dioceses are also urged to make available resources for spiritual direction and opportunities for theological reflection. The discipline of thinking theologically about ministry and the experience of spiritual formation should continue after ordination.

Conclusion

It is hoped that these guidelines will be helpful to the Church. Their implementation can be accomplished only within and by the dioceses. Their greater usefulness will depend upon the several dioceses being willing to share with one another their experiences with the guidelines, together with the ways and means by which they adapt them for their own purposes and procedures. Future, continuing revision of the guidelines is assumed. Such revision will be possible when bishops, Commissions on Ministry, seminaries, candidates for ordination, and clergy share their suggestions and comments with the Board for Theological Education, the Council for Development of Ministry, and the General Board of Examining Chaplains.

Resolution #A191

Revision of Guidelines for Theological Education

Whereas, the Guidelines for Theological Education prepared by the General Board of Examining Chaplains, with the assistance of the 1984-85 Advisory Committee, were received by the 68th General Convention of this Church and commended to the Church for use and evaluation during the triennium 1985-1988; and

Whereas, the Board for Theological Education received responses to the Guidelines from bishops, theological seminaries, Commissions on Ministry, and other interested parties, and shared them with the General Board of Examining Chaplains and its select committee; and

Whereas, the Presiding Bishop has appointed a special committee from the House of Bishops and Council of Seminary Deans to discuss the process leading to ordination; and

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Whereas, the Board for Theological Education has been engaged in a project of strategic planning for theological education; and

Whereas, the General Board of Examining Chaplains, with the assistance of its select committee, and others, has continued to revise the Guidelines; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Guidelines as revised be received by the 69th General Convention for continued use and reflection by the Church, looking forward to further revision upon the completion of the work of the Board for Theological Education and the Presiding Bishop's special committee in preparation for action by the 70th General Convention.**

EXPLANATION: The GBOE select committee presents revised guidelines and asks for further use and reflection by the Church during the coming triennium. With the work being done by the BTE in strategic planning and the anticipated work of the Presiding Bishop's special committee, it is the opinion of the select committee that it is premature to ask for a final decision on the guidelines at this time.