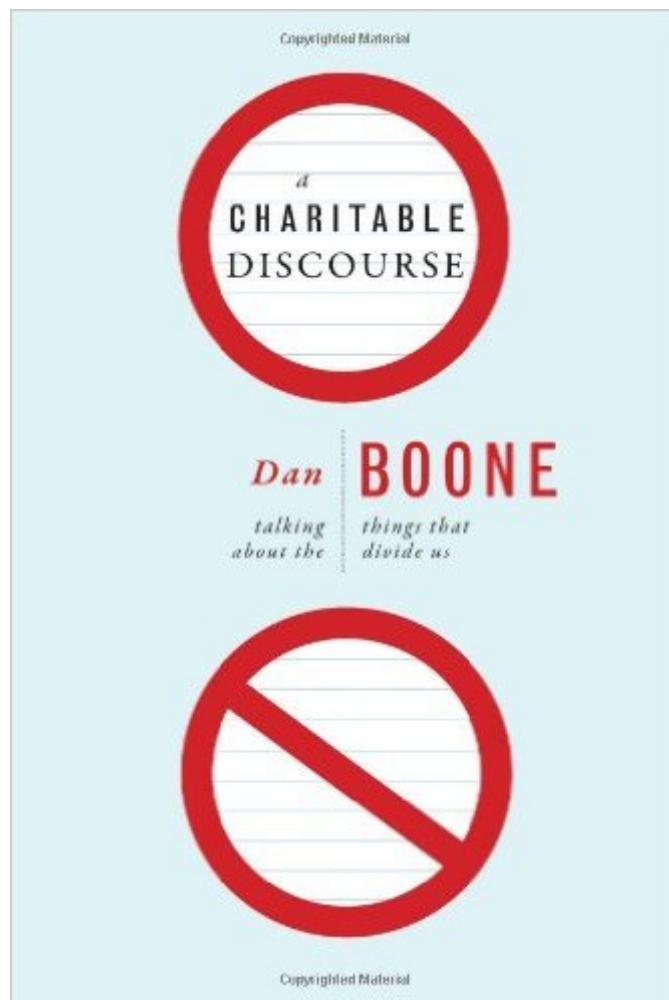


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# A Charitable Discourse: Talking About The Things That Divide Us



## **Synopsis**

Homosexuality, social drinking, and politics . . . Why is it so hard to talk about these topics and others like them in the church? What keeps us from having open and honest conversations about complex and controversial issues? The silence in the pews about these matters can be deafening. Often members say little, fearing disagreement and rebuttal, others strongly assert half-truths and biases. Nothing gets truly discussed, and many, especially the youth, become discouraged and leave. A Charitable Discourse insightfully explores why this happens, looking closely at the ways people avoid and prevent authentic dialog, from labeling and grandstanding to religious abuse. Seven controversial issues are discussed with understanding, sincerity, and compassion.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Occasionally I read something and say to myself, "Wow! I wish I had written that." That's the way I felt as I read this book. Frankly, I think I have the courage to write such a book but I doubt that I have the grasp of the several issues reflected in Dr. Boone's deft and lucid writing. This is a book for the times - well conceived, need focused, courageous, inspired, and prophetic. Few stones are left unturned. The appeal for calm conversation regarding these controversial and potentially divisive matters is very Christian and Wesleyan. I hope it receives a Church-wide reading. Jim L. Bond  
General Superintendent Emeritus Church of the Nazarene

"No fool, the author, as he intimates in his introduction on how 'fools rush in where angels fear to

tread'. Rather, Dr. Boone has written a courageous volume that the evangelical church needs to hear with open minds and hearts. I plan to purchase a volume for every Trustee member and faculty member of our institution. It is a timely reminder of who we are supposed to be as His followers."

This is a very important book. Charitable discourse is almost certainly one of the greatest immediate needs in the Church in America today. In this book, Dan Boone invites us to enter into thoughtful conversations about tough questions for which there are no easy answers. Even if you don't agree with every position he puts on the table, hopefully you will accept his invitation to enter into civil conversation around these important issues. It seems to me that Dr. Boone's challenge to re-discover charitable Christian discourse is essential to the future of the holiness witness and mission of the Church. I highly recommend this book to all who are interested in exchanging the bitter rhetoric of the current environment for mutual trust and understanding in a spirit of Christian unity.

When I started reading this book I couldn't put it down! I was thinking "wow, somebody thinks like me!" Dan Boone does a great job of making you think about these tough issues and how to step back and look at both sides - This is a lost art in the Christian church today. We assign labels to people and issues that divide us without really thinking through the issues. Jesus was not afraid of controversy and was not afraid to engage people who did not agree with him in a compassionate way - the church needs to do the same thing! Jesus saved his harshest criticisms and most angry interactions for the dogmatic, rule-driven Pharisees of his day that had no compassion for anything but their rules and the law. This book does not teach us to give up our principles but it encourages us to have civil debate with fellow believers and non-believers alike who disagree with us on some very sensitive issues. I think all churches should go through Dan Boone's book and learn how to TALK through things and LISTEN to others points of view instead of arguing with and isolating those that sometimes see things differently. If you think about it, there are truly only a few very black and white issues when it comes to the Gospel that are non-disputable (who Jesus was, salvation, etc.) but there are MANY areas where we as believers are going to disagree - this disagreement should not split us into "camps" and cause strife among our fellow believers. The truth is many of these "disputable" matters are not going to matter in the end so we need to learn how to agree to disagree on these issues and perhaps even learn another point of view along the way and develop compassion for others who are often hurting, broken people just like all of us! Always remember: "every person you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about, so be kind always!" (Get this

book and read it - the DVD-based small group study is also very good!!)

Have you wanted to converse with others in authentic and transparent ways about complex and controversial issues? Are you ready to be invited to the table of civil discourse? If so, this is the book for which you've been waiting. In "A Charitable Discourse," Dr. Dan Boone brings the heart of a pastor, the mind of a theologian, the experience of a university president, and the spirit of a Wesleyan to help us chart a course toward charitable discourse. Beginning with the practices that prevent honest, charitable discourse, Dr. Boone then surveys seven controversial issues and offers ways that Christians might talk together. Finally, Boone reminds us that the doctrine of perfect love and one of John Wesley's means of grace - holy conversation - provides us with framework of Spirit-guided listening to one another and discerning the ways of God. I commend this book to all Wesleyans willing to learn from one another. Let us gather at the table. And let us season our words with grace.

Throughout this book I kept saying, "Amen, Amen. That is what I believe!" I want to hand chapters to others and say, "Here, this is what I have been trying to say." Growing up in a Christian pastor's home, this is the message that I learned, too. How has it happened that we have lost the way and did not seem to learn that holiness is purity of heart in love; not haughty uprightness. Thank you to the author for writing this book and opening these conversations.

Dr Boone presents us an great look into the issues that face the world and Church in our current context. He shines a light on issues that are easily the most debated in the Church and tries to bring a breath of fresh air to the conversation. It is much needed. He doesn't shy away from giving his opinion, but his point is not that you'd agree with him, but that you'd engage in the conversation. I highly recommend this book.

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