

A Christian Philosophy of Education

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Abstract

Christian missionaries were responsible for building all of Japan's great mission schools with the belief that "all of wisdom and understanding is found in Jesus Christ," (Colossians 2:3).¹ Fukuoka Jo Gakuin was started in a church in 1885, because the church members wanted their daughters to be taught the principles of Christian education.² The main objective then of mission schools started by the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was to raise up "Christian workers, efficient workers, to make successors" who would carry the Gospel throughout the islands of Japan.³ This was carried out successfully "with the foundation of the Christian Scriptures and the great principles of Christian ethics" and the Bible as "a daily text-book in all departments of school and college work."⁴ The Biblical worldview of Christian education as the basis for all academic training is shared in this paper.

Introduction

Bob Jones Sr., Founder of Bob Jones Seminary once shared, "Dying men have said, 'I am sorry I have been an atheist, an infidel, an agnostic, a skeptic, or a sinner;' but no man ever said with his last breath, 'I am sorry I have lived a Christian life.'" Indeed, to live a Christian life is to live a life of service to others. It is marked by caring and sharing and love towards

others in selfless devotion to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And it is the aim of Fukuoka Jo Gakuin University Junior College to train up women who walk in such love, but how? That is the subject of this paper, namely, Christian Education from the standpoint of a Biblical worldview. In Jennie M. Gheer's generation, there were workers tirelessly working among the nations for Jesus, sharing the love of God with any and all who would listen. A century and a half later, such workers are no longer visible. Even Jesus himself asks the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

In recent years statistics reveal that a staggering number of young people in America have left their Christian faith, either entirely or for a period of at least a year (Barna Group, 2019; Earls, 2019). Kinnaman in his book, *Faith for Exiles*, identifies just 10 percent of Americans aged 18 to 29 to be "resiliently faithful" followers of Christ. This means they "strongly affirm that the Bible is inspired by God and contains truth about the world," (Barna Group, 2019, p. 3). The ten percent or "just under four million," is a staggering number when considering that in 2022 in Japan there are an estimated 1.8 million "Christians" among the 124,214,766 people living here.⁵ The figure includes the large presence of both cults of Mormonism and Jehovah Witness, in addition to Catholics and Protestants, so evangelical Christians are estimated to be around 650,000 (CIA.gov; japanmission.org). Japan also has 7,907 churches compared to America's 380,000, with an average attendance rate of 35 people (japanmission.org). Yet missionaries have decreased by 34 percent in the past two decades making the Japanese the second largest unreached people group in the world (Ibid.).

How do we reverse this downward trend? According to Harold Lindsell, our thinking is the problem. "Errancy produces evil consequences and it will finally lead to apostasy," and such fruit will be the result: a

disappearance of the doctrine of sin, no preaching of the gospel, no sending of missionaries to take the gospel, and no Bible preaching in churches (2008, p. 28). This describes the current “secularized” state of many churches and mission schools in Japan. It is a well-known fact that the nations of the world, including America and Japan worship the gods of education and economic utility, gods that do not benefit the people but lead to emptiness and shallow living.⁶ In so-called “Christian schools” especially, the children of Japan deserve the right to a Christian education with the true God at the center. In the past, Christian training by American missionaries left behind a legacy of godly education in said “mission” schools. Furthermore, since education is a creaturely activity, it must be pursued in submission to God and to the worldview revealed in His Word. It is to this end that this paper seeks to explain the three questions of ontology, epistemology and axiology that education seeks to answer by looking deeply through the lens of the Bible into the three areas of creation, fall and redemption. The Bible enables us to pursue these questions in a creation way. The Bible also helps us to identify and critically evaluate how these questions are often pursued and answered in a fallen way. Lastly, the Bible can instruct teachers on how they can help students by responding redemptively to the challenges the fall has brought into the pursuit of these three foundational questions: What is real? What is true? and What is good?

Creation and the Work of Education

A Christian worldview based on the Bible is foundational to any correct understanding of Creation and the work of education. A Christian uses the term, “worldview,” to defend the faith and to bring clarity and purpose to the work of Christian education by using the Bible as the lens through which to interpret the world and justify knowledge. Jesus prayed before going to the cross, “They do not belong to this world any more

than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth,” (John 17:16-17). Jesus shares the very purpose of his gospel, “And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth,” (Ibid., verse 19). A worldview will inform its adherents and shape their values relating to the following three questions: 1) What is real? 2) What is true? 3) What is good?

First of all, according to the Bible, God is the Ultimate reality (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18). He existed before there ever was a man upon the earth (Revelation 1:17-18; Micah 5:2; John 1:1; 8:58). He says, “Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass” (Isaiah 46:9-10). Therefore, since He is the Ultimate, He is the most important person for the students to know about and the way to do so is through the words of the Bible. Because He reveals himself through the Bible, His Word is the most important book for the students to know, read and to understand. In addition, ontology answers the question, “What does it mean to be human?”

Genesis 1:26-27 tells us that humans are made in God’s image and are to bring Him glory by imitating Him in all they do. Holmes in his book, *The Idea of a Christian College*, says, “We are to image God in all of our creaturely activity, our cultural existence and every phase of our humanity. To image God in the fullness of our humanity is our highest calling,” p. 27. Therefore, living independently of God, is considered proud and wicked (Psalm 10:4). We imitate God with the help of others.

Jesus, for example, was the ultimate image bearer of God (Hebrews 1:3) and it is God’s will for us to become like Jesus (Romans 8:29). The apostle Paul said, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Like Paul, as Christian educators we fulfill God’s purpose by imitating Jesus in front of the students so they too may learn what it means to

please Him. Modeling then is an important tool in education. Methe and Hintze (2003) echo this stating, “An effective and direct method for influencing the behavior of children is demonstrating, or modeling, desired behavior,” p. 617. The results of their study clearly showed that children naturally imitate the ones they love and respect. Furthermore, not only teacher behavior, but teacher preference, opinion and worldview can each have an effect on students in educational settings, which is all the more reason why Christian teachers must be sold out to the Biblical worldview (Loh, 2009). Next, epistemology from the perspective of creation, answers the question of “What is true?” and “How are humans supposed to grow in knowledge?” and “How do I know something is true?”

The Apostle Paul said to new believers, “Now that you are wearing a new life, a life that is new every day. You are growing in your understanding of the one who made you. You are becoming more and more like him” (Colossians 3:10). Human beings bear God's image and as such were created to attain knowledge in a covenant with the Lord (Genesis 1-2). Additionally, mankind was to interpret the world under God and according to God's interpretation of the world, measure all things by His commands (Ibid., 2:16- 17). So God gave the first man a prohibition to stay away from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and if man obeyed he would surely live. The will of God for Adam was to face the serpent's contrary claim by flatly rejecting it. This was the first occurrence in human history of the justification of knowledge, which is a key characteristic in epistemology. When new knowledge is disclosed and man asks the question, “How do I know that the knowledge I possess is true?” It is to be held up to the standard of God's holy Word by which all claims are to be tested. Because God's Word is self-justified, it cannot be false.⁷ Our first parents failed to examine the serpent's claim and reject it when it contradicted what they knew to be the truth. This is the means by which

justification of knowledge is supposed to work and our job as teachers is to teach our students to evaluate all truth claims by the Word of God. Holmes states:

If we confess that God is the all-wise Creator of all, then he has perfect knowledge of everything we ever sought to know or do. The truth about the physical order is known perfectly to him, the truth about humankind and society, and the truth about everything we've ever wondered in our most perplexed moments and God the Creator is ultimately the source of all that is true, p. 17.

Furthermore, he states, "Education should... prepare us to adapt, to think, to be creative," (Ibid., p. 24). As humans, we are in covenant with God and are not free to exercise claims independent of God. Whatever claims line up with the Word of God are accepted, those which lay contrary are not and must be dismissed as not true. Take for example, Ray Comfort in his article, "This One Bible Verse Shuts Evolution Down." He cites Genesis 2:1, "The heavens and the earth were finished. Creation was complete." Then he rejects evolution's claims stating, "The theory of evolution says that nothing is finished. Nothing is complete. The horse is still evolving. So is the dog. To believe this, all you need is a big imagination, a small brain, millions of years, and the word 'perhaps'" (2022, livingwaters.com). Numerous Scriptures reveal our Creator is God, the LORD God. He spoke and created (Psalm 33:6). His hands made both heaven and earth (Isaiah 66:2). Comfort states, "In reality, nothing evolved or is evolving. It was all created by the genius of God, and everything is complete. It is finished, just as the Scriptures say," (livingwaters.com). The last point in this section is axiology, which answers the questions, "What is good?" and "How can we know what is right and what is wrong?"

According to the Apostle Paul, man is made in the image of his Creator and we were made to be righteous and judge righteously (Ephesians 4:24). Holmes states, “a person is a responsible agent, accountable ultimately to God, for life is after all a stewardship of what God has created. This in fact seems to be the purpose in our reflective and valuing capacities, for understanding right and wrong,” p. 32. Adam was given a mandate to name all the animals and to be a guardian of the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 2:15, the Hebrew word for “keep it” is *šamar*, which means “to watch” and it is the same root as the word “watchman” (Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon, Strongs H8104). That means when anything wicked came into the garden, it was up to Adam to expel it. This is a function of righteous judgment and is also important to the work of education. Particularly, evaluation and ethics are important aspects that must be taught to students. One such study found that after three years of assessments, students gained improvement in reasoning skills when making ethical decisions, (Sanchez, Fulcher, Smith, Ames & Hawk, 2017). Another found that teachers’ ability “to accept and encourage the expression of critical opinions of students” was of high importance in relation to students’ moral judgment and development (Weinstock, Assor & Broide, 2009, p. 149). As students are presented with real life scenarios that they judge by comparing them to instances in the Bible, they recognize God’s commands (Mark 12:30-31; Exodus 20:1-17) and understand that the 10 commandments are the basis of all the teachings of ethics and morality in the Bible. Ultimately, students should know that we were created by God; and in covenant with Him, we are not free to judge based on our own sense of right or wrong, because we have been damaged by sin. Instead, all of our judgment must be based on what has been revealed to us through the Bible.

The Fall and the Work of Education

“The work of education, however, is not as it should be. The human race has fallen into sin (Genesis 3). Because of the entrance of sin, the basic questions of education (and of life in general) are pursued in sinful ways,” (Brian Smith, Bob Jones University Seminary, Biblical Worldview course lecture). Sin has damaged how humanity seeks to answer the basic questions of life in independence from the Bible. Because God created us and we are the sheep of his pasture, all humans on this planet are to imitate Him (Psalm 95:6-7). Though we were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), all people have turned away from their Creator and as a result we no longer pattern ourselves after God’s perfect ways (Romans 3:23). Mankind has become secular, wanting nothing to do with the God of the Bible. This running away from God was first seen in Adam and Eve when they sinned in the Garden (Genesis 3:10). And this is the way man has sought to develop culture and civilization, apart from his Creator. The man Cain, when building the first city, “went out from the presence of the Lord” (Ibid., 4:16). The trend is to depart. And the pattern has continued now some 6,000 years later, as mankind strives for independence and the freedom to direct the affairs of his own life. But he is severely limited in the full capacity to do so, because of the effects of sin. Instead of looking to the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), our Creator God and Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3), man follows the dictates of his own stubborn heart (Jeremiah 16:12), which in essence is the doing the desires of his father, Satan (John 8:44).

There are several ways this is done. Perhaps the most visible is the tendency of man to idolize the ungodly. Even in Japan they call their favorite singers, アイドル after the English word “idol.” People tend to be drawn to ones having similar values, and as unregenerate they value the passions and desires of this world exemplifying the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and in the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). Even in the

field of education, the selected role models are people without morals. Certainly, Jesus Christ is not selected by teachers as a role model for the students. This is because secular education believes that religion has no place in the classroom. People who are of the same spirit of this age, who have been generous, successful, or even political actors, along with a stark absence of love for God or a life dedicated to his values are the very ones presented as role models to students. If they were somehow religious, that part would be stripped away to make them appear just as secular as the system of education has become. This happened recently here in Japan as I have been in the Temple University Japan TESOL community for over 18 years where my professors and classmates were huge fans of Zoltán Dörnyei, who recently passed away. I was in disbelief when the CELEA (Christian English Language Educators Association) dedicated their fall publication to this “godly man.”⁸ Yet, after watching his memorial service online, I understood that he was a true godly man and disciple of Christ. Hodge’s article of 2009 emphasizes the lack of godly influence in society by highlighting how media and entertainment fills the homes of Americans an average of 8 hours per day, even more so now, as everyone has their own smart phone in their pocket. He cautions how viewers are being taught “about life, how they should understand different populations, what constitutes a problem, and how problems should be solved,” p. 12. Reading the article makes one realize the battle for the hearts and minds of societies today and all the more the importance of teaching a Biblical worldview in the classroom.

The fall has also affected all of creation. Though we are made in God’s image, the image within us has been marred. Instead of coming to the knowledge of truth through submission to God’s truth, the Bible, fallen man rejects God’s standard of holy living and any knowledge pertaining to the life of God. However, we have not been given the liberty to judge

based on our own ideas and perceptions, rather we are to justify claims by comparing them to the Word of God, which is Truth (John 17:17). Not doing so identifies one as being in Satan's camp, as it was Satan who tempted Eve to believe his story as the true one, and reject God's text as unjustifiable (Genesis 3:1). In modern society and for the past hundreds of years the claim is that knowledge comes from human reason based upon science. Thus man tends to justify his knowledge by appeals to human reason and experience, though he is a finite creature. As long as many people are on the same page, it makes a claim appear to be true (Matthew 7:13). As for the Bible, man will accept parts of the book only if the demands of fallen human reason and fallen human experience are satisfied. This of course means a total rejection of the Bible's authority. In the Postmodern age man views knowledge as something subjective and there is no standard of justifying claims unless you are a Facebook "fact checker." Communities have their own views of reason and experience where truth is seen as a social construction needful for the community to function. As long as it supports the desires of the community, "the truth" is embraced. But as in the case of traditional marriage, as soon as the community's desires shift, the "old truth" is rejected for the embrace of the "new truth." This is also true of education, which has been the work of justifying cultural beliefs within a community rather than the pursuit of eternal verities. Yet all of this is designed to produce autonomous human thought in students, also called a "constructivist classroom [which] gives students ownership of the knowledge they acquire" (Whyte, 2018).

Finally, the Fall's effect on axiology can be seen in mankind's lack of basing judgments on the righteous decrees of God. The Bible defines him as perfect in justice (Deuteronomy 32:4) and rendering just judgments (Psalm 99:4). Because of the Fall, man has come to make his judgments based on something other than God and His Word, leading people everywhere to

approve of wrong things with no fear of God before their eyes (Romans 3:10-18). The standard for right and wrong is found only in the Bible. Multitudes who forsake this Book are led astray into many wrong paths. Recently the community standards have decided what is valuable and what is promoted. The most highly prized values are freedom and equality. For example, standing up for the LGBTQ community makes one a hero, but anyone who challenges them or who does not bow down to them by making their wedding cake, is vilified and targeted for hate crimes.⁹ These ungodly ideas are promoted throughout the current educational curriculum not only in the States, but also in Japan. This godless spirit has affected the work of education, especially the collaborative learning promoted by John Dewey who promoted “self” as god (Dewey, 2018).

Dewey brought his worldview with him to the classroom and taught that the Bible was not to be sought for judging right or wrong. Instead the community should decide by consensus what is right for everyone and all should follow suit. An example of this type of thinking in the worldwide community took place during the COVID-19 pandemic when vaccines were advocated by governments. Dewey encouraged educators to democratize the classroom by teaching students how to solve problems through effective means of communication. Today secular educators highly value Dewey’s collaborative learning as a tool for training young people in community problem solving. However, if it is done for Dewey’s reasons, it reinforces the children to act autonomously in making judgments which is a rejection of God’s authority and leads to a dangerous end of calling good evil and evil good, which is opposite the outcome of a creational educational practice (Isaiah 5:20).

Creation and the Work of Redemption

As Christian educators we are to teach in such a way that shapes

the worldview of our students away from the defective worldview of our day towards a Biblical worldview. Therefore, we understand from the Bible that originally all that God created was good and man was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26; 31); but he was soon marred by sin in the Garden of Eden and the consequences are felt in all of creation today (Ibid., 3:7). Yet through the redeeming work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ man can be restored to fulfill the creation mandate and become all that God intended for his glory. “The Bible takes its time in telling the history of Redemption. It begins in Genesis 3 [verse 15] and doesn’t end until Revelation 22,” (Ward, p. 138). This section also has three parts. The first is ontology, how do we answer what is real in a redemptive way? God affirms that man still bears his image and still has his Creation mandate (Genesis 9:1-7). And he has made provision for man to return to the innocence of the Garden, before sin ruined it (Ibid., 3:15). For by the transgression of one, death reigned, yet there comes the gift of righteousness by the one, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17). Through Adam’s sin many died, but by Jesus’ gift, grace abounds to many (Ibid., 5:15). Through one man’s disobedience all were made sinners, yet through obedience of the one, many are made righteous (Ibid., 5:19). In Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22). Jesus Christ is the second Adam, who got it right and gave his blood to redeem us to God (Hebrews 9:22; 1 Timothy 2:6). Not only does redemption recover all that was lost between man and God in Adam’s fall, it also frees the creation from the curse. Paul writes that all creation waits in eager expectation for this (Romans 8:19). In the same way, education can experience healing because God’s redemption in Christ can be applied to it if we as Christians will trust God and obey Him.

Secondly, the question, “What is true?” is answered by epistemology. Though a secular worldview disparages the truth in lieu of reason and science, all that is true is found in His Word. In education then, we teach

our students to search out and find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in His Word (Colossians 2:3). We help them to successfully use this knowledge to serve others in their immediate contexts and communities. Through Biblical integration, activities and assessments help to shape students into a Biblical mindset through much interaction with Scripture. Though the present age is evil, a portion of this age is under the believer's charge to live redemptively in that portion (1 Corinthians 9:13; Ephesians 5:15-16). We move back toward creational structures. For example, in marriage, the husband and wife begin to fulfill the role God called them too. In education, we are maturing young people for life to be partakers of his kingdom. This kingdom is within our hearts and we share the love of Jesus wherever we go (Luke 17:21). His kingdom comes in stages, first we receive power to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8) and through many trials and tribulations we inherit the promises (Acts 14:22). When his future kingdom arrives in the millennial reign, the lion will lay down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6).

Lastly we answer the question, "What is good?" We evaluate what is good and beautiful from his Word (Psalm 119). The goal of education is to teach our students to do the same in order that they may live well in this present world and do all they do for the glory of God our Father. Holmes states, "All of life with its culture and its learning must be penetrated with Christian perspectives, if Jesus Christ is to be Lord of all. All of a young person's human potential must be as fully developed as possible, if the stewardship of his life is to honor God. The Christian has a mandate in education," p. 29.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to introduce the Christian philosophy of work

in education by answering the three philosophical questions, What is real? What is true? and What is good?, from the perspective of a Christian worldview. The Bible is the only foundation of human knowledge. Period. Belle J. Allen, missionary to Fukuoka Jo Gakuin, wrote:

The question may arise, "Who will teach this people of Jesus?" We all must do it. Knowing science is knowing something that will help us know the Creator of science, knowing Music, is knowing how to express thought in sound, knowing art is knowing how to embody thought by pencils, brush, or chisel. These are all thoughts of God's, and he who does not see in the wonderful love the beautiful in the Japanese soul as something to be taken hold and cultivated for the Master's use sees not a far off. Every head of a Department is supposed to be a special specialist in the Bible and has her Bible Class, her Church Class, so that no one is without opportunity for doing good and reaching souls directly. A regular prayer meeting is held every Saturday evening, led by one of the foreign teachers; every evening at 9 o'clock two special prayer meetings are held by different classes of students. During the year there have been 18 accessions to the Church from the school... Education without the Gospel is dangerous in Christian lands, much more so in the mission field; but education with the gospel is a mighty power. As our girls go out with cultured intellect and hearts all aglow with love for Christ, they carry a combination of forces which must tell upon every community in which they live or work. May God bless all our schools.¹⁰

Nowadays people claim many truths, but the wise servant will live between the pages of Genesis to Revelation and refuse to pay heed to a text that does not align itself with the Scripture. Paul warned Timothy that

in the last days perilous times would come; men would be so consumed with themselves and their own ideas that they would not endure sound teaching (2 Timothy 3:1-13; 4:3). Those days are here and not only are they in the church, they are in Christian schools in Japan too, where the next generation is being swept up in the twisted doctrines of demons, where things like transgenderism, LGBTQ, feminism and universalism are all affirmed from the daily chapel pulpit. God spoke through Isaiah saying, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them,” (8:20). And God’s Word will never fail (Luke 1:37), it has the power to transform and to save (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Gospel will never lose its power (Romans 1:16).

Notes

- ¹ Presently mission schools in Japan without the assistance of missionaries have lost their ability to preach the gospel and rescue souls. Even the term, *mission* has become a “catch phrase,” as the true meaning of *mission* has been long forgotten by this generation of both believer and unbeliever alike. The most recent monthly publication of the *Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Bulletin*, No. 84, sadly confirms the fact that the *mission of mission schools* has lost its true identity and is now said to be guided by SDG’s. However, *mission* comes from the “Great commission” spoken by Jesus Christ, the first missionary sent from heaven to earth to suffer on behalf of sinners, that any who receive Him may be reconciled to God. And He said, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:18-20). The mission of missionaries was to obey Jesus by taking this message of the Gospel to the nations of the world and *mission schools* were established for this exact purpose to act as training grounds for raising up women evangelists who could be Bible teachers to their own people. For details of the *mission* history of Fukuoka Jo Gakuin, please refer to the book by Millikan (2023) *Memoirs of Jennie M. Gheer*.
- ² In *75 Years History of Fukuoka Jo Gakuin 1885 ~ 1960*, p.2; and *95 Years History of Fukuoka Jo Gakuin 1885-1980*, p. 10.
- ³ July, 1891. “The Minutes of the Eighth Session of The Woman’s Conference of the

Methodist Episcopal Church in Japan” in *M. E. Woman’s Conference in Japan 1886-1899*, p. 61.

- ⁴ The *Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church* writes regarding the moral and religious instruction of students in mission schools, “The foundation, of course, for such teaching must be our Christian Scriptures and the great principles of Christian ethics....The Bible is a daily text-book in all departments of school and college work,” p. 159. “Eighty-Third Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1901” (New York).
- ⁵ In Japan “after 150 years of fervid Westernization, the percentage of Christians remains at something like 1 percent. It’s staggeringly low, considering the huge amount of money and personnel poured in by Western churches. ‘Few countries on the face of the earth are more resistant to and more difficult for Christian endeavors. It even exceeds Islamic resistance,’ said Lawrence Spalink in 2007...who noted there were more church members in Iraq than in Japan,” in Dougill (2012) *In Search of Japan’s Hidden Christians*, p. 223 (Tokyo: Tuttle).
- ⁶ In Neil Postman’s book, *The End of Education*, he defines “god” in the following way, “A god in the sense I am using the word is the name of a great narrative, one that has sufficient credibility, complexity, and symbolic power to enable one to organize one’s life around it,” p. 6. As for the god of economic utility, this is the god most educators serve by default. Postman posits, “It’s a passionless god, cold and severe. But it makes a promise, and not a trivial one. Addressing the young, it offers a covenant of sorts with them: If you will pay attention in school, and do your homework, and score well on tests, and behave yourself, you will be rewarded with a well-paying job when you are done. Its driving idea is that the purpose of schooling is to prepare children for competent entry into the economic life of a community,” (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 26. “When you ask this god, ‘What is a human being?’, the answer is ‘an economic creature, a being that finds worth and value in its ability to secure material objects.’ This ignores what God said long ago and what every human recognizes on some level, ‘man shall not live by bread alone.’ Life is more than making stuff and buying stuff. Life is more than having our physical needs and wants met. If that is all there was to life, then rich people would be the happiest people in the world, but they’re not. They’re some of the most miserable people in the world. Some of the poorest are among the happiest. Happiness and fulfillment in life is not found in things, it’s found in God and obedience to Him. That’s the point in what God said in Deuteronomy, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ Another way to say it is that the ‘economic god’ does not fulfill the purpose for which we were created. If that is all that we have, we are left with shallowness and emptiness and many of us will find suicide to be a more satisfying choice than continuing to exist. This too is a failed

- god,” *Biblical Worldview in Education*, December 2022, Bob Jones Seminary, Class Notes.
- ⁷ “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus prayed like this, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17). John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1).
- ⁸ Baurain, Bradley (2022) “Editor’s Column: Wisdom and Sorrow,” *International Journal of Christianity and English Language Teaching*. Vol. 9, Article 3. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/ijc-elt/vol9/iss1/3>
- ⁹ Liptak, Adam. (2018, June 4). In Narrow Decision, Supreme Court Sides With Baker Who Turned Away Gay Couple. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/04/us/politics/supreme-court-sides-with-baker-who-turned-away-gay-couple.html> and John Brown. (2023, February 7). Catholic high school student arrested after suspension for opposing transgender ideology. <https://www.foxnews.com/world/catholic-high-school-allegedly-suspends-student-for-opposing-transgender-ideology>
- ¹⁰ (July, 1891) Minutes of the Eighth Session of The Woman’s Conference of the MEC in Japan in *M. E. Woman’s Conference in Japan 1886-1895*, p. 61.
- ¹¹ [In Appendix] Anna French (July, 1891) “Report of Committee on Course of Bible Study for Day Schools,” Minutes of the Eighth Session of The Woman’s Conference of the MEC in Japan in *M. E. Woman’s Conference in Japan 1886-1895*, pp. 24-25.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p.19
- ¹³ (*Tendo Soron*) Reverend Amos Binney and Reverend Daniel Steele (1875) *Theological Compend Improved*, Translated into Japanese by Julius Soper of Aoyama Gakuin and Kenichiro Kobayashi (Tokyo: Noshokan, 1882). <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/824892/1/1>
- ¹⁴ The Methodist Catechism, questions 1-36 can be viewed at the following link. <https://globalmethodist.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Catechism-V2.pdf> Miss Elizabeth Russell, co-missionary with Jennie M. Gheer and founder of Kwassui Jo Gakko, writes in her diary, “We had a Bible study every Sunday afternoon. Our girls and servants were required to come. We had catechism every evening, In *My Life in My Own Words*, pp. 28, in *The Elucidation of Jean Margaret Gheer’s Work and the Formation of School Identity in the Establishment of Fukuoka Jo Gakuin*, p. 144 (Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Reference Room, 2021).

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Appendix

The following reports of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society reveal the Bible curriculum of mission Schools in Japan including Fukuoka Jo Gakko.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON COURSE OF BIBLE STUDY FOR DAY SCHOOLS.¹¹

First Year.

Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Commandments.
Leading Events in the Life of Christ.
(Simply told and illustrated by pictures)

Second Year.

First thirty-six questions from Catechism.
Thirty-eight easy verses from the Bible.
Beatitudes.
Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Commandments.

Third Year.

Catechism through Chapter V.
Ninety-sixth Psalm.
Selected Scriptures.
Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Commandments.

Fourth Year.

Catechism completed.
I Corinthians, Chapter XIII.
Story of Bible.

Fifth Year.

Review of Catechism.
Matthew, Chapter V.
Selections from Proverbs.
Old Testament Characters.

Sixth Year.

Review of Catechism.
Matthew, Chapter VI.
Old Testament Characters continued.

Seventh Year.

Matthew, Chapter VII.
Parable of Prodigal Son.
Bible Selections.

Eighth Year.

Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Commandments critically studied.
Outline of plan of salvation.
Review of Catechism.
I. John, Chapter I.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR BIBLE WOMEN.¹²

FIRST YEAR. –Genesis, Exodus, and other selected lessons from the Pentateuch, the Gospels, Life of Christ, Normal Methods, English.

SECOND YEAR.–Historical books of the Old Testament through II. Samuel, Lessons from the Psalms, Acts, I. and II. Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, Tendo Soron¹³, Larned's Church History, Normal Methods, English.

THIRD YEAR.–I. and II. Kings, I. and II. Chronicles, Lessons from the Prophets, the remainder of the Epistles except Romans, Raymond's Bible History, Soshiki Shingaku, Normal Methods, English.

FOURTH YEAR.– Comparative study of the Gospels, Romans, Revelation, Messianic Prophecies, Binney's Theological Compend, Martin's Evidences, Church Rules, Mental Philosophy, Normal Methods, English.

SPECIAL COURSE.

FIRST YEAR.–Same as regular course, exclusive of English.

SECOND YEAR.–Acts, Lessons in the Epistles, Lessons in Psalms and Messianic Prophecies, Normal Methods.

METHODIST MISSION SCHOOLS' CATECHISM¹⁴

1. **Do you believe in God?** Yes. I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. (Genesis 1:1-31; 17:1; Joshua 2:11; Psalm 8:3-8; Isaiah 42:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:6; Hebrews 1:5; Revelation 4:11)
2. **Who is God?** God is the one true, holy and living God, the Eternal Spirit, the Holy Trinity. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Leviticus 19:2; Jeremiah 10:10; Matthew 28:19; John 17:3; Hebrews 9:14)
3. **What is the mystery of the Trinity?** God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable, eternally one in essence and power. (Luke 3:21-22; John 15:26; Acts 2:33; Romans 8:9-11; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 4:4-6; Ephesians 2:18; Titus 3:4-6; Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 1:2)
4. **How is God Almighty?** God is infinite in power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and love. (Job 12:13; 42:2; Psalm 89:14; 107:1; Isaiah 55:9; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26; Luke 1:37, 18:7; Romans 5:8, 11:33-36, 16:27; 1 John 4:7-16)
5. **What is God's relation to heaven and earth?** God is Creator, Sovereign, and Preserver of all things. (Genesis 1:1-31; Deuteronomy 4:39; 1 Kings 8:23; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 8:1; Proverbs 16:9; Isaiah 44:24; Acts 17:24; Romans 8:28; Revelation 4:11)
6. **How does God rule heaven and earth?** God rules with gracious regard for the well-being and salvation of all, to the glory of his name. (Exodus 34:6;

- Psalm 104:31, 116:5; Joel 2:13; Micah 7:18-20; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:4-7; 2 Pet. 3:9)
7. **Do you believe in Jesus Christ?** Yes. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through Him all things were made. (Mark 9:7; Matthew 3:17; John 3:16; Acts 2:36; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Philippians 2:11; Jude 1:4)
 8. **Is the Son God?** Yes. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. (Luke 10:22; John 1:1, 14, 18; 8:12; 10:30; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15, 19; 2:9; Hebrews 1:1-5)
 9. **What is the Son's role in creation?** Through Him all things were made. (John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2)
 10. **Why did the Son of God become human?** For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. (John 3:17; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:30-31; Romans 3:21-26; 10:9; Titus 3:6-7; Hebrews 7:25)
 11. **How did the Son of God become human?** He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human. (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:30-35; John 1:1-2, 14; Romans 1:3-4; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:6-8; 1 John 1:1-3, 4:2)
 12. **Who is Jesus Christ?** The Son of God and our Lord Jesus Christ are one person in whom the divine and human natures are perfectly and inseparably united. (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:20-23; John 1:14, 14:9-11; Romans 1:3-4; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-3).
 13. **How does God reconcile us in Christ?** God reconciles us to himself through the death of Christ upon the cross. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. (Matthews 27:26, 50, 59-60; Mark 15:15, 37, 45-46; Luke 23:23-25, 46, 53; John 19:16, 30, 33-34, 38-42; Romans 3:21-26; 5:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)
 14. **Did Jesus Christ rise bodily from the dead?** Yes! On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. (Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-11, 36-43; John 20:1-17, 27; Acts 2:22-36; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 1 Peter 1:3)
 15. **Is Jesus Christ Lord of heaven and earth?** Yes. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. (Luke

- 1:33, 24:51; John 5:22-29; Acts 1:9-11; 10:42; Romans 8:34; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 2:9-11; 2 Peter 1:11; Revelation 11:15)
16. **Is Jesus Christ our great high priest?** Yes. Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. (Romans 8:34; Hebrew 4:14-16; 7:11-28; 1 John 2:1-2)
 17. **Who is under judgment?** All stand under the righteous judgment of Jesus Christ both now and in the last day. (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-46; John 5:22-29; Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
 18. **Are we made righteous by works?** No. We are never made righteous inwardly nor accounted righteous before God through our works or merit. (Luke 5:32; Romans 3:21-30; 4:2-5; 11:6; Galatians 2:15-16; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:14; 3:4-7; 1 John 1:9)
 19. **How can we escape the wrath of God?** God justifies, or accounts righteous, penitent sinners who confess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 3:36; Romans 3:21-30; 4:6-8; 5:6-11; Ephesians 1:7-14; 2:3-7; 5:5-10; Colossians 3:5-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10)
 20. **Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?** Yes. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. (Isaiah 11:2; 61:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; John 6:63; Romans 8:11; Galatians 6:8)
 21. **Is the Holy Spirit God?** Yes. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified. (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9-11; 3:16; Galatians 4:6) He has spoken through the prophets. (2 Samuel 23:2; Isaiah 61:1-3; Zechariah 7:12; Matthew 1:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
 22. **How does the Holy Spirit lead us to repentance?** He convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. (Micah 3:8; John 16:7-11)
 23. **Is salvation possible without the Spirit?** No. The Spirit leads us through faithful response to the gospel into the fellowship of the Church. (John 3:3-6; Romans 8:9-17; Ephesians 2:17-22; Titus 3:4-7)
 24. **How does the Spirit work in the Church?** He comforts, sustains and empowers the faithful and guides us into all truth. (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15; Romans 8:2-6, 12-17, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Galatians 5:16-25)
 25. **Where is the truth about salvation to be found?** We believe the Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, reveals the Word of God so far as it is necessary for our salvation. (Psalm 119:105, 130; Matthew 4:1-4; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
 26. **How must we receive Scripture?** The Holy Bible is to be received through

- the Holy Spirit as the true rule and guide for faith and practice. (Proverbs 30:5-6; James 1:21-25; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Jude 3)
27. **Do you believe in the Church?** Yes. We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. (John 10:16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-6; 5:25-27; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Revelation 5:9-10)
 28. **Who constitutes the Church?** The Christian Church is the community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. (Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 1:2-3; Ephesians 2:11-22; Revelation 7:9-10)
 29. **What is the Church?** It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by those divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. (Jeremiah 1:5; Acts 2:41-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-27)
 30. **Why does the Church exist?** Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the Church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world. (1 Corinthians 12:27-28; 14:12; Galatians 6:1-2, 6-10; Ephesians 4:11-16; Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:23-25)
 31. **Is it right and good to worship our creator and redeemer?** It is our duty and privilege to bow in adoration, humility, and dedication in the presence of God. (Psalm 92:1-2; 95:1-7; 103:1-5; 107:1; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 4:11; 5:9-14)
 32. **Why is worship essential to the life of the Church?** The assembling of the people of God for worship is necessary to Christian fellowship and spiritual growth. (Acts 2:41-47, 4:31; Romans 1:11-12; Hebrews 10:23-25)
 33. **Do you believe that there is but one baptism?** Yes. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. (Eph. 4:4-6)
 34. **What is Baptism?** Baptism signifies entrance into the household of faith and is a symbol of repentance and inner cleansing from sin, a representation of the new birth in Christ Jesus, and a mark of Christian discipleship. (Acts 2:37-39; Romans 6:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:27-28; Colossians 2:11-14; Hebrews 10:19-22)
 35. **What is our greatest hope?** We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. (John 6:39-40; 11:25-26; Romans 6:5-8; 8:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 50-55; Philippians 3:10-12, 20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
 36. **What are the two ultimate outcomes facing humanity?** The righteous rise to eternal life and the wicked to eternal condemnation. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; 25:31-46; John 5:25-29; Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-8; 22:1-5)

