

Procedures of Accountability

A Flow Chart Approach

The purpose of this summary is to give an overview of various existing approaches to the problem of upholding common standards around ordination and licencing for ministry, and to try to put some kind of order into these several distinct approaches.

We are approaching this task through a “flow chart” method, which attempts to identify the fundamental decisions we face as a church on the question of standards, the ramifications of each possible choice, and the practical measures to which they might lead.

Two disclaimers must be given at the beginning:

- this survey in no way claims to be exhaustive. There may well be other solutions than the ones mentioned here – indeed the hope is that this will be a tool that will help us find novel solutions.
- this is in no way intended as an endorsement of the solutions surveyed. Some of them may have some promise for our context, others may not. The purpose here is to survey some of the ways in which various churches have responded to some of the challenges we face.

We begin with the fundamental question:

Do we ordain priests for the local church, or are we accountable to the larger church?

Clearly the answer must be in some sense both: in the Anglican tradition, priests are ordained and licenced by a specific bishop first of all for ministry within a specific diocese. Yet they are ordained according to a common ordinal into an order of ministry that should be recognized throughout the Anglican Church of Canada (indeed throughout the Anglican Communion). In practical terms, however, this alternative may present us with a dilemma. The particular needs of a diocese may make it appropriate in the local context to ordain someone whose training and discernment may not fulfil commonly agreed-upon standards. Yet this priest may then later transfer into another diocese.

I. If we choose to consider only the needs of the local church, another question arises:

Do we somehow distinguish a priest who does not meet common standards?

A. No, all priests are ordained and licenced without distinction. This is in effect the status quo.

Advantages: - responsive to local need
- simple

Disadvantages: - undermines any sense of common standards
- lack of clarity about a cleric’s discernment and training for other bishops, selection committees, other Anglican jurisdictions and full communion partners

B. Yes, we attempt to retain a distinction between those priests chosen and trained according to a common standard, and those not.

How then do we make this distinction?

1. Distinction made between different orders of priest. This is not really an option in Anglican tradition and polity, as we continue to use a single ordinal.

2. Distinction made in licencing by the diocese.

This has been tried in some dioceses through the ordination of “locally called priests”, and in ECUSA by Canon 9 priests.

Advantages: - may be useful in geographically isolated communities, and in some ethnic communities

Disadvantages: - either we end up creating a two-tier priesthood
- or the distinction is lost altogether. The original intention of licencing for non-stipendiary work in a single community may not always be followed through. What if the priest moves to another community or diocese?
- the priest may not have the training to meet the demands of running a parish, or even of living up to the expectations of the ordinal
- the community may not fully recognize the authority of the priest

3. Distinction made by the national church by an additional level of certification.

This is practised in the ELCiC in the form of a national church clergy “roster”. This is a list of all clergy who meet the national church standards of discernment and training, and thus are certified as eligible to apply for a call anywhere in the ELCiC.

In an Anglican context, this could be adapted to allow for the freedom of individual bishops and dioceses to respond to local need. Clergy who do not meet the standard could still be ordained and licenced for a particular context, and could of course transfer dioceses at the discretion of the receiving bishop, but would not be listed on the roster without further training.

Advantages: - a common standard would be upheld
- clarity for other bishops and selection committees about a priest’s qualifications
- yet still flexibility to respond to local need
- priests ordained for local need would not be permanently sidelined, but could work towards certification by further training
- perhaps a tool to uphold professional standards by requiring ongoing continuing education for all clergy

Disadvantages: - who would administer the roster?

II. Returning to our original question, if we wish to remain accountable to the wider church

How do we assess common standards?

A. An absolute, objective standard. This is the *status quo* in theory: the Ordination Prerequisite Document of 1986 names as the requirement for ministry in the ACC “a Bachelor’s degree plus a degree or diploma program of studies in a Theological College recognized by the ACC” – i.e. an M.Div. or equivalent.

Advantages: - a clearly articulated common standard
- ATS accreditation for M.Div. degree ensures an intentional and constantly developing program

Disadvantages:

- a high level of academic training
- impracticable. There are simply not enough M.Div. trained candidates around to cover the need, at least in remote dioceses
- the high and increasing cost can no longer be born by the student or the church, particularly as it includes an undergraduate degree
- the standard is not being upheld, so to continue to pretend it is the standard leaves us with no effective standard at all
- questions as to whether the model of training reflects the needs of the church in a missional context

B. No clear standards. This is the *status quo* in practice.

C. Another standard, modelled perhaps on the M.Div. but adapted for our context.

Advantages:

- a clearly articulated common standard
- flexibility to respond to our changing needs

Disadvantages:

- the danger of simply “dumbing down” the M.Div. How do we ensure that the ideal of an educated clergy is not abandoned by inches?

If we need another standard, *who assesses, and how?*

1. Standards maintained by academic institutions, by identifying different programs as equivalent (in varying degrees) to the M.Div. This is in effect widely practised.

Advantages:

- allows flexibility in program offering, while still orienting training on similar goals (e.g. ATS standards)
- allows the church to draw on the strengths of various local institutions, not all of which are ATS accredited

Disadvantages:

- danger of sliding standards. Pressure from the church, from students, from competition between colleges tends to drive standards downward. Who can offer training with as little investment as possible?

2. Standards built into discernment process, by adding a theological component to our current practice. *What level of church should do the assessing?*

a. At the diocesan level. By Examining Chaplains, or similar.

Advantages:

- responsive to local context

Disadvantages:

- do dioceses have the resources to assess theological readiness to give leadership in the complex missional context of the church?
- danger of becoming meaningless, as it is too subject to the pressures and personal preferences of the diocesan administration. How does this process produce a *common* standard, accountable to the wider church?

b. At the provincial level, by adding a theological component to the ACPO process. This

would be similar to the Colloquy in the ELCiC process. (For an example of a Colloquy, see below, Appendix 1)

- Advantages:*
- works with an existing structure
 - integrates the discernment of theological education with other aspects of the discernment process
- Disadvantages:*
- danger of overburdening the ACPO process. Would require another set of assessors with a different skill set.
 - would not work in terms of the timing of ACPO: the assessment of theological education would be at the end of the process, just prior to ordination, whereas the assessment ACPO is currently doing should be earlier in the process.
 - this would then involve the cost of adding a second phase to the ACPO process, a colloquy just before ordination

- c. At the national level. Here we would be looking at some kind of nationally administered test, on the model of ECUSA's General Ordination Exams. (For an example of GOE questions, see below, Appendix 2)

- Advantages:*
- a genuinely standard tool, that would give us comparative data on students' theological competence
 - an opportunity for the church to set forth its expectations on theological competencies directly
- Disadvantages:*
- considerable administrative and financial cost to set and mark the exam
 - pressure on seminaries to "teach to the exam"
 - requires a considerable investment of time by final year students, which would be disruptive of curriculum. A particular challenge in our context where most institutions develop curriculum in ecumenical partnerships.
 - tendency of standardized exams to discriminate against cultural minorities

3. Standards assessed by a partnership of diocese, province, national church and theological schools.

What is the role of the church, and what tools might make the partnership more transparent, intentional, and accountable?

- a. A more clearly articulated list of competencies, academic as well as practical. The TEAC grids, as well as the ATS outcomes, would serve as a basis, but it would need to be contextualized. The United Church of Canada "Leadership Outcomes" standards would be an example of this approach.

- Advantages:*
- the church would enter into a more transparent process of reflection on its needs for the education of its clergy
 - orientation on existing inventories would keep the church's expectations

consistent with that of the seminaries, and our ecumenical partners in education

- TEAC standards in particular integrate expectations for pre- and post-ordination training

- Disadvantages:*
- how would the standards be determined? We would need a process to ensure that they are themselves theologically grounded, and agreed on by the church
 - without some tools to assess and enforce these expectations, they would have little meaning

- b. A roster might be a tool to enforce these standards. See above.
- c. Co-ordination and co-operation with the theological schools, using their various strengths to fulfil different needs, such as remote education or continuing education.

- Advantages:*
- more efficient use of existing resources
 - support for a variety of regional schools
 - greater breadth and flexibility than any one school could achieve on its own

- Disadvantages:*
- this must not become an instrument for church control of the schools. Ownership and planning of these programs would have to be negotiated between the church and the schools
 - if we are not relying only on the free consumer market, how do we ensure a fair distribution of responsibilities and resources among the schools

Appendix 1: An actual Colloquy

Academic/Praxis Question

The doctrine of Justification has been described by Lutherans as the article upon which the church stands or falls. Theologians of various stripes have contested this assertion, claiming that other doctrines--Christology for instance--ought to have pride of place in doctrinal disputes. The role of justification in ecumenical dialogues has been variously received and so remains a contested point of departure for theology. Indeed, the Joint Declaration on Justification (1999) signed by the Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches demonstrates that even though mutual condemnations no longer apply, there is not yet consensus on what justification is, or its function as a locus for dogmatic theology. Moreover, even among those who give ready approval of it one sometimes wonders whether they really grasp how radical this doctrine is in their seemingly facile acceptance of its significance for the life of the church. This question will give you opportunity to articulate the scandal that this doctrine is in Lutheran theology, to examine its implications for ecumenical/interfaith relationships and to demonstrate its significance for the life and mission of the church.

For Candidates for Ordained Ministry:

You have been invited to preach the sermon at an ecumenical event in your community, hosted by the local ministerial. This year the event will take place in the Roman Catholic church and since the offerings from the event will be given to a interfaith refugee settlement committee, members of its board of directors, which include members of the Abrahamic faiths, as well as a Sikh and a Buddhist, have been invited to attend and may be present. The texts to be used for the service are the propers for Reformation Sunday, since the event falls in late October. Prepare a sermon for this event. In addition to the sermon, include an outline which lists significant doctrinal, exegetical, and practical points considered in preparation of this sermon which inform it. Feel free to reference the Book of Concord, Luther's Works, and biblical commentaries in preparation of this.

For Diaconal Candidates

Recently, the church at which you serve has entered into a joint use agreement with the local congregation of the United Church of Canada. The Lutheran community meets at 9:00 am and the United Church congregation has a service at 11:00 am. The Lutheran church is only five years old, and is growing with an influx of young families to the area. About half of these families are new to Lutheranism, some coming from a variety of denominations, some unchurched, and a handful with a Buddhist background. The area in which this church is located has a number of new immigrants from China, Africa and the Caribbean. The new families are anxious to ensure that their children understand what Lutheranism is, and so the Pastor has asked you to work with the Sunday School to design a multigenerational learning event for Reformation Sunday. The goal of this special learning event is to teach the children (about 20) and interested adults (about 15) a little bit about the history and significance of Lutheran Christianity. This event will take place in the hall of the Church during the same time as the UCC worship service, which has an older congregation without a Sunday School. Explain which themes you will highlight, why, and how you will engage the adults and children in a mutual learning opportunity.

Appendix 2 General Ordination Examination 2003 From the Episcopal Church USA

Please review the General Instructions before you begin work on this set of questions and again when you put your answers in final form.

SET 1. Friday, January 3, 2003, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Set 1 addresses principally the canonical area of Liturgy and Church Music.

OPEN BOOK

" The Holy Eucharist, the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day and other major Feasts, and Daily Morning and Evening Prayer, as set forth in this Book, are the regular services appointed for public worship in this Church" (BCP, 13).?

" There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: as, among other things, it may plainly appear by the common prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service ..." (Preface to the First Book of Common Prayer [1549], BCP, 866).

A. In the light of these statements, write an essay of no more than two pages

1. tracing the origins and history of the Daily Offices prior to their incorporation in the Book of Common Prayer of 1549 (cite antecedents in Jewish as well as Christian practice); and

2. summarizing briefly the history of the use of the Daily Offices in the Church of England between the Reformation and the American Revolution, and in this country from the Colonial period to the present. How has our practice changed in light of the focus on the Holy Eucharist in the liturgical renewal of the 20th century as reflected in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer?

B. In an essay of one page answer the following:

What place can Morning and Evening Prayer have in the Episcopal Church today? Address the question with attention to:

the spiritual formation and nurture of members;

outreach to a diverse, largely secular and spiritually hungry society.

SET 2. Friday, January 3, 2003, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Set 2 addresses principally the canonical area of Christian Theology.

LIMITED RESOURCES: Bible, Book of Common Prayer, The Hymnal 1982

" Lord, you give the great commission," Hymn 528, appears as the first hymn in the section "The Church's Mission" in The Hymnal 1982. The text of this hymn expresses a rich theology of the church's

mission. In a three-page essay address the following:

A. The text of this hymn makes use of many biblical phrases and themes. Show how it articulates the church's mission. In your answer use the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as sources.

B. Given the global complexity of this pluralistic world, how does this hymn text inform your own understanding of the church's mission? Include in your answer the church's obligation to people of other faiths in light of the great commission.

SET 3. Saturday, January 4, 2003, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Set 3 addresses principally the canonical area of Church History.

OPEN BOOK

By the end of the reign of the Tudor monarchs, the reformation of the Church of England had eliminated a number of doctrines and practices considered to be "Romish." Other such doctrines and practices, however, were kept, though sometimes in modified form. In subsequent periods--notably, perhaps, the first half of the seventeenth century and the second two-thirds of the nineteenth century--other Catholic elements were reclaimed or reintroduced and have remained as part of the Anglican ethos.

Choose three such Catholic elements still present in the Episcopal Church. At least one of your choices should be from the period of the English Reformation. In an essay of three pages:

A. Give an account of each one of your choices in the context of the time of its retention or reintroduction. What were the reasons given for retaining or reintroducing it? Was there opposition at the time, and if so, what was its nature?

B. Conclude your essay by assessing the significance of each of your choices in the worship, polity, theology, spirituality or practice of the contemporary Episcopal Church.

SET 4. Saturday, January 4, 2003, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Set 4 addresses principally the canonical area of Contemporary Society.

CLOSED BOOK

You may not use any outside references, printed, written or electronic.

General Convention 2000 passed Resolution B049 which, in one of its resolves, states:

"That beginning February, 2001, the lay and ordained leadership of the Episcopal Church, including all ordained persons, professionals, and those elected or appointed to positions of leadership on committees, commissions, agencies and boards, be required to take anti-racism training and receive certification for such training."

Among a range of possibilities, here are answers to three questions basic to anti-racism training:

What is Prejudice?

“preconceived judgment or opinion; an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge; . . . an irrational attitude of hostility directed against an individual, a group, a race, or their supposed characteristics .” (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, 1983)

What is Racism?

“Racism is more than race prejudice. It is more than individual attitudes and actions. Racism is the collective actions of a dominant racial group. Systemic power turns race prejudice into racism. Racial prejudice becomes racism when one group's racial prejudices are enforced by the systems and institutions of a society, giving power and privilege based on skin color to the group in power, and limiting the power and privilege of the racial groups that are not in power.” (Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America, Crossroads Ministry, 1991)

Who is a Racist?

“All white individuals in our society are racists. Even if whites are totally free from all conscious racial prejudices, they remain racists, for they receive benefits distributed by a white society through its institutions. Our institutional and cultural processes are so arranged as to automatically benefit whites, just because they are white. It is essential for whites to recognize that they receive most of these racist benefits automatically, unconsciously, and unintentionally.”(Education and Racism, National Education Association, 1973)

A. In the light of the foregoing definitions, write an essay of two and a half pages describing the role the Episcopal Church has played and continues to play in perpetuating and/or combating institutional racism. As part of your essay, give at least three specific examples from your knowledge of the Episcopal Church and three from your own personal experience.

B. In an essay of one page, state what you believe the institutional church must do to eradicate racism within the church.

SET 5. Monday, January 6, 2003, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Set 5 addresses principally the canonical area of Holy Scripture.

OPEN BOOK

Faithful members of the church often encounter conflict when weighing the authority of tradition against the prophetic conviction that God is creating something new. Similar tensions were present in the life of Israel and of the early church; Holy Scripture bears witness to the story of God's people struggling to distinguish between the authority of tradition and the people's experience of God acting in a new way. This question asks you to analyze two biblical texts in their historical and literary contexts and to bring your exegetical work to bear on the question of authority in the church today. Each part should be no more than two pages.

A. Joshua 24 is a pivotal text in the Hexateuch. How does this passage of scripture contribute to an understanding of tradition and innovation? Be sure to address the following in your response:

the placement of this text in the narrative of Israel's history and in the Hexateuch;

the significance of verses 14-15;

what the people are being asked to give up;

the basis on which the people should respond to Joshua's challenge to accept a new authority.

B. In I Corinthians 11:17-34 Paul alludes to the authority of tradition in order to teach members of the Corinthian church that their factions at the Lord's Supper bring judgment against them. What contribution does this text make to an understanding of tradition and innovation? Please address the following in your response:

the overall problem with which Paul is wrestling in I Corinthians, and its specific manifestation in Chapter 11;

what the people are being asked to give up;

the function of verses 23-26 in Paul's argument;

why the people should change their behavior.

C. Using your exegetical work on Joshua 24 and I Corinthians 11:17-34, write a two-page essay on the authority of tradition in the Christian life.

SET 6. Tuesday, January 7, 2003, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Set 6 addresses principally the canonical area of Christian Ethics and Moral Theology.

OPEN BOOK

“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars ...”
(Matthew 24:6)

Hearing of wars and rumors of wars has been unfortunately frequent since these words were written. Christian moral response to war has taken different forms, expressed most notably, perhaps, in the just war theory and the pacifist tradition. In a total of three pages:

A. Define each of these traditions, supporting your response with references to scripture and to at least two theologians in each case. Your response should include the reasons for the development of the just war theory and its subsequent evolution, as

well as the origins of pacifism and how that tradition developed over time.

B. Assess the applicability of each tradition as a moral response to war for Christians in the 21st century.

C. Write a brief prayer to be used in times of war in Form V of the Prayers of the People (BCP, 389-91). The prayer should reflect your conclusions in Part B above.

Note: (1) Although discussions of war are always imbedded in politics, the question asks that you emphasize moral assessments. (2) Remember to focus on the topic of war and not on violence in general.

SET 7. Tuesday, January 7, 2003, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CLOSED BOOK

You may not use any outside references, printed, written or electronic.

Set 7 addresses principally the canonical area of Theory and Practice of Ministry.

Part A. Allow one hour to respond in a few sentences each to all questions in this part.

1. A parishioner tells you, "I have been asked to offer my name in nomination for the diocesan Standing Committee. What is it? What does it do?" How would you respond?
2. The vestry must decide whether or not to purchase a new pipe organ. The group is divided and someone suggests calling a parish meeting and putting the matter to a vote. How would you respond? What are the reasons for your response?
3. Some older members of the congregation remember the days when the rector dropped by parishioners' homes on a regular basis, and they wonder why the clergy no longer make pastoral calls. How would you respond in terms of the practice of pastoral care?
4. A parishioner asks, "Can I talk to you in confidence?" What are the key issues of confidentiality?
5. An acolyte asks, "Why do you put ashes on my forehead on Ash Wednesday when the gospel says anoint your head and wash your face?" How would you explain the contradiction?
6. In parishes throughout a given diocese there may be differences in the practice of taking communion to people in nursing homes, hospitals, private homes, and prisons. What are the national canonical standards that should be followed?
7. A parishioner who serves on the finance committee comes to you with a complaint. "Why should the committee start its work with Bible study when the day is already a long one before we arrive? Besides, we are here to do finances, not Bible study." What response do you offer?

8. You serve a congregation that has only a men's and boys' choir. A relatively new member asks how that can be justified in light of the call for equality of men and women in the church. How would you respond?

Part B. Allow two hours for this part, approximately one-half hour for each question.

1. Describe the inquirers' class you would offer for people wanting to know more about the Episcopal Church.

2. You have become the rector of a parish where giving is considerably lower than is usually found in a church of that size and economic status. You know there has been no emphasis on stewardship for many years. How would you address stewardship with your congregation? What steps would you take to implement your program?

3. A large number of Latino families attend the congregation in which you serve. Both they and other members want to consider ministry that would include adding a Spanish-speaking member to the staff and offering worship in Spanish. What tensions would you anticipate in the congregation's life? How might they be resolved?

4. You are a member of a clergy study group. You agree to explain how you prepare a sermon. What would you say?