

## The General Board of Examining Chaplains

### A. MEMBERSHIP

#### Bishops

The Rt. Rev. Wm. B. Spofford, *Chairman*, Washington, DC (1982)  
The Rt. Rev. Wm. E. Sanders, Knoxville, TN (1985; resigned as of 1982)  
The Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Sims, Atlanta, GA (1988)

#### Clergy with Pastoral Responsibilities

The Rev. Sandra Ragan-Kelley, Palo Alto, CA (1982)\*  
The Rev. Jerre Feagin, Buffalo, NY (1982)\*\*  
The Rev. William H. Baar, LaGrange, IL (1985)  
The Rev. Donald Bitsberger, Chestnut Hill, MA (1985)  
The Rev. J. Mark Dyer, S. Hamilton, MA (1988)  
The Rev. Herman Page, Topeka, KS (1988)

#### Members of Faculties

The Very Rev. O. C. Edwards, Evanston, IL (1982)  
The Rev. H. Boone Porter, Milwaukee, WI (1982)  
The Rev. Boyce Bennett, New York, NY (1985)  
The Rev. Robert Cooper, Austin, TX (1985)  
The Rev. Holt Graham, New Brighton, MN (1988)  
The Rev. Wm. B. Green, Austin, TX (1988)

#### Lay Persons

Dr. Marylu Fowler, Chicago, IL (1982)  
Dr. Cecil Patterson, Durham, NC (1982)  
Dr. William Gaines, Evanston, IL (1985)  
Mrs. Evelyn Shipman, Freeland, WA (1985)  
Dr. Thomas A. Bartlett, Washington, DC (1988)  
Dr. Thomas Matthews, Tulsa, OK (1988)

### B. SUMMARY OF THE BOARD'S WORK

During the triennium, the General Board of Examining Chaplains:

1. Convened in each of the three years to prepare an annual general ordination examination; and arranged for these examinations to be administered to an average of about 300 candidates each year.
2. Participated, annually, in overseeing the work of about 150 persons convened in eight centers to read and write evaluations of the exams.
3. Reported examination results and recommendations to all candidates, their bishops, and commissions on ministry, and made the required canonical report to seminary deans.

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\*Ms. Ragan-Kelley replaced the Rt. Rev. C. FitzSimons Allison when the latter was elected coadjutor of South Carolina.

\*\*Mr. Feagin replaced the Rev. Dr. Charles Eldon Davis of Benicia, CA, when Dr. Davis died.

4. Many members visited seminaries, dioceses and parishes to interpret the work of the General Board of Examining Chaplains.
5. All members 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 exams.
6. 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 Program and Budget Committee, and the General Convention and national Church staff through Canon James Gundrum.
7. Reported through the chairman to the interim meetings of the House of Bishops in Chattanooga and San Diego, as required by the Canons.

In its annual meeting in 1981, the Board reached several conclusions about its work which are outlined in the Appendix and concerning which it proposes a resolution, as well as the necessary financial resolutions.

(NOTE: Much of the administration of the Board's work was in the portfolio of the Rev. Dr. Emmet Gribbin of Tuscaloosa, AL, who with grace, pastoral sensitivity, and thoroughness managed the complicated procedures which the examinations and their evaluations require.)

TABLE I

**General Ordination Examinations  
Administered 1972-1982**

	1972-79	1980	1981	1982	Triennium	Totals
					Totals 80-82	Totals 1972-82
Candidates examined:						
Essay examination	2025	286	279	308	871	2896
Multiple choice test <sup>1</sup>	1420	279	271	310	850	2270
Dioceses represented	90	79	79	80	92 <sup>2</sup>	92
Readers participating		144	140	154		

<sup>1</sup> A multiple choice test became part of the GOE in 1975.

<sup>2</sup> All but two or three dioceses in the United States generally have their candidates take the GOEs, but small dioceses do not have candidates every year.

C. FINANCIAL REPORT

	Statistics—1980-82			Estimates—1983-85			
	1980 Actual	1981 Actual	1982 Budgeted	1983	1984	1985	1983-85 Total
<b>Expenses</b>							
Board expense	\$20,642.	\$21,407.	\$23,703.	\$23,968	\$25,400.	\$26,900.	\$ 76,268.
Meetings							
Administration							
Secretarial assistance	31,059.	34,347.	42,536.	43,000.	44,500.	46,000.	133,500.
Reading expense							
Conferences							
Honoraria							
Other expense	7,027.	6,575.	7,141. <sup>2</sup>	7,250.	7,550.	7,900.	22,700.
Office							
Printing							
Copying							
Postage							
<b>Total expense</b>	<u>\$58,728.</u>	<u>\$62,329.</u>	<u>\$73,380.</u>	<u>\$74,218.</u>	<u>\$77,450.</u>	<u>\$80,800.</u>	<u>\$232,468.</u>
<b>Funding</b>							
Examination fees	\$22,960. (@\$80)	\$24,200. (@\$90)	\$30,800. (@\$100)	\$30,000. (@\$100)	\$30,000. (@\$100)	\$33,000. (@\$110)	\$ 93,000.
Convention budget	41,000.	40,500.	39,000. 3,600. <sup>3</sup>	44,000.	47,000.	47,500.	138,500.
<b>Total funding</b>	<u>\$63,960.</u>	<u>\$65,350.</u>	<u>\$73,400.</u>	<u>\$74,000.</u>	<u>\$77,000.</u>	<u>\$80,500.</u>	<u>\$231,500.</u>

<sup>1</sup> Contribution.  
<sup>2</sup> Includes purchase of typewriter.  
<sup>3</sup> Deposited in wrong account.

**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 1983-1985 triennium will be to develop, administer, and communicate the results of examinations which are balanced, responsible, and of benefit to the candidates and their bishops, as well as to the Church at large.

**E. REQUEST FOR BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS**

**Resolution #A—54.**

*Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the following amounts be appropriated from the General Convention Assessment Budget for the General Board of Examining Chaplains:*

\$ 44,000 for 1983  
47,000 for 1984  
47,500 for 1985  

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\$138,500 for the triennium

**Resolution #A—55.**

*Resolved, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the authorization for the General Board of Examining Chaplains to charge a fee, not exceeding \$125 per Candidate for the General Ordination Examination, be continued for the next triennium, with the provision that Candidates for whom the fee is not paid, but who are otherwise qualified, shall also be examined.*

**F. REQUEST FOR CANONICAL CHANGE**

The General Board of Examining Chaplains was canonically created at the General Convention of 1970. On October 15, 1971, the members of the Board stated:

“The Board believes the examination-evaluation process we have outlined will assist:

1. Bishops and diocesan commissions on ministry in their pastoral work of selecting, guiding and evaluating candidates for Holy Orders.
2. Bishops and others responsible for the placement and supervision of ordinands.
3. Ordinands, themselves, in developing a realistic analysis of their readiness for the work of the ordained ministry, with a view toward their future professional growth and development.
4. The House of Bishops, the seminaries, and other agencies of the Church, in gaining a clearer view of the pre-ordination standards of competence and readiness currently in effect throughout the Church.”

In presenting this statement to an interim House of Bishops meeting at Pocono Manor, Pennsylvania, Bishop Stephen Bayne, then chairman of the Board, stated:

*We felt . . . that we needed to emphasize to the candidates, in the introduction to the examination itself, that it is designed to test the ordinand's awareness of the resources which they should be able to bring to the resolution of the questions or problems posed. . . we have tried to make it clear that we expect a candidate to show, in appropriate depth, an adequate grasp of the core elements necessary to a priest's ministry.*

Although two kinds of questions have been added to the open book essay questions of the General Ordination Examinations in recent years, the Board believes that, fundamentally, the above statements are still valid. The two new additions are (a) the multiple choice closed-book examination on five of the canonical subject matters and (b) some short-answer, closed-book questions which seek to elicit spontaneous but valid answers from the candidates which would reveal the 'deposit' of knowledge the candidate may have in the required canonical areas, and which the candidate can express without having to turn to resources. In the jargon of the Board, these have become known as "coffee-hour questions" or "questions at the Church door"—and are of such a nature that any person seeking orders should be able to produce a concise and correct response.

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; 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.

Eleven examinations, 1972-82, are now a matter of record. Table 1 gives pertinent statistics about the participation of candidates, dioceses, and readers in all years and in the past triennium.

The objective part of the examination, instituted in 1975, is the 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, this past year, 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. The results of this part of the examination are not known to the readers who are evaluating performances on the essay and closed-book 'coffee-hour' questions. The chaplains at the several area evaluation meetings do have the raw scores and percentile rankings for reference, to assist them in the decisions about a candidate's proficiency in the canonical subjects. These scores and percentiles are used for the benefit of the candidate, to provide additional information if there does not seem to be sufficient evidence in the written work on which to base an evaluation in the particular canonical subject.

The Board is now in the process of assessing the best manner in which to

communicate these scores to the bishops, seminaries and others. Although the authorizing canon indicates that the Board may do research, the members believe that their fundamental role is to develop an examination system. The accumulated knowledge from the eleven examinations should perhaps be made available to an appropriate agency, such as the Board for Theological Education or the Council for the Development of Ministry, which could undertake research concerning theological education in the Church.

The Board has continuing problems with evaluating a candidate's proficiency in the most recent addition to the required canonical subjects, "Studies in Contemporary Society, including Racial and Minority Groups." This subject was added to the more traditional ones by the General Convention of 1970. The Board believes that this subject matter is the 'environment' in which all questions are asked. A candidate's response to any GOE question is evaluated as less than satisfactory unless the answer is illumined by some aspect of Contemporary Society. The subject matter of Contemporary Society tends to become confused with some of what has traditionally been included in the canonical subject, "Christian Ethics and Moral Theology," with the result that there is some redundancy in the questions or an unbalanced exam design. The academic content of Contemporary Society is more difficult to assess than is the content of such subjects as Church History or Holy Scriptures.

With over a decade of experience, the members of the Board now believe the time has come to shorten the terms of the members of the General Board of Examining Chaplains. Because it was a new venture to have national exams instead of diocesan ones, the Church obviously felt that it was important to have a long enough period of service so that members of the Board could get the process organized and functioning well. At the same time, our history shows that, save for the Rev. Dr. Boone Porter, none of the original members is still with the Board. Due to changes in personal circumstances and vocations, death, or elections to the episcopate, few members are able to sustain a nine-year term. Therefore, the Board presents a resolution asking the General Convention of 1982 to limit the terms of the Examining Chaplains to two General Convention periods—i.e., six years.

Finally, besides thanking Dr. Emmet Gribbin for his work, we wish to express our gratitude for the work and time of the hundreds of readers who, through this triennium, helped the Board and the candidates with their skills and energies; and also to thank the seminaries and other agencies which have helped to administer the examinations and have hosted the annual Conferences of Readers. The Board continues to be grateful to the rector, vestry and people of Christ Church, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, for the office space which this parish has provided the GBEC and Dr. Gribbin since 1975.

## F. SPECIAL RESOLUTION

### **Resolution #A—56.**

To change terms of GBEC members.

*Resolved, That Title III, Canon 7, Sec. 1 be amended as follows:*

#### **CANON 7**

Sec. 1. There shall be a General Board of Examining Chaplains, consisting of three Bishops, six Presbyters with pastoral cures, six members of Theological Seminary faculties or of other educational institutions, and six Lay Persons. The members of the board shall be elected by the House of Bishops and confirmed by the House of Deputies, ~~one-third~~ *one-half* of such members in each of the foregoing

categories being so elected and confirmed at each regular meeting of the General Convention for a term of ~~three~~ *two* Convention periods. They shall take office at the close of the said meeting, and shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified. The House of Bishops, at any special meeting that may be held prior to the next General Convention, shall fill for the unexpired portion of the term any vacancy that may have arisen in the interim. The Board shall elect its own Chairman and Secretary, and shall have the power to constitute committees necessary for the carrying on of its work.