

Great Questions of Life: Felt Needs to Address in Christian Education
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NOTE: Since the great universal questions of life which give rise to felt needs are essentially philosophical, they have been grouped here in their major philosophical categories. Doing so also has heuristic value. The other traditional philosophical categories have been omitted because they deal more with unmet needs. Theology has been subdivided into subjects of creation and redemption to clarify the orientation of the questions. Anthropological questions have been subsumed under redemption, for I believe the key question of all questions today, if not always, is who God is, what he is doing, and why. The question of who God is and what he is like is the starting point of all reasoning that is ultimately satisfying and provides the understanding that is sought in order to make sense out of life and eternity. Disharmony is used instead of hamatology (doctrine of sin) for clarification and to denote the positive perspective the Gospel of Jesus Christ uniquely makes possible. These classifications also reveal the practicality of philosophy and theology. It must also be recognized that some of these questions are dealt with in more than one category, e.g., the question, "Does my life have significance, meaning; is it important?" is not only an anthropological one (included here in redemption), but a key dimension is also a part of creation theology, specifically the concept of the *imago dei*, the image of God in which he created human beings and the vast implications of his doing so. However, the questions have been placed where they are for the sake of brevity and to indicate the likely focus for most people, non-Christians as well as Christians.

1. Questions Regarding Epistemology

- a. How can I know what is true?
- b. What is truth?
 - 1) Is the Bible true? How can I know?
 - a) Is the Bible God's Word? How can I know?
 - b) Can the Bible help me in my daily life?
 - c) How can I understand the Bible? What are correct principles of interpretation?
 - 2) Are all religions basically the same?
 - 3) Do science and the Bible conflict?
- c. How can I make sense out of life?

2. Questions Regarding Creation

- a. Is there a God?
 - 1) What is God like?
 - 2) Is God personal?
 - 3) How can I know God?
 - 4) How does he work in my life?
 - a) Does he communicate? If so, how can I communicate with him?
 - b) Does he love me?

- 5) How can I know God's will?
 - b. How did everything come to be?
 - c. What relationship do I have with the cosmos? Who am I?
 - d. Are there other beings in the universe besides us?
 - e. How far can we go with genetic engineering?
 - f. Why does God allow suffering and evil? (the theodicy question)
3. Questions Regarding Redemption
- a. Questions Regarding Anthropology/Disharmony
 - 1) Does my life have significance, meaning? Is my life important? How do I find myself? (ego need for esteem, to view oneself as having value and dignity)
 - 2) How can I find fulfillment, purpose? (need for self-actualization, fulfill potential, to give a gift that matters, to sow a seed that continues [leave a legacy])
 - 3) How free can I be?
 - 4) Why are there problems, including suffering and evil?
 - b. Questions Regarding Harmony
 - 1) How can I be physically healthy? (physiological need)
 - 2) How can I be safe, secure? (need for safety)
 - 3) How can I resolve conflict? (need for peace)
 - a) How can I overcome bitterness?
 - b) How can I obtain forgiveness?
 - c) How can I be understood?
 - 4) How can I find relief from guilt? (need for peace)
 - 5) How can I relieve my stress? (need for peace)
 - 6) How can I overcome depression? (need for peace and to belong)
 - 7) How can I overcome my loneliness? (need to belong)
 - 8) How can I be at peace with God?
 - 9) Did Jesus Christ really rise from the dead?
 - 10) What happens when I die?
 - 11) Will I live again, and if so, what will it be like?
 - 12) Is the church necessary?
 - 13) Can I have hope?
 - 14) Can I have joy, harmony? (need to sing a song of joy)
 - 15) How can I experience love, affection, and respect most fully? (need to belong, love and be loved)
 - a) How can my marriage improve?
 - b) How can I get help with my kids?
 - c) What kind of friends should I have?
4. Questions Regarding Morality and Ethics
- a. Is there a right and wrong?
 - b. Is abortion right or wrong, sometimes or always?
 - c. Is homosexuality right or wrong, sometimes or always?
 - d. Is suicide ever right?

- e. Is war ever just?
- f. When is divorce permissible?
- g. Is sex outside of marriage ever right?
- h. Is gaming wrong?
- i. How do I prepare for retirement and the end of life?
- j. What obligations do I have for others?
 - 1) In my family?
 - 2) Where I work?
 - 3) In my community?
 - 4) Nationally and internationally?
- k. What are my rights?

CONCLUDING NOTE: This is not an exhaustive list. However, it covers essential questions human beings have, need, and want to have answered. The Bible has the answers to these and the other great questions of life and eternity. Therefore, these questions should be used to plan educational offerings in the church that will provide help for people to find the answer to these questions.

In the 21st century and beyond, due to a wide range of cultural and individual circumstances that have arisen in addition to historically normal matters, a multifaceted church education program should be designed to develop objectives and the relevant resources that will meet these needs. Evaluation mechanisms should be included to provide assurance to the teachers and students that the desired learning is occurring and being implemented in the daily lives of the participants. Such educational offerings should include the traditional courses that are very helpful, but also new learning formats to assist people whose lifestyle, work, and personal constraints do not permit them to take lengthy courses that assume and require attendance at an extended sequence of logically integrated class sessions. For more on this subject, see [Christian Education Ministry for the 21st Century and Beyond](#) and the other resources on that same page of the Website, [From Acorn to Oak12: Becoming Oaks of Righteousness Maturing in Christ Jesus \(Isaiah 61:3, Ephesians 4:13\)](#).