GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

This examination shall assess the candidate's ability to interpret an assigned passage of Scripture by demonstrating attention to the original language of the text, an understanding of the text's historical context, and an ability to relate the text effectively to the contemporary life of the church in the world.

The candidate shall have access to Hebrew and Greek texts, translations, commentaries, and other exegetical tools. Using these, he or she shall provide a faithful interpretation of the passage, show how he or she arrived at this interpretation, and suggest how this passage might be used in the contemporary life of the church. (This description was approved by the 2008 General Assembly.)

1. TECHNOLOGY. Computers must be used to write this examination. Double-space your answers to Sections I and II; use a 12-point font throughout. Section III may be single-spaced. When finished, staple the printed copy to the inside of the exam folder. Handwritten examinations will not be evaluated.

2. IDENTIFICATION NUMBER. Include your identification number (not your name) at the top of each page of the exam.

3. FORM. Examinations that cannot be understood because of poor grammar or syntax will be returned unevaluated.

4. HONESTY. You must do your own work without giving or receiving aid from anyone after the passages are announced. The exam will not be proctored.

ASSIGNMENT OF PASSAGE

Choose from selected passages:

Proverbs 3:1-8 OR John 3:16-21

Your examination is due to your proctor at 9:00 AM, SEPTEMBER 1, 2011. The time of submission will be strictly observed.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

1. Clearly identify each section of the exam. Within Section I label your answers "First Required Response," etc. and indicate "A" or "B" where appropriate. Identify the parts of Section II by number.

2. In formulating your answers, remember that your readers will be looking for an ability to work with the passage in its original language and to communicate the findings of biblical scholarship to those who have not had the opportunity of formal training in the field.

3. You must provide original answers to the exam questions. When using written material from other sources, you must identify the author, title, and page number. You must also identify electronic sources, either software or on-line. You may use parenthetical citations within the text of your answers, endnotes, or footnotes:

4. Include a bibliography of consulted works.
Specific Instructions continued:

5. Readers will be looking for logical organization and consistency within the examination. They will evaluate the exam as a unit and not in parts.

6. In order to maintain your anonymity and to ensure the integrity of the ordination exam process, an examination that contains any of the following will be returned unevaluated:
   - your name
   - the educational institution or congregation where you study or worship
   - the names of professors with whom you have studied, except in citations of their published works in references or your bibliography
   - mention of your having taken the exam previously.

REQUIRED PARTS OF A SATISFACTORY EXAMINATION

The following sections are required parts of a satisfactory examination. If any of these sections is incomplete the entire examination will be evaluated as unsatisfactory. The specified ministry contexts for each passage and specific questions in each of the categories of Section I will be provided when the passages are announced.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context

After studying the passage, answer the questions in the following subject areas:

1. Language of the Text: word meanings, grammar, literary and other features with respect to both its original language and its translation into the language of the modern community
2. Historical Situation: the influence of the historical and cultural context in which the engagement between God and God's people has come
3. Scriptural and Theological Context: the passage's relation to the broad teaching of Scripture and theological tradition of the church

A total of four (4) responses will be required in Section I of the examination, and there will be a 600-word limit per response. You will be required to respond to three specified questions and will be permitted to select between an option of either A or B in the other response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by required response number and letter (as necessary).

Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. Focus Statement: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. Limit your statement to 50 words.
2. Supporting the Interpretation: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation with a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. Limit your essay to 1,200 words.

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline or lesson plan (as required by the specified ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. Limit your sermon outline or lesson plan to 2 pages.
PROVERBS 3:1-8

Ministry Context:
You are officiating at the wedding of a young couple in your congregation. They have requested that you preach on Proverbs 3:1-8. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your sermon outline.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context
After studying Proverbs 3:1-8, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. Limit your answer/or each question to 600 words.

1. Language of the Text

First Required Response
In comparing translations of Proverbs 3:2, you notice a difference in the following four versions:

For they will bestow on you length of days, Years of life and well-being. (Tanakh)

... for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. (New International Version)

For length of days and years of life and peace will they add to thee. (JPS Holy Scriptures, 1917)

... for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare they will give you. (New Revised Standard Version)

Discuss the differences in the translation of Proverbs 3:2. Which translation do you find most appropriate for this passage? Why?

Second Required Response
The Book of Common Worship includes Proverbs 3:3-8 among the passages suggested for use in a service of Christian marriage. The engaged couple have asked you to preach on Proverbs 3:1-8. From your study of the book of Proverbs and chapter 3 in particular, determine the proper boundaries of this passage. Support your decision on the basis of the biblical text.

2. Historical Situation

Third Required Response
Proverbs 1:1 attributes what follows to "Solomon son of David, king of Israel" (New Revised Standard Version). Therefore, one might say that, within the Bible at least, the narratives of Solomon in 1 Kings provide a historical context for the Book of Proverbs, including Proverbs 3:1-8. In 1 Kings 3:1-14, Solomon prays to God for wisdom and receives God's answer to his prayer. How might 1 Kings 3:1-14 inform your understanding and interpretation of Proverbs 3:1-8?
3. **Scriptural and Theological Context**

**Fourth Required Response - CHOOSE ONE: A or B**

**A.** As you read Proverbs 3:3, the words "bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart" (*New Revised Standard Version*) remind you of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. In addition, you discover that similar language also appears in Proverbs 6:21 and 7:3. Compare Deuteronomy 6:4-9 with Proverbs 3:3, 6:20-21, and 7:1-3. How are these verses similar or different? How does this comparison inform your understanding of Proverbs 3:1-8?

**OR**

**B.** Proverbs chapters 1-9 form a large unit within the book of Proverbs, with the theme of "wisdom." You notice that the term "wisdom" also appears often within these chapters, including Proverbs 3:5. How does this repeated use inform your understanding of the term "wisdom" and the interpretation of this passage?

**Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation**

1. **Focus Statement:** Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. Limit your statement to 50 words.

2. **Supporting the Interpretation:** Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. Limit your essay to 200 words.

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

**Section III: Application**

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.
JOHN 3:16-21

Ministry Context:
You are the preacher at a youth conference and are given John 3:16-21 as the text for the closing worship service. This ministry context should inform your responses throughout the examination. In the final section of this examination, you will present your sermon outline.

Section I: Language, Historical Situation, Scriptural and Theological Context
After studying John 3:16-21, answer the questions in the following required areas of response. To assist the readers of your examination, clearly label this portion as Section I and identify each response by number and letter as necessary. Limit your answer/or each question to 600 words.

1. Language of the Text

First Required Response
As you study John 3:16-21, you notice that forms of κόπος or κόπως are translated differently, such as condemn, judgment, and verdict. Discuss both Greek words as they appear in this passage and the nuances of meaning in the Greek that permit the different English renderings of the words.

Second Required Response
As you read through the Gospel of John and study this passage, you notice key concepts that pervade the Gospel. One of them is the verb κρίνω. You also realize that the noun κάτοχος never occurs. What are the implications of John's use of only the verb for your understanding of John 3:16-21?

2. Historical Situation

Third Required Response
There have been various reconstructions posited for the Johannine community; describe one. To what experience of this community might John 3:18 be referring? How do your findings about this experience affect your interpretation of the assigned passage?

3. Scriptural and Theological Context

Fourth Required Response - CHOOSE ONE: A or B


OR

B. What theology of salvation do you discern in John 3:16-21? Support your answer with specific references from within the passage.
Section II: Presenting a Faithful Interpretation

1. Focus Statement: Write a focus statement based on your broad study of the passage (not just material presented in Section I) that articulates a central theme of your faithful interpretation of the passage. Limit your statement to 50 words.

2. Supporting the Interpretation: Write an essay presenting your faithful interpretation of the passage consistent with the central theme in the focus statement. Support your interpretation by a careful and critical analysis of the text. You may draw on any material in areas of the required responses in Section I and other exegetical methods and evidence relevant to the interpretation. Limit your essay to 1,200 words.

Identify the parts of Section II by number.

Section III: Application

Present a sermon outline (as specified by the required ministry context) based on your faithful interpretation of the passage and consistent with your focus statement. Limit your sermon outline to 2 pages.