

# Discussion Guide on Christian Values in Politics



*This Discussion Guide is best used for small groups. It is supported by the more detailed Discussion Notes.*

## Worldview Differences between Two Composers

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

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

If you believe there is a God, He has revealed Himself through the Ten Commandments, the person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Scriptures, that will shape your worldview *one* way. Proverbs 3:6 would be your guide: "In all your ways acknowledge God."

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

Both worldviews have demonstrably different results in the way people behave.

### 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 in which the words are taken exclusively from Scripture, contrasting the Old

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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>

This work has had an uncanny spiritual impact on the lives of its listeners. One writer said that *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>

The words Handel chose for his grave at Westminster Abbey reflected his worldview: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." <sup>6</sup>

**John Cage's Unbiblical Worldview.** John Cage (1912-1992) 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.<sup>7</sup>

Cage was a 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>8</sup>

Not surprisingly, Cage's rejection of a Biblical ethic not only revealed itself in his chaotic music, but in his chaotic lifestyle.

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**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.”<sup>9</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.

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>10</sup>

In fact, over the course of the following 100 years, one judicial ruling after another endorsed Judeo-Christian. 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>11</sup>

**The Values of Moral Relativism.** 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 absolutes.”<sup>12</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>13</sup>

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

Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion, was arbitrary both medically and legally.<sup>14</sup> As a result, our civil government cut short

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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.”** (Psalm 139:13-14)

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)

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.

## Our Values Matter

It's simple. Our values matter! When we honor God and His absolute values, the innocent are protected and the Biblical design for marriage is affirmed.

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 key is if God-honoring citizens elect God-honoring public officials who pass God-honoring public policies and select God-honoring judges.<sup>15</sup>

## Discussion Questions:

1. How would you define the term “worldview”?
2. How did George Handel's musical composition of the libretto Messiah honor God?

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3. How did John Cage's embrace of morally relativistic values evidence itself in his music?
4. What is the *key* to ensure that we get God-honoring policies and God-honoring judges?

## Endnotes

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- <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 Edinburg", *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> Schaeffer, *How Now Shall We Then Live?*, p. 194-195.
- <sup>8</sup> Schaeffer, *How Now Shall We Then Live?*, p. 193.
- <sup>9</sup> Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, p. 204.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 13.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 16.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 217
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 217.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 222.
- <sup>15</sup> David Barton, *The Bible, Voters & the 2008 Election*, p. 4.