



The Christian origins of our Kiwi Cultural views on **HUMAN RIGHTS & FREEDOMS** What made our society so caring and free?

OPENING QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever felt your 'rights were infringed upon' because someone took something that was yours, or treated you in an unfair manner? What happened, and how did you respond?
- Have you ever seen someone else treated unfairly – maybe like a child, and wanted to stand up for their rights?
- How do you think God feels when he sees rights to justice, life or care being denied to people he loves and created?

BIBLICAL BASIS QUESTIONS:

- [HUMAN RIGHTS] On what basis does a Christian and Christian society believe human beings have value, and therefore have rights that should be protected? GENESIS 1:26-27.
- [ATTITUDE TOWARD GOVERNMENT] Why is it important and beneficial for us to respect and obey the Governments of our lands? ROMANS 13:1-5 gives a few reasons.
- [ATTITUDE TOWARD ABUSIVE GOVERNMENT] Many Governments overrule the rights of their people, abusing and using them for their own benefit.
 - Where, according to the Bible, does true freedom come from, and how does that work? JOHN 8:36.
 - The entirety of the New Testament was written while living under the violent and abusive leadership of the Roman Emperor. How should we respond to and speak about bad Government? 1 PETER 2:13-17.
- [ATTITUDE TO THE LOSS OF PERSONAL FREEDOM] What does the Bible say to those suffering under the bondage of slavery (which the Christian community, as a small group in a big Empire, had no power over at that point in time)? EPHESIANS 6:5-9.
- [RIGHTS VS RESPONSIBILITIES?] Does the Bible seem to suggest that standing up for our own rights is important – or is there something more important? 2 THESSALONIANS 3:7-9.
 - What do you think the connection is between 'rights' and 'responsibilities'? Can we have one without the other?
 - Might our responsibilities be even more important than our rights? If so, why? 2 CORINTHIANS 5:10; MATTHEW 25:34-36
 - For what reasons does the Bible suggest we might forego our own rights in these verses? 1 CORINTHIANS 9:11-12; 8:13; 9:19-22; MATTHEW 23:11-12.
 - What example did Jesus Christ give to us when people treated him unfairly? What various 'rights' did He forgo? PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8; 1 PETER 2:21-23.

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REVISION OF OUR HISTORY AS SUMMARISED IN, *HOPE FOR ALL – NOW MADE FREE*

- While the basis for our cultural idea about human rights is the idea that human life has have real value (GENESIS 1:27 – referred to on page 3), the Ten Commandments bring a lot of detail to this. How do the Ten Commandments connect with the idea that people have God-given rights - which even Governments need to respect? (See page 4)
- While Jesus avoided comment on anything political because the punishment for criticising Rome was death, he did reply to a question by saying to *'give to Caesar what is Caesars, and to God what is God's.'* How does this statement relate to the 'limitation of Government powers'? (See page 5)
 - How does that idea of 'limited powers for Government' relate to our belief in God-given freedoms, and why is it important?
- When, and through whom, were the 10 Commandments taken to Ireland?
- When, and through whom, were the 10 Commandments taken to England?
 - What difference might this have made to how people were treated – and also to the powers and behaviour of Government?
- What was the name of a Charter the King signed, that recognized the right of justice for the people? What was the significance of this?
- These Christian ideas about human rights and freedoms became ours as a nation because of our connection to them through England. In what ways did Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi, which was purposed to hinder or stop colonisation, reflect these same Christian values? (Obviously this Treaty was later betrayed.)
- Summarise the story of the first debate at the first sitting of the NZ Parliament. What does this tell us about how those present, which included many non-Christians, understood the relationship of the Christian faith with its values to who we were going to be together as a nation?
- Summarise the story of Te Mani'era and Kereopa. What things stand out in this story as amazing?
- Summary: How does belief in God connect to the idea that all people have rights – which we are all obligated to uphold? (What logically happens to the idea of human rights if we reject the idea of God? GENESIS 1:27)

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- The freedoms of speech and religion are said to be a case of 'use it or lose it'.
 - Why does using freedoms protect them?
 - In what ways can you use freedoms you have – to protect them?
- The integrity of a democracy depends upon its Government self-limiting it's power to that which is needed for it to protect the rights and freedoms of the people.
 - Why is this idea true and important?
 - If a Government does begin to control too many areas, infringing on the rights of individuals to thought, speech, conscience or religion, what can we do?
 - If we lose freedoms – like 70 nations did to communism and fascism last Century as one example, does that mean we lose hope? How should we respond?
- In conclusion, what do you learn or take away from this discussion today?