

# Discussion Notes on Christian Values in Politics



*The Discussion Notes support the Discussion Guide. The Discussion Notes may also be used for a longer, detailed lesson or sermon.*

## Worldview Differences Between Two Composers

Everyone has a worldview. Billy Graham’s worldview differed dramatically from Adolph Hitler’s worldview.

**Worldview.** Definition: A particular philosophy of life, set of values, or conception of the world.<sup>1</sup>

If you believe there is a God, that He revealed Himself through the Ten Commandments, the person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Scriptures—this shapes your worldview in one direction. Proverbs 3:6 so directs: **“In all your ways acknowledge God.”**

On the contrary, if you believe that man is god and can make up his own rules to pursue his greatest pleasure, that shapes your worldview another way. In Judges 17:6, we read, **“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”**

Both worldviews have demonstrably different results in the way people behave. Romans 1:28 says, **“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.”** When a society no longer sees fit to acknowledge God, He gives it over to depravity, which is antithetical to His design with tragic consequences.

James Madison, the fourth president of the United States, said, “Before any man can be considered a member of civil society, he must be considered one who is subject to the Governor of the universe.” In other words, as a Christian, to the best of your ability with the help of the Holy Spirit, your values should reflect God’s values—truthful, faithful, merciful, and life-affirming.

Proverbs 14:34 puts it succinctly: **“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”**

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For Christ-followers, our righteousness is “imputed” or assigned to us. It has nothing to do with what we have done, but rather what Christ has done for us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, **“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”** Flowing out of our God-given ability to discern right from wrong based on the “plumb line” of Scripture, we make right decisions.

Look at how Proverbs 11:2 captures the two sides of the “worldview coin.” It says, **“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”**

And, when Jesus preached in Matthew 7:24-27 about the values that people build their lives on, He explained that wisdom—the God-given ability to discern right from wrong—led to life versus foolishness which led to death.

**“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”**

## The Importance of a Christian Worldview

In his signature book, *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer connected the dots between one’s worldview and how it played out in culture through music and art.

While the music of George Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) reflected the order and sense of purpose based on a Biblical worldview, the music of John Cage (1912-1992) reflected chaos and “a purposeless play” based on Indian philosophy and Zen Buddhism.<sup>2</sup>

**George Handel’s Biblical Worldview.** Best known for the libretto, *Messiah*, Handel set to work composing the music to the piece written by Charles Jennens

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in which the words are taken exclusively from Scripture, contrasting the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah with their fulfillment in the Person of Jesus Christ found in the Gospels. After Handel began on August 22, 1741 in his little house on Brook Street in London, he completed 260 pages of manuscript in an exhausting three weeks of incredible productivity during which he never stepped foot outside.<sup>3</sup>

According to *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers* by Patrick Kavanaugh, “A servant of Handel swings the door open to Handel’s room. The startled composer, tears streaming down his face, turns to his servant and cries out, ‘I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself.’ Handel had just finished writing a movement, which would take its place in history as the Hallelujah Chorus.”

This work has had an uncanny spiritual impact on the lives of its listeners. One writer said *Messiah’s* music and message “has probably done more to convince thousands of mankind that there is a God about us than all the theological works ever written.”<sup>4</sup>

*Messiah* premiered on April 13, 1742, as a charitable benefit, raising 400 pounds and freeing 142 men from debtor’s prison. In fact, one of his biographers declared that “*Messiah* has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan more than any other single musical production in this or any country.”<sup>5</sup>

Lord Kinnoul once congratulated Handel on his fine performance, to which he replied, “My lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them. I wish to make them *better*.” Plus, Haydn, Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven all considered Handel was in a class by himself. Haydn said, “[Handel] is the master of us all.” And Beethoven said, “Handel is the greatest composer that ever lived.”<sup>6</sup>

What was Handel’s response to all this adulation? In 1759, while receiving a rapturous ovation after his last performance he *cried* out: “Not from me . . . but from Heaven . . . comes all.” Not surprisingly, the words Handel chose for his grave at Westminster Abbey reflected his worldview: “I know that my Redeemer liveth.”<sup>7</sup>

**John Cage’s Unbiblical Worldview.** Schaeffer notes that the secular philosophers, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Kant Hegel, and Søren Kierkegaard,

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who rejected a Biblical worldview, presented a fragmented concept of reality. It was the artists, however, who first understood that the end of this view was the absurdity of all things.<sup>8</sup>

John Cage (1912-1992) offers the *clearest* example of what is involved in the shift in music. Cage believed the universe is a universe of chance, and to express this he produced music by chance. For example, at times he literally flipped coins to decide what the music should be. At other times, he erected a machine that led an orchestra by chance motions so that the orchestra would not know what was coming next. Thus, there was no order. Or, he placed two conductors leading the same orchestra, separated from each other by a partition, so that what resulted was utter confusion.<sup>9</sup> This random music, with no meaning and no resolution, resulted in a lot of noise.

Cage was student of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) who totally rejected the past tradition in music and invented the “12-tone row.” This was “modern” in that there was perpetual variation with no resolution, a sharp contrast to Handel and Bach who, on a Biblical basis, had much diversity, but always resolution. Their music had resolution because, as Christian composers, they believed that there will be resolution both for each individual life and for history.<sup>10</sup>

Not surprisingly, Cage’s rejection of a Biblical ethic not only revealed itself in his chaotic music, but in his chaotic lifestyle. After successive homosexual relationships as a single man, Cage entered an “open marriage” with Xenia Kashevaroff, an American painter and musician, in 1935 for 10 years.<sup>11</sup>

Ultimately, Cage and his wife had a rendezvous with Merce Cunningham, a male choreographer, whom he had met in Seattle after taking a job as piano accompanist for some dance classes. After Cage stated that he was more attracted to Cunningham than to Xenia, the two men moved together to New York in 1942, without Xenia, and there collaborated on their first joint endeavor, entitled *Credo in Us*.<sup>12</sup> That title, “Believe in Us”, introduced the world to Cage and Cunningham’s newly formed personal and professional partnership which celebrated what the Bible describes as unnatural relations.

**The Values of Moral Absolutes.** Christian philosopher Francis Schaeffer rejected the foolishness of John Cage’s worldview, saying, “Man is not the product of chance. Man is made in the image of God, and on this basis, it is

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understandable why music is music to man. Based on revelation—the Bible and the revelation of God through Christ—there is not ultimate silence in the universe.”<sup>13</sup>

In other words, our values as people and as a nation need to be anchored in Christ—as articulated in Psalm 18:2 which says “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” Then, our lives will have meaning, purpose, and hope.

In his booklet *The Bible, Voters, and the 2008 Election*, David Barton reminds us, “From the expansive system of 613 laws in the Old Testament, God selected His ‘Top Ten’ commands, thus creating a prioritization of what was *most* significant to Him. In Exodus 34:27-28, God specifically described those Ten as the “tenor” – that is, the core substance of His 613 laws.”<sup>14</sup>

Protecting innocent life made God’s Top Ten at #6: **“You shall not murder.”** (Exodus 20:13). The sanctity of marriage made #7: **“You shall not commit adultery”** (Exodus 20:14). Babies in the womb matter. Marriage between one man and one woman matters. These are the values that matter to God.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the life issue is so important to God, that He ordained human government and delegated authority to hold man accountable for committing murder. The whole foundation of government stands on this central precept: God views all life as sacred (Genesis 9:6).

To the credit of our Founding Fathers, they enshrined the Biblical notion of protecting life as the first of three specifically enumerated inalienable rights set forth in the Declaration of Independence in the American governing philosophy.<sup>16</sup> The second paragraph begins with these words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

In fact, over the course of the following 100 years, one judicial ruling after another endorsed Judeo-Christian values. For example, in 1811, the New York Supreme Court declared, “The morality of the country is deeply engrafted upon

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Christianity . . . We are people whose manners . . . and whose morals have been elevated and inspired . . . by means of the Christian religion.”<sup>17</sup>

Then, in 1844, the U.S. Supreme Court asked this profound question: “Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly as from the New Testament?” And, in 1861, the New York Supreme Court, asserted, “The Christian religion is . . . the basis of our morals and the strength of our government.”<sup>18</sup>

**The Values of Moral Relativism.** By contrast, humanism—the worldview that humans are at the center of the universe instead of God—has turned the Twenty-third Psalm on its head! Instead of “The Lord is my shepherd,” humanists insist that “I am the shepherd.” Man has become his own god. It gets worse. The slippery slope leads to “Sheep are my shepherd,” followed by “Everything is my shepherd.” But you know you’ve finally hit rock bottom when your worldview concludes that “Nothing is my shepherd.”<sup>19</sup>

Schaeffer explains, “As the more Christian-dominated consensus weakened, the majority of people adopted two impoverished values: personal peace and affluence.”<sup>20</sup>

“Personal peace means just to be let alone, not to be troubled by the troubles of other people, whether across the world or across the city—to live one’s life with minimal possibilities of being personally disturbed—regardless of what the result will be in the lifetimes of my children and grandchildren.”<sup>21</sup>

“And affluence means an overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity—a life made up of things, a success judged by an ever-higher level of material abundance.”<sup>22</sup>

Just like the rich young ruler who left Jesus without the assurance of eternal life, so too many people in the culture today, while they might be initially curious about the Kingdom of God, ultimately walk away because it’s too inconvenient to count the cost, to take up one’s cross daily (Luke 9:23).

Frederick Moore Vinson (1890-1953), former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, described America’s embrace of moral relativism, saying, “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no

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absolutes.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, we had fallen from the high view that “Lex Rex”—Law is King—to the gutter of “Rex Lex”—King is Law.<sup>24</sup>

## **Arbitrary Judgments are *Dangerous!***

Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion, was arbitrary both medically and legally.<sup>25</sup> As a result, our civil government cut short the lives of over 60 million pre-born baby boys and baby girls created in God’s image.

The Bible says, **“For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be”** (Psalm 139:13-16).

Jeremiah 1:5 underscores this point: **“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”**

Of John the Baptist, we learn while still in his mother’s womb, he was conscious of being in the presence of the woman who would bear the Son of God. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth received the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).

Obergefell v. Hodges, the 2015 Supreme Court decision which legalized faux homosexual “marriage”, was also arbitrary. As a result, our civil government has affirmed behavior that God calls sin.

The Bible says, **“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination”** (Leviticus 18:22).

The Obergefell decision was especially egregious before God, as it attacked the very nature of mankind’s unique relationship to God through the act of Christian marriage.

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Genesis 2:24 says, **“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”**

Paul took the clear command that a man should marry a woman and applied it spiritually to reveal the relationship of Christ to the church. In Ephesians 5:32, he wrote, **“This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”** In other words, the marriage covenant is a picture of Christ and the church. The *reason* Satan is going after marriage is because He understands both the importance of God’s command and he wants to *desecrate* the teaching that Christ is married to the church!

Additionally, throughout human history, marriage was reserved for a man and a woman until the U.S. Supreme Court *arbitrarily* decided to redefine it. Presidents appoint Federal judges. Voters elect Presidents who appoint, and Senators who confirm the Supreme Court justices. Without question, elections have *consequences* as we see in both *Roe v. Wade* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*.

Dr. James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family and the host of Family Talk, wrote a prophetic letter to his listeners in which he reacted to the Supreme Court’s plunging “this dagger into the heart of the American family.”<sup>26</sup>

In his August 2015 letter entitled “Life in Post-Christian America”, Dr. Dobson wrote, “This Court decision is not about same-sex marriage, except only tangentially. Many gay and lesbian groups have admitted that marriage has never been their primary goal. Instead, it is about *everything* else. What’s at stake is the entire culture war. To begin, it is an expression of hostility toward people who take their Christianity seriously. It is about weakening the Church of Jesus Christ and limiting what pastors and ministers can say and do publicly.

“It is about undermining the religious liberties of Christians that are guaranteed by the Constitution. It is about attacking Christian schools, Christian non-profit organizations such as Family Talk, and Christian businesses, hospitals, charities, and seminaries. It is about Christian colleges and universities, and about whom their leaders choose as professors and what their students will be taught. It’s about government funding and accreditation. It is all at risk. You’ll see.”<sup>27</sup>



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## Our Values Matter

It's simple. Our values matter! When we honor God and His absolute values, we protect the innocent, and we affirm the Biblical design for marriage.

When we reject God, and embrace man's morally relativistic values, the innocent are endangered and the Biblical design for marriage is abandoned.

In America, in our representative republic, the point is: God-honoring citizens should elect God-honoring public officials who pass God-honoring public policies and select God-honoring judges.<sup>28</sup>

As Founding Father Noah Webster reminded citizens in his day, **“The Scriptures teach . . . that rulers should be men who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness”** (Exodus 18:21).<sup>29</sup>

## Discussion Questions:

1. How would you define the term “worldview”?
2. What are two differences in values or worldview between Billy Graham and Adolph Hitler?
3. How does righteousness – or right decisions – exalt a nation like Proverbs 14:34 asserts?
4. How did George Handel's musical composition of the libretto *Messiah* honor God?
5. How did Handel's reaction to the praise of his composer colleagues reveal his Christian convictions?
6. How did George Cage's embrace of morally relativistic values evidence itself in his music?
7. How did Cage's rejection of God's moral absolutes lead to chaos in his personal life?
8. What does David Barton say about how we as Christians can decipher what God has prioritized as His most important values?
9. What are 2 *non-negotiable* values which every Bible-believing Christian should look for in candidates for elective office?

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10. How do humanists turn Psalm 23—“The Lord is my Shepherd—on its head?
11. What are the two impoverished values that Francis Schaeffer cites that people turn to when they reject God’s standards?
12. Explain why it is tragic that we have gone from “Law is King” to “King is Law.”
13. What are the 2 Supreme Court cases which reveal morally and legally arbitrary decisions?
14. Cite a Scripture which underscores God’s value of the sanctity of life.
15. Cite a Scripture which underscores God’s value of the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman.
16. What is the *key* to ensure that we get God-honoring policies and God-honoring judges?

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> “Lexico powered by Oxford”, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/worldview>.

<sup>2</sup> John Cage, *Wikipedia*, accessed March 8, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Cage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Cage)

<sup>3</sup> Paul James-Griffiths, “Christian Heritage Edinburgh”, *Spiritual Lives of the Great Composers*, August 20, 2016, accessed March 8, 2020, <https://www.christianheritageedinburgh.org.uk/2016/08/20/spiritual-lives-of-the-great-composers/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Schaeffer, Francis, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois: 2005, p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> Schaeffer, *How Now Shall We Then Live?*, p. 194-195.

<sup>10</sup> Schaeffer, *How Now Shall We Then Live?*, p. 193.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Katz, *John Cage’s Queer Silence or How To Avoid Making Matters Worse*, <http://www.queerculturalcenter.org/Pages/KatzPages/KatzWorse.html>, accessed March 8, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, p. 204.

<sup>14</sup> David Barton, *The Bible, Voters & the 2008 Election*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1<sup>st</sup> printing, [www.Wallbuilders.com](http://www.wallbuilders.com), Aledo, Texas: 2008, p.8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, p. 226.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 205.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 205.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

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<sup>26</sup> Dr. James Dobson, “Life in Post-Christian America”, August 2015, accessed on March 16, 2020,  
<http://www.drjamesdobson.org/news/commentaries/archives/2015-newsletters/august-newsletter-2015>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> David Barton, *The Bible, Voters & the 2008 Election*, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 5.