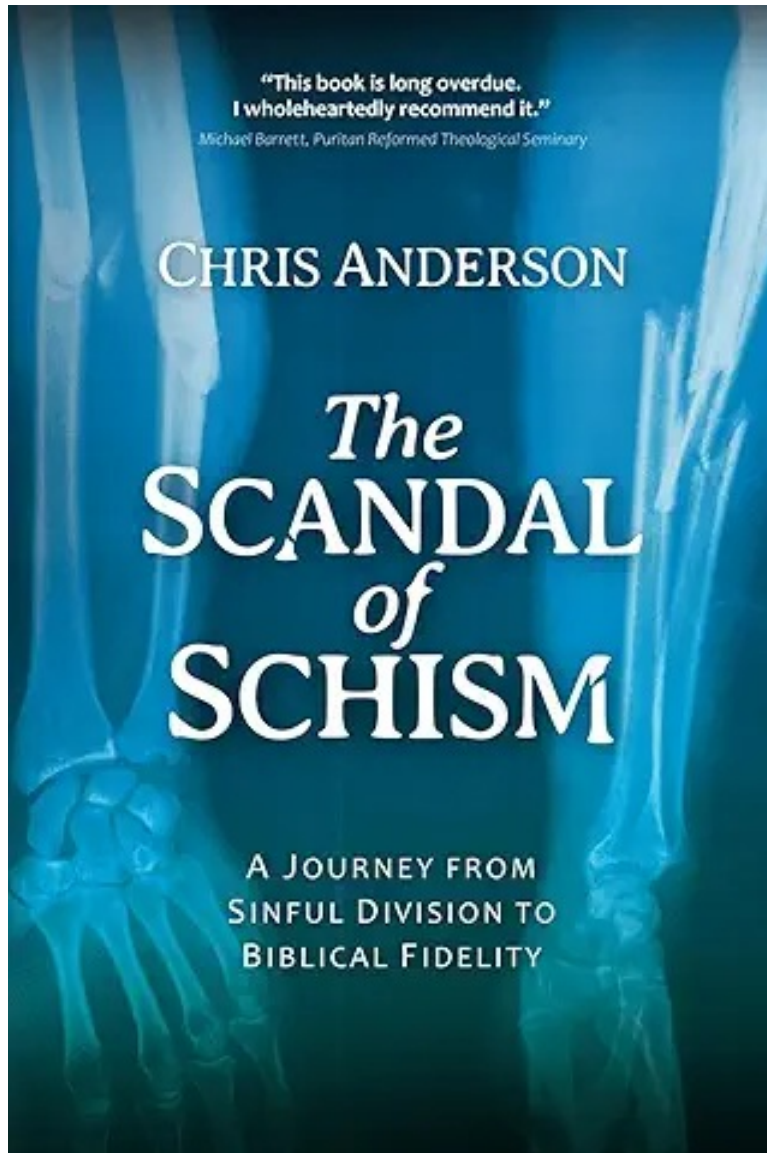


The Scandal of Schism
A Journey From Sinful Division to Biblical Fidelity
by Chris Anderson



Reviewed by George Zeller

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Chris Anderson published this book in 2024. Who is Chris Anderson? According to the Church Works website, the following biographical information is given about Chris Anderson:

Chris Anderson served as a pastor for twenty-five years—first as a church planter in Ohio and then as lead pastor in the Atlanta, Georgia, area. He served as a missions catalyst for Biblical Ministries Worldwide for three years and now works full-time as president of Church Works Media, which he co-founded in 2006. Chris is the author of multiple books, including *The God Who Satisfies* and *Theology That Sticks*. He is a contributing author and editor for Church Works Media’s popular Gospel Meditations devotional series; a frequent speaker in churches, colleges, and conferences; and a well-known hymn-writer of songs like “His Robes for Mine” and “I Run to Christ.” Chris and his wife Lori have four lovely daughters, two sons-in-law, and a beautiful granddaughter.

According to this same website: “Our resources come well-recommended by John MacArthur, Al Mohler, Phil Johnson, Milton Vincent, Voddie Baucham, Keith Getty, and many others.” While he was a pastor Chris Anderson said it was a blessing to host men such as John MacArthur, Al Mohler, Voddie Baucham and Steve Green (p. 62).¹

Our congregation has greatly appreciated some of Anderson’s hymns. We have included several of these in a supplemental hymnbook: “His Robes for Mine,” “Holy, Mighty, Worthy,” “I Am With You,” “My Jesus Fair,” and “You Are Always Good.” The lyrics are excellent and Bible-based. The only exception would be the second stanza of “His Robes for Mine” which sets forth the unbiblical doctrine of vicarious law-keeping.²

In light of the helpful contributions Anderson has made with his hymn compositions, etc., I was saddened to learn that he had published this book which is an attack against fundamentalists. He accuses them of causing schisms and sinful divisions in the churches. In this review I will cite page numbers of Anderson’s book so that his statements can be easily found and checked.

¹Anderson also speaks favorably of John MacArthur, Al Mohler and John Piper on page 47 of his book.

²Vicarious Law-Keeping is a view held by many Reformed men, and it looks for Christ’s righteousness on the wrong side of the cross. Notice that Romans 4:25 does **not** say, “Who was delivered for our offences, and who kept the law of Moses for our justification.” George Zeller, William Newell, John Darby, Charles Stanley of Rotherham, Myron Houghton and others have discussed this erroneous teaching in detail. See <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/reformed/vicarlaw.htm>

One positive aspect of the book is that Anderson recognizes the many compromises of Billy Graham as carried out in his cooperative and ecumenical evangelism, partnering with liberals who denied the fundamentals of the Christian faith (p. 28). Many Christians, especially in past years when Billy Graham was still alive, seemed to be blind to his many compromises.³ It is important that Christians be discerning when it comes to evangelistic ministries and support those who practice the kind of Biblical evangelism which is not compromised by cooperation with the enemies of the cross.

Anderson believes we should fight and earnestly contend for the fundamentals of the faith and separate from those who do not hold to these truths. As long as people hold to “essential doctrines,” especially doctrines which relate to the gospel, we should seek to have unity with them and be part of “one big gospel tent” (p. 13, 183, 177; Chapter 15). He believes that anything less than this results in scandalous schisms and sinful divisions, and that we should stop fighting with each other and present a united front for Christ.

Anderson’s new attack against fundamentalists reminds me of a very similar attack by Jack Van Impe as set forth in his book, *Heart Disease in Christ’s Body* (written 1984). In this book Van Impe expressed his concern over the divisiveness within the church and he makes a strong plea for broader fellowship among brethren based on love and doctrinal toleration. The book was a virulent attack against what he labeled as “neo-fundamentalists” or “extreme separatists.” I reviewed that book over 40 years ago.

See <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/separate/heartdis.pdf>

How does Chris Anderson describe these divisive and schismatic fundamentalists? Here is what he says about them: They are guilty of unbiblical extremes (p. 10). They lack balance when it comes to secondary issues and refuse to practice deference (p. 10). They live in “hyper-separatist isolation” (p. 14). They nitpick at believers over tertiary issues (p. 15). They harm fellow believers with “friendly fire” instead of attacking the real enemy (p. 15). They fight each other over theological minutiae (p. 16), petty squabbles (p. 19) and foolish controversies (pages 104, 140). They have become isolationists (p. 29) and they take shots at each other (p. 104). They have become “mean...through continual fault-finding and infighting” (p. 30). Fundamentalists are guilty of “unbiblical asceticism” (pages 30, 199). They label secular music as wicked (p. 30). They follow “legalistic rules” (p. 31) and “man-made addendums to Scripture” (p. 113). They fought the wrong people over the wrong issues (p. 32). Fundamentalists became “peripheralists” and fought over hairstyles (p. 32). They have a hyper-critical spirit (p. 36). They engage in intramural skirmishes but their neglect of souls is scandalous (p. 55). They are guilty of “excessive separation” (p. 58). Fundamentalists practice “guilt by association” also called “secondary separation” (p. 85). They engage in unbiblical judgmentalism (p. 135) and fleshly schism (p. 185).

Because he views fundamentalists in this way, he does not like to label himself as a fundamentalist. He says that he is bit skittish about the word fundamentalist (p. 45). However, in any group there are going to be those who hold to some extreme positions or who act in ways that bring discredit to the group. For example, there might be some bad apples among the thousands of dedicated police officers, but this is no reason to defund the police. There are some unprofessional or even unethical doctors who bring shame upon their medical practice, but this is no reason to condemn all doctors in a general way. Anderson uses a broad brush in criticizing fundamentalists, and yet I am so thankful for every believer who stands upon the fundamentals of the faith in these times of departure and compromise. How I thank God for everyone who is “valiant for

³See our study, “Cooperative Evangelism—Is Billy Graham Right or Wrong?”, <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/separate/billgram.pdf>

the truth” in these days (compare Jer. 9:3)!

What issues is Anderson concerned about? Here are the issues he mentions in the book:

Contemporary Christian music (pages 10, 23, 30, 32, **Chapter 11**, pages 125-135)
Churches hosting a Broadway musical (p. 36)
Christians admiring rock bands (p. 36)
Having drum sets on the platform (p. 47, 52)
Praise bands (p. 182)
Rock music (p. 126)
Degrees of Calvinism (p. 14)
The timing of the rapture (p. 14)
Opinions about a well-known author (p. 14) [probably referring to men such as MacArthur]
Worship attire (pages 23, 53, 55, 180)
Worship styles (pages 55, 58)
Clothing styles (pages 29, 185)
How women should dress (p. 31)
Wearing jeans in church (p. 55)
Short hair on men (p. 30, but see 1 Cor. 11:14)
Movies and attending movie theaters (pages 19, 30, 53)
Interracial marriage (p. 30)
Second-degree separation (p. 28)
The use of alcohol (pages 30, 52, 141)
Card playing (p. 30)
Dancing (p. 30)
Television (p. 30)
Entertainment choices (p. 58)
Mixed bathing (p. 30)
Bible Versions (pages 32, 55)
Christians with tatoos (p. 185)
Etc.

If Anderson is serious about this list, then he would apparently have no problem with a morning worship service featuring a man with long hair playing rock and roll to “Christian lyrics” accompanied by drums while wearing jeans and exposing the tattoos on his bare arms, and sipping on a beer in between songs (as long as he doesn’t get drunk). Actually, Anderson may not personally think this is a good idea, but he doesn’t feel believers should fight over such issues.

I shared this list with a Pastor friend who made this comment:

This reminds me of a book Chuck Swindoll wrote back in 1990 called, *The Grace Awakening*. He attacked believers with high standards as “legalists” and pushed his “free grace” ideas way beyond their boundaries. I just dug up that book and found some notations I made in it, similar to your list. Swindoll added a few that Anderson didn’t mention such as beer, discos, and two piece bathing suits, also known as bikinis. At the end of my “note to self” I jotted down the question, “Where will his principles lead? To greater Christlikeness

or greater lasciviousness?” There’s nothing new under the sun.

Let me comment briefly on some of these “divisive issues” mentioned by Anderson:

Contemporary music has done much damage to the testimony of Jesus Christ, as the Church has accepted the world’s music and musical styles. Anderson says that he likes the fundamentalists of the past. If you go back to the past, even as late as the 1950's, every church, whether liberal or fundamental, had music which was worshipful and reverent and appropriate for the worship of God. Even in the liberal Congregational Church which I attended as a child and as a teen, the music was beautiful and appropriate and the choir was fantastic, even though, sadly, the gospel was never preached. Society in general seemed to know what kind of music was appropriate in the churches. But as time passed things began to change. Contemporary Christian music is famous for its shallow and repetitive praise songs. Anderson believes songs should have solid Biblical content, but by adopting and allowing contemporary styles, he seems to be sending a mixed message. “Let’s use music with a beat and lots of emotion, but we’ll put really good lyrics to it.” Anderson has no problem with the music of the Gettys, Sovereign Grace, CityAlight or Steve Green (pages 62,132, 125)

Concerning rock music, I lived in the 50's and 60's when rock music had its beginnings. There is no question that *it was the music of sex, drugs and rebellion*. Everyone knew this, including the rock musicians. How tragic that now the churches have allowed this music to come into their sanctuaries. We are told that if you simply attach good Christian lyrics to the song, then it is fine to use. They are ignorant that *the music itself carries a message*. This is wonderfully illustrated by a Christian film which came out many years ago called “So Many Voices.”

Here is a link to that film: <https://www.mbcmessages.org/video/SMV.mp4>

Also see our article on *Is Music Neutral*: <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/lochurch/musicneu.pdf>

In Anderson’s book I could not find anything negative said about rock music.

Concerning degrees of Calvinism, these doctrinal matters *are* important. Anderson wants believers to be united around the gospel, but how can we join together with men who deny that “God so loved the world,” teaching instead that He loved and died only for the “world of the elect.”⁴ Limited atonement is a denial of the true gospel which is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. In this passage Paul was reminding the Corinthians about the gospel which he preached to them when they were unsaved. What was his message? He preached, “Christ died for our sins” (verse 3). So Paul, in preaching to an audience of unsaved Corinthians, told them that “Christ died for our sins” both your sins and mine. And there were certainly those in the audience who were not elect. Limited atonement is an attack on the true gospel in which provision has been made for all men and the message of good news is to be preached to all men (Mark 16:15). But according to Anderson we should all seek unity under one big tent and not be concerned about such doctrines.

Also many Calvinists teach that regeneration precedes faith. That is, you do not believe to be born again but you are born again so that you can believe. This teaching relates directly to salvation and the gospel, and

⁴A. W. Pink believed that God cannot love the non-elect. Yet, Mark 10:21 says that Jesus loved the rich young ruler. To Pink, this means that the rich young ruler at some point became a believer, even though the Bible does not indicate this. It is Pink’s theology that demands this, not the Scriptures.

all believers should be concerned about any unbiblical teaching relating to salvation truths. See our study, "Does Regeneration Precede Faith?" found at <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/reformed/regenera.pdf>

Also most Reformed men deny that there will be a thousand-year kingdom on this earth as foretold by all the prophets. They also deny that Israel has a future in the program of God (Replacement Theology). How can we claim to believe the Bible and then turn around and insist that hundreds of Bible prophecies should **not** be taken in their normal, natural and literal sense?

Concerning the timing of the rapture. Most sound Christian churches and organizations have the pretribulation rapture spelled out in their doctrinal statement because they consider it to be important. Every pre-tribulation rapturist can hold up a sign saying, "**Perhaps today!**" Those who hold to any other rapture position (mid-trib., pre-wrath, post-trib) must hold up a sign saying, "**Not yet!**" If we are to correctly understand God's program for the future, these things are important. This does not mean we vilify those who do not agree, but it does mean that we are concerned about sound doctrine.

Opinions of a well-known author. Anderson seems to be referring to men such as John MacArthur, Al Mohler, John Piper, etc. Are we to embrace such men even if they hold some very unbiblical positions? Let me give you an example from my own experience. I have written a critique on the teachings of John MacArthur (about 100 pages long). I did it respectfully, never attacking the man, but pointing out where his teachings deviate from Scripture. Some of the areas of concern: 1) MacArthur's denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ (teaching that Christ did not become the Son of God until His incarnation); 2) MacArthur's teaching that a believer does not have an old nature, but only a new nature in Christ; 3) MacArthur's teaching on "Lordship Salvation," that the requirements for salvation include obedience, surrender and fulfilling the demands of discipleship; 4) MacArthur's denial of unlimited atonement, denying that Christ died for every child of Adam; 5) MacArthur's weak positions on dispensationalism; etc. These issues are important and need to be exposed, especially since MacArthur's influence is so wide and since he has gained numerous followers and disciples who hold his same views. Does Anderson believe that exposing errors like this is an attack on Christian unity? Apparently he does. Our unity should always be based on the truth of God's Word, and the real enemies of Christian unity are those who refuse to stand on sound doctrine and upon the truth of God. It should also be noted that in many of MacArthur's books he himself attacks the teachings of other Christians, such as in his book, *The Charismatics*. In many of his books MacArthur exposes what he deems to be error, and very often he is correct. False doctrines should be exposed wherever they are found, even if it should cause disruption among professing believers.

How people should dress for worship is an issue that deserves careful attention. There ought to be a great respect for God and His holiness. Going to worship the Holy One should be different than going to the beach, to a concert, to a ball game or to a shopping mall. Sadly, there is an attitude of casualness which has swept into so many churches today. I knew a very godly pastor in Ohio who loved to work in his garden every morning, but when it was time to study the Scriptures he would always wear a suit and tie because he was sitting before God's holy Word. I do not follow the same practice, but I highly respect this man of God because he believed sitting before God's Holy Word deserved the highest honor. When people visit the President of the United States, they normally dress appropriately. Why then should God's people be so indifferent and casual when it comes to assembling ourselves together in the presence of the King of Kings? The late Paul Tassell (GARBC) wrote an excellent piece entitled, "Whatever Happened to our Sunday Best?" See <https://middletownbiblechurch.org/lochurch/casualness.htm>

Worship Styles. In previous times, the pulpit was at the center of the platform because the focus was upon the preaching of the Word of God. Today in so many churches the platform has been redesigned to handle worship leaders, bands, drum sets, numerous pieces of sound equipment and everything else needed to provide the necessary entertainment. A large church near us has recently spent many thousands of dollars to redesign their entire platform in order to make it fully functional for their contemporary worship service. The days of making the Word of God central, having an old-fashioned song leader and using Bible-centered hymnbooks (which, unlike screens, allows for hymns to be sung in four parts) are mostly a thing of the past.

Short hair on men is a Biblical issue. It is not an “unnecessary backwards standard” (p. 30). “If a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him” (1 Cor. 11:14). Fundamentalists hold such standards because this is what God’s Word teaches. We could have reasonable discussions as to how short for men and how long for women, but the fact remains, women’s hair should be long and men’s short. This is especially important in our day when the world is totally confused about gender distinctions.

Excessively modest dress. He criticizes women for “excessively modest dress” (p. 53) but has nothing to say about women, even professing believers, who are excessively immodest.

Attending movie theaters. Anderson professes to like the older fundamentalists but not today’s fundamentalists. The older fundamentalists took a stand against worldly amusements and movie theaters. And they did so when movies, such as *It’s a Wonderful Life*, were far more wholesome than they are today. Today it is very difficult to find a movie that is wholesome and does not contain foul language, immodest dress and nudity, violence, premarital and extramarital sex, etc. Today the problem is complicated because so many movies are being streamed right into the home. Spurgeon said, “If the church is now supposed to raise the tone of the world by imitating it, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said, ‘Come out from among them...and touch not the unclean thing.’” Spurgeon’s entire article (“Attending Places of Entertainment”) is powerful and may be found here:

<https://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/christia/spurgeon.htm>

I don’t know what Anderson thinks of Tozer, but he may not agree with his article on *The Great God Entertainment* as well as Surgeon’s article, *Feeding Sheep or Entertaining Goats*. Both articles may be found here: <https://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/lochurch/enterta.htm>

Second degree separation. Anderson is opposed to secondary separation and believes that fundamentalists are guilty of “excessive separation” (p. 58). He characterizes “secondary separation” as “guilt by association” (p. 85). Yet Spurgeon said, “I have cut myself clear of those who err from the faith, **and even from those who associate with them**” (message #2047 entitled “No Compromise”).

The Use of Alcohol. There is a trend today towards a position where believers may partake of alcohol in moderation but avoid getting drunk. The IFCA in recent years changed their policy on alcohol, basically allowing for social drinking and the consumption of alcohol but condemning drunkenness. Anderson takes the same position. Anderson, as stated in his book, prefers the earlier fundamentalists over today’s fundamentalists because they were united in the truths of the gospel even though they represented many denominations. What would he think of men like Billy Sunday? Billy Sunday went everywhere not only preaching the gospel but preaching against the use of alcohol. He knew the harmful effects it had upon society. He not only wanted men saved, but he wanted them sober. He preached abstinence.

To compare the use of wine in Bible times to the use of wine today, as Anderson seems to do, is not comparing apples with apples. Norman Geisler wrote the following:

Many wine-drinking Christians today mistakenly assume that what the New Testament meant by wine is identical to wine used today. This, however is false. In fact today's wine is by Biblical definitions "strong drink," and hence is forbidden in the Bible! What the Bible frequently meant by wine was basically purified water....The average [wine] was about three or four parts of water to one part of wine. Sometimes in the ancient world one part water would be mixed with one part wine: this was considered strong wine. Anyone who drank wine unmixed was looked on as a Scythian, a barbarian. That means the Greeks would say today, "You Americans are barbarians—drinking straight wine"....Wine used in the Passover meal was three parts water and one part wine (cf. 2 Macc. 15:39)....In New Testament times one would need to drink twenty-two glasses of wine in order to consume the large amount of alcohol in two martinis today. Stein humorously notes, "In other words, it is possible to become intoxicated from wine mixed with three parts water, but one's drinking would probably affect the bladder long before the mind." Though fermented wine was drunk in Bible times and though the Bible approved of wine-drinking, one needs to remember that the alcoholic content was much less than that of wine today. What is used today is not the wine of the New Testament.⁵

Pastor Jim Delany, Salem Bible Church (NH), has written an excellent study entitled, "Alcohol in the Bible." Here is the link: <https://www.salembible.org/alcohol-in-the-bible/>

Card Playing. The standard deck of cards has strong associations with gambling. I remember once driving by Atlantic City where gambling is legal and there was a huge billboard supporting gambling and it prominently displayed cards. The gambling problem in America is becoming bigger than it has ever been, in large part due to the legalization of sports gambling in recent years. As believers, should we get as close as we can to such worldly pursuits without partaking, or should we stay as far away as possible? 2 Cor. 6:17; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17. Pastor Delany has a good study on the topic of gambling: <https://www.salembible.org/biblical-perspective-on-gambling/>

Dancing. It's hard to believe we are still discussing whether or not dancing is pleasing to the Lord. See Pastor Delany's excellent study on this topic: <https://www.salembible.org/biblical-perspective-on-dancing/>

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One of the authors that Anderson quotes from favorably is Dick Gregory who wrote a book *On the Level: Discovering the Levels of Biblical Relationships Among Believers*. Anderson quotes from this book or refers to it on pages 26,27,28,32,33,79,159,192. Let me share my own interactions with Dick Gregory. Dick Gregory was the National Executive Director of the IFCA in the early 1990's when there arose a great controversy over some of the teachings of John MacArthur, especially MacArthur's denial of the eternal Sonship of Christ. There were many men in the IFCA who defended Christ's eternal Sonship because it was Biblical and also it was affirmed in the doctrinal statement of the IFCA in two places. Gregory, and other

⁵"A Christian Perspective on Wine Drinking," by Norman L. Geisler, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 139, Num 553, Jan-March, 1982.

IFCA leaders on the Executive Committee, allowed John MacArthur to be a member of the IFCA even though he was not in agreement with the IFCA statement of faith.⁶ Because Gregory and others allowed MacArthur to be a member of the IFCA, many men left the IFCA from all over the country, including the entire New England Regional. Who was guilty of being divisive and schismatic in this case? Was it the Bible believing men who were standing on the doctrinal statement or was it Richard Gregory who allowed MacArthur to be a member even though he held deviant positions? Ironically, after the IFCA was seriously wounded in this way, MacArthur announced that he had been wrong on the issue of the Sonship of Christ, and to some degree he recanted his former position, but this was after all the damage had been done. It was also ironic that many years later the IFCA leadership told MacArthur that he could no longer be a member because his position on limited atonement conflicted with the IFCA position! The IFCA did the right thing, but many years too late, and long after Dick Gregory was in leadership.

If Anderson had been a member of the IFCA during this controversy, what side would he have taken? From what I can gather from reading his book, he would have sadly taken the side of Dick Gregory, who in his desire to preserve unity, ended up causing a great schism and a sad and unnecessary separation. All the IFCA leaders had to do was say, “I’m sorry, Pastor MacArthur, but since you are not in harmony with the doctrinal statement of the IFCA, you are not able to be a member. We are fully committed to doctrinal integrity. Those who are members need to be in wholehearted agreement with the IFCA statement of faith.”⁷

Ernest Pickering in his excellent book, *Biblical Separation*, wrote, “Church history yields no example of a group or denomination that, having been captured by apostates, has been rescued and restored to a Biblical witness.” Anderson takes issue with this statement and believes that the Southern Baptist Convention has been rescued and restored to a Biblical witness, due to a conservative resurgence around 1979 (p. 72 footnote). He accuses David Beale of maligning SBC brethren instead of encouraging them (p. 73). He cites Beale’s book, *SBC: House on the Sand?* and claims that the SBC experienced a successful conservative resurgence and a great victory (p. 73 footnote).

This “conservative resurgence” in the SBC is highly questionable. As Beale mentions, it was reported that there are about 1,800 women pastors working in the denomination.⁸ Dr. J. Gerald Harris, does not agree with Anderson’s assessment of the SBC. See his book *The Rise and Fall of the Conservative Resurgence* (2021). It seems that Pickering’s statement was correct. There is too much leaven in the SBC denomination and this false teaching has not been purged out. It would be like saying that the United States is now on the right track because Donald Trump is President. This would be a failure to see how deeply sin is entrenched in our nation. Trump has done some good things but he is not making America righteous again.

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⁶MacArthur also taught that the believer has only one nature, the new nature in Christ and he taught that Christ died only for the elect. Both of these teaching were also in conflict with the IFCA doctrinal statement.

⁷For a fuller analysis of this IFCA Controversy, see David Beale’s book, *Christian Fundamentalism in America*, pages 589-595. David Beale was Chris Anderson’s professor at Bob Jones.

⁸See Associated Press, 12:24 PM EDT, Wed. June 12, 2024.

How do we handle the various teachings and positions that are held among Bible-believing Christians? Anderson believes that if a person holds to the fundamentals of the faith and preaches the true gospel then he should be welcomed into “one big gospel tent” and we should not fight over any of these secondary issues. Anderson loves the slogan, “***In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity***” (p. 151). The problem here is this: Who decides what is non-essential? If we are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4), then what portions of God’s Word are non-essential? If “all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” then how do we put some Scripture in the “non-essential” category?

I would recommend a different and far better approach for how to handle groups of believers who differ in their understanding of the whole counsel of God. Dr. John Whitcomb, Old Testament scholar and pioneer creationist, has preached a wonderful series of messages on what he calls “God’s Truth Circles.” I would urge the reader of this review to listen to Whitcomb’s balanced and Biblical approach. These messages may be accessed here:

<https://www.mbcmessages.org/audio/special/GTC/GTC-1.mp3>

<https://www.mbcmessages.org/audio/special/GTC/GTC-2.mp3>

<https://www.mbcmessages.org/audio/special/GTC/GTC-3.mp3>

They are also available from *Whitcomb Ministries* in a CD album.

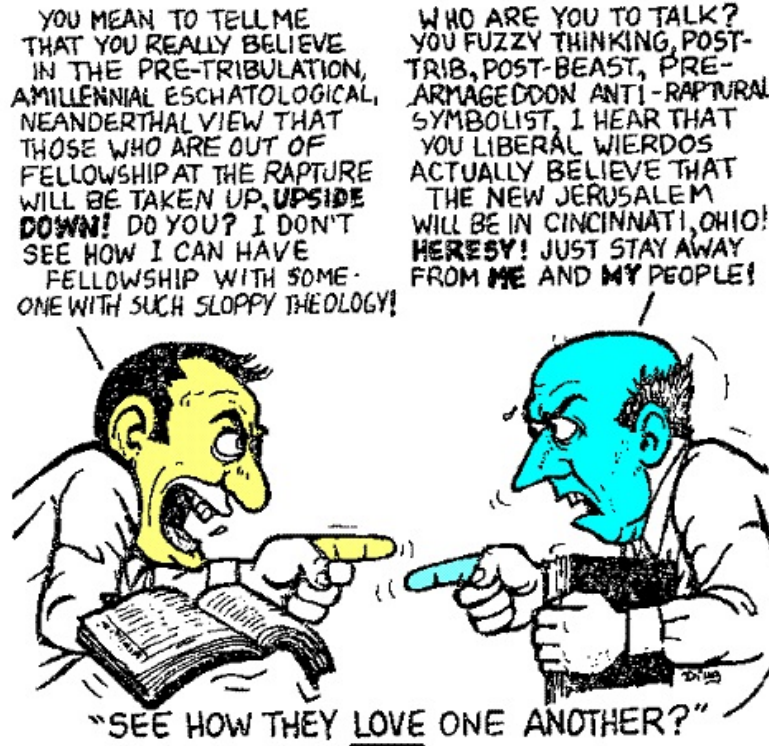
How can we summarize the position of Chris Anderson? The following quotation is taken from *Worldwide Impact*, a Campus Crusade for Christ publication, May 1972. Even though this was written a number of years ago, it seems to accurately reflect Anderson’s position:

We are to put aside the **peripheral issues** (that is, doctrinal issues) that divide us Men are reminded that the real issue is Jesus Christ, and that we are to love one another even if we do not agree theologically or philosophically (or doctrinally). I encourage you to apply this principle of LOVE and acceptance with all of your Christian friends, and help make Christ the real issue [emphasis and parentheses are mine].

This philosophy could perhaps be restated as follows: “It is sinful to divide the body of Christ on earth by separating ourselves from any Christian over any doctrinal or ecclesiastical issue. The mark of true orthodoxy is love, not doctrine. Therefore, if we truly love one another, we will not allow doctrines or ordinances to divide us...To win the world for Christ, we must bury our differences and proclaim the essential core of the gospel in a positive way.”

I once wrote a paper evaluating this Campus Crusade article and I’m going to include it in this review because it touches on the core issues. See the following three pages:

The Importance of Doctrine and The True Biblical Concept of Love



[The above diagram is taken from Worldwide Impact, May 1972, published by Campus Crusade for Christ and used by permission.]

As believers we are often guilty of quibbling over foolish questions and arguments which can only engender strife rather than godly edifying which is by faith (see 1 Timothy 1:4; 6:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:9; Philippians 2:14). Our desire should always be to build up and edify our fellow believers in the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:26; 8:1; etc.).

On the other hand, the above cartoon seems to imply the following attitude: "It doesn't matter so much what you believe as long as you 'love' one another." The following quotation is taken from the same issue (Worldwide Impact, a Campus Crusade for Christ publication, May 1972) in which the above cartoon appeared:

We are to put aside the **peripheral issues** (that is, doctrinal issues) that divide us Men are reminded that the real issue is Jesus Christ, and that we are to love one another even if we do not agree theologically or philosophically (or doctrinally). I encourage you to apply this principle of LOVE and acceptance with all of your Christian friends, and help make Christ

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Let us now test this philosophy by the Word of God (see 1 Thess. 5:21):

- 1) What place did the Lord give to teaching (doctrine) in the Great Commission as given in Matthew 28:19-20? What exactly was to be the content of their teaching? Were they to be teaching only "essential" doctrines?
- 2) Why was the early church unified and healthy (Acts 2:42)? Did they consider doctrine important? Remember, we must never have unity at the expense of truth.
- 3) Did the Apostle Paul carry on a ministry of total indoctrination (Acts 20:26-31) or did he seek to avoid "offensive" doctrines?
- 4) Consider this statement: "We are to put aside the PERIPHERAL ISSUES that divide us." Does the Bible contain any peripheral issues? Are there any nonessential doctrines in God's Word? Is there any part of God's Word that should not be boldly proclaimed (Acts 20:27)? We are to conform our lives to how much of God's Word (Matthew 4:4)? Do we have the right to judge which parts of the Bible are important and which parts are not? According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 how much of God's Word is important and profitable for the believer?
- 5) Consider again the cartoon at the beginning of this article. The Thessalonian believers were confused concerning the removal (rapture) of the church and the coming day of wrath—see 1 Thess. 4:13; 5:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:1-5. If these are not important matters, then why did the Lord direct Paul to write these letters? If these are merely "peripheral issues," then why did Paul take the time to teach the Thessalonian believers concerning these doctrines (see 2 Thess. 2:3-5 and note especially verse 5)? What was Paul's desire for these believers? Did he want them to be ignorant concerning these matters (see 1 Thess. 4:13)?
- 6) Was the Lord Jesus tolerant towards the Sadducees who differed from Him doctrinally concerning the resurrection (see Matt. 22:23-33 and note verse 29)? What was it that astonished the multitude (Matt. 22:33; cf. Matt. 7:28-29)?
- 7) What is the characteristic of a true disciple (John 8:31-32)? When believers harmonize together according to truth, what effect will this have upon the world (John 13:35; 17:23)?
- 8) How do we manifest and demonstrate our love for the Lord Jesus (John 14:21-24; 15:9-10; 1 John 2:3-6; 5:2-3 etc.)? How can a pastor demonstrate that he truly loves the Master (John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28)?
- 9) Is God concerned about doctrinal purity (Tit. 2:7; 1 Tim. 1:3)? Should we be concerned when men deviate

from sound doctrine (1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-18)? How are we told to "convict the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9)? Why should we reprove certain men sharply (Tit. 1:13)? What should be the measure of our speaking (Tit. 2:1)? What does Christ think of false doctrine in the church (Revelation 2:14-16)?

10) Why did Christ give certain gifted men to the church (Eph. 4:11-12)? According to Ephesians 4:11-16 how is true Christian unity (Eph. 4:1-6) achieved and enjoyed? What is the great danger of neglecting doctrine (Eph. 4:14)? What is the relationship between truth and love (Eph. 4:15)? Consider carefully the unity of believers as described by Christ in John 17:22. Is there any doctrinal disagreement between God the Father and God the Son?

11) If we truly love our fellow believers will we warn them about false doctrine and false teachers (Acts 20:29-31; Phil. 3:2; Col. 1:28; and see the example of Christ--Matt- 7:15-20; 16:6-12; 24:4-5; Luke 12:1,15)? If we truly love someone, will we exercise proper discipline (Heb. 12:6; Rev. 3:19; 2 Thess. 3:5-6,14-15)?

12) According to the example of our Lord Jesus, if we truly love someone, will we tell them what they need to hear even if it offends and hurts them (Mark 10:21)? Can love and hate co-exist at the same time (Hebrews 1:9)? Was the Apostle Paul manifesting love when he wrote Galatians 1:8-9? What does love rejoice in (1 Cor. 13:6)? How should our love abound (Phil. 1:9-10)?

13) If we really love people is it possible to reprove and rebuke them (2 Tim. 4:2)? Why do people turn to false teachers (2 Tim. 4:3)? When you reject the truth, what's left (2 Tim. 4:4)?

14) Did John, the Apostle of Love, minimize the importance of truth and doctrine (2 John verses 1-9)? How did John love Gaius (3 John 1)? What was John's greatest joy (3 John verses 3 and 4)? For what should we earnestly contend (Jude 3)? How are we to love (1 John 3:18)?

15) Read Revelation 22:18-19 and compare Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32 and Proverbs 30:6. ***IS DOCTRINE IMPORTANT?***

[I am greatly indebted to Dr. John C. Whitcomb for some of the material used in this paper]

CONCLUSION

Doctrine is extremely important. Biblical love never minimizes the importance of Bible doctrine. If we truly love a person then we will desire that person to be totally indoctrinated in the truth of God from Genesis to Revelation, including every jot and tittle of God's precious Revelation. True unity can never come at the expense of truth. In fact, true unity is only realized and enjoyed as believers harmonize together and function according to truth (Ephesians 4:11-16). The only basis for the enjoyment of true Christian unity (Ephesians 4:1-6) is a COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF AND OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD OF GOD. The ones who are hindering the cause of Christian unity are those who refuse to stand faithfully and obediently upon the written Word of God. When doctrine becomes the issue, truth must prevail! May we love and abide in the truth!

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Final Thought

Some years ago I found a music video on the Internet. It was Chris Anderson's song *You are Always Good*. It was performed by a group of singers from Majesty Music. Jonathan Hamilton composed the music and Chris Anderson wrote the lyrics. As I sat and listened my heart was truly blessed. The melody was beautiful; the harmonies blended so well and the words were exceptional. I believe Chris Anderson wrote the words to encourage the grieving Hamilton family and as a tribute to Jonathan Hamilton after his untimely death. "You are always good; You are only good. You are always good to me." The song was touching to me because of the tragic death of my own son when he was in his 20's. Often, during those difficult days, the Lord has reminded me of Nahum 1:7—"The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble and He knoweth them that trust in Him." Watching that video was a wonderful experience and my heart was encouraged. That song does not need a strong beat. It does not need drum accompaniment. It was precious the way it was presented. That video is found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nizcEH4Gk4>

Today as I think of that song and the several other Chris Anderson songs that have meant so much to me and to our congregation, I am saddened. I am saddened because the man who had the potential to be one of the finest song writers of our day has decided to go on the attack against fundamentalists and join the ranks of a much wider and broader evangelicalism. It brings to mind the title of Dr. Pickering's book, *The Tragedy of Compromise*.

George Zeller
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georgezeller3@gmail.com

For Further Study

See the excellent article by Dr. Ernest Pickering, *Are Fundamentalists Legalists?*
<https://middletownbiblechurch.org/christia/legalEP.htm>