

# VIC AND COLE'S RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR CHRISTIAN DISCOURSE

Vic McCracken and Cole Bennett

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## **RULE ONE: Remember that your opponent (challenger? rival? peer?) is a human made in God's image.**

Humankind is created in God's own image. For this reason, every human person possesses an inherent dignity and a value that is not dependent on any particular belief or personal quality. Human dignity is not something that we earn, nor is it something that can be lost. A person who holds an opposite view from yours is not any less of a person; he or she has a thought process, a moral compass, a heart, and a soul. This person deserves love and respect, not caricaturing or dismissing.

## **RULE TWO: Understand and articulate your opponent's position to his/her satisfaction.**

Christian disagreement is grounded in charity. Regard for the other entails that I try to understand the other from her perspective, not just in large swaths, but in the nuanced details as well. It also entails a humility that leaves me open to the possibility that I may be wrong. Finally, it entails a persistent desire to extend grace to the other person as we yearn together for a reconciliation of minds.

## **RULE THREE: Assume your opponent operates from virtuous motives.**

Christians do not always agree about what it means to faithfully realize God's mission. There are many reasons for our disagreements. Sometimes sin impedes our judgment, but sometimes our disagreements reflect reasonable disagreements among Christians who are committed to common values but are reconciling conflicts among these values in different ways. We should strive for an unconditional positive regard for people who hold different views from us, even as we try to persuade them to believe or act differently.

## **RULE FOUR: Model kingdom life when disagreeing with other Christians.**

Regardless of what we disagree about, Christians are united in our conviction that God's kingdom has broken into this world in Jesus Christ. Even amid disagreement, God calls us to embody this alternative reality for the sake of the world. In a world where disagreement frequently devolves into name-calling, rhetorical assault, and physical violence, Christians should serve as living examples of an alternative way of life grounded in compassion and regard for all. Christian disagreement provides us with opportunity to bear witness to the truth of Gospel.



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