

National Baptist Congress of Christian Education 2026

DD005 How to Reach “Cancel Culture”



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Herndon, Virginia

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Dear Delegate,

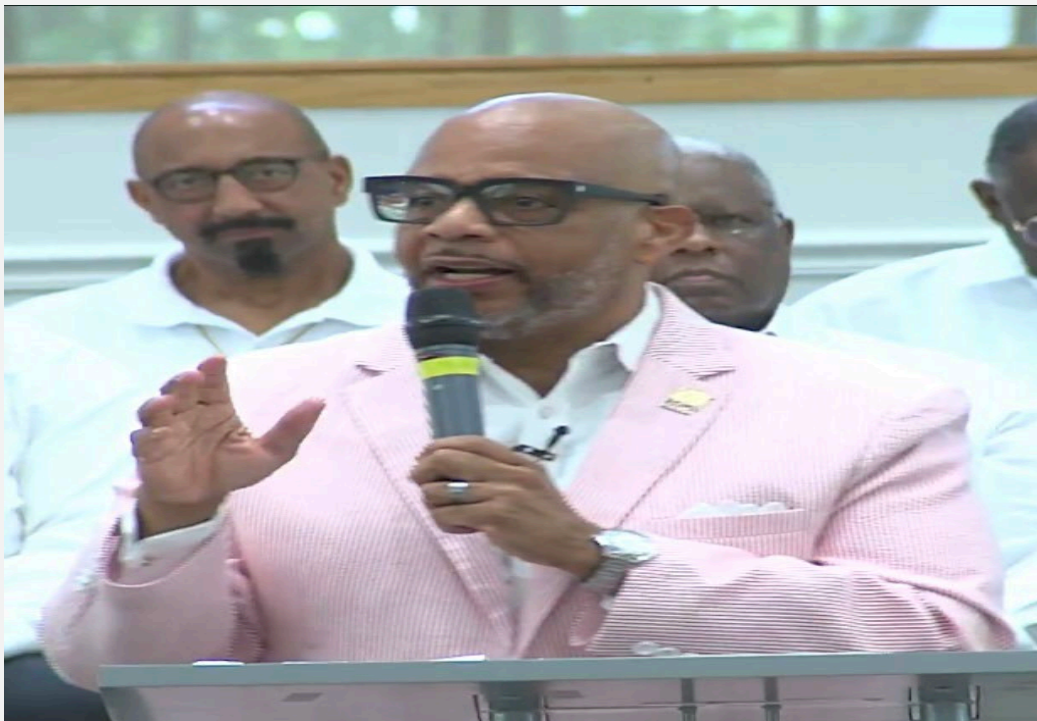
Greeting in the precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I am honored to have you in my class for this week of study and discussion. This year's class is: How to Reach Cancel Culture. I count it as an honor and a privilege to serve as your facilitator and teacher this week in our Annual Congress of Christian Education.

Thank you for selecting this course. After this week is over with, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any additional questions. I can be reached through email at KDonalson@MtPleasantBaptist.org. I can also be reached at the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church at (703) 793-1196.

Because He Lives,

Rev. Dr. Kevin E. Donalson Sr.



National Baptist Convention, USA

2025 Congress of Christian Education

CLASS:

How to Reach Cancel Culture

DD005

SYLLABUS

Tuesday, June 23rd	Introduction and Understanding the Cultural Shift & The Church's Response
Wednesday, June 24th	Building Authentic Relationships & Engaging the Disconnected
Thursday, June 25th	Addressing Controversial Topics with Grace & Truth
Friday, June 26th	Reclaiming Influence & Expanding the Church's Reach

Introduction

Many people, especially younger generations, are disengaging from traditional church models. Some are "deconstructing" their faith, while others feel that the church is irrelevant or out of touch. Scandals, hypocrisy, and political leanings have eroded trust in the church, leading to skepticism even among believers. Churches face increasing pressure to conform to cultural norms, sometimes at the expense of biblical truth. Pastors and leaders must walk the fine line between truth and grace, knowing how to communicate effectively without alienating people. Issues like racial justice, economic inequality, mental health, and sexuality demand biblical responses delivered with empathy.

What is Cancel Culture? Cancel culture is a phenomenon where individuals or groups publicly and swiftly denounce and campaign against someone perceived to have done or said something offensive or objectionable. This "canceling" often involves withdrawing support, boycotting their products or services, and calling on organizations to cancel their appearances.

While the church emphasizes love, forgiveness, and redemption, the rise of cancel culture poses challenges. While we want to hold to the truth, we must also learn how to show "mercy". Figuring out the balance between accountability and mercy may seem hard to do – but remember that God has already shown us how. He "showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8).



What does the Bible say?

Luke 19:10 – "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Matthew 9:36 – "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

1 Corinthians 9:22-23 – "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings."

Romans 12:2 – "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Colossians 4:5-6 – "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Matthew 5:13-16 – "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Solution

The Church must build authentic relationships with those feeling disconnected. It must address difficult topics with wisdom and love. We must strengthen ministries to adapt while staying biblically grounded. In this post-COVID society we must reclaim influence by serving the community and engaging younger generations effectively. We must get back to being the church and not a Spiritual Social Club.



WHAT WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS WEEK:

- Understand why people feel disconnected from the church and how cultural shifts impact faith.
- Learn how to assess and adapt ministry strategies without compromising biblical truth.
- Learn how to create a welcoming and inclusive (but biblically sound) church environment.
- Gain tools for active listening, mentoring, and relational discipleship.
- Be equipped to engage in difficult conversations on sensitive topics without fear or hostility.
- Understand the importance of digital evangelism and community outreach.
- Be encouraged, refreshed, and inspired to step into a renewed mission of outreach.



I. Understanding the Cultural Shift & The Church's Response

1 Chronicles 12:32 — "...the men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do."

What Is a Cultural Shift? A cultural shift refers to a significant and often noticeable change in the shared beliefs, values, norms, and behaviors of a society or group. What are some cultural shifts we have seen in society? What are some of the cultural shifts we have seen in the church?

How have these shifts impacted the church?

1. **Changing definition of truth-** From absolute truth to "your truth vs. my truth"
2. **Challenged the beliefs of the church-** Christian beliefs often labeled intolerant or outdated
3. **Christian values questioned-** Examples: views on sexuality, exclusivity of Christ, sanctity of life
4. **Church seen as irrelevant-** Digital Distraction and Disconnection Short attention spans, digital addiction

HOW CAN THE CHURCH RESPOND?

1. **Discern the Times (Not Deny Them)-** *Romans 12:2- 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
2. **Declare the Gospel with Boldness-** *2 Timothy 4:2- 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.*
3. **Demonstrate Christ's Love-** *John 13:35- 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
4. **Disciple Deeply-** *Luke 5:4- 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."*
5. **Develop Culturally Intelligent Leaders-** *2 Timothy 2:15- 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

II. Building Authentic Relationships & Engaging the Disconnected

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

A. Understanding Disconnection

B. Who are the Disconnected?

- Hurting or marginalized individuals
- Young Adults
- Those dealing with Church hurt
- Inactive members
- Newcomers who never got plugged in
- Others

C. The Result of Disconnection

1. **Isolation-** Disconnected individuals feel emotionally and spiritually alone, lacking support from the body of Christ.

Ecclesiastes 4:8-10- There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. “For whom am I toiling,” he asked, “and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?” This too is meaningless— a miserable business! 9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: 10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

2. **Irrecoverable opportunities for growth, service, and healing-** You can’t get back missed opportunities

Matthew 25:26-27- 26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

3. **Imbalance-** Without community, spiritual lives become unbalanced

Proverbs 27:17- As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

4. **Insecurity-** Without healthy relationships, people often wrestle with spiritual doubt, low self-worth, or uncertainty about belonging.

Romans 15:7- 7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

5. **Indifference-** Over time, disconnection can lead to apathy—toward faith, church, and even God.

Revelation 3:16- 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

D. What is an Authentic Relationship:

An authentic relationship is a Christ-centered connection between individuals marked by honesty, vulnerability, trust, love, and mutual commitment to growth. It is a relationship that is genuine, not performative, and reflects the character of Jesus in how people engage, support, and walk with one another.

E. Key Traits of Authentic Relationships

- Honesty – People are free to be real without fear of judgment or rejection
Ephesians 4:25- 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.
- Vulnerability – There is openness about struggles, doubts, and weaknesses
James 5:16- 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.
- Trust – Built over time through consistency, confidentiality, and care
Proverbs 17:17- A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.
- Mutual Growth – Both parties help each other grow spiritually, emotionally, and relationally
Proverbs 27:17- As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
- Love in Action – Demonstrated through listening, serving, forgiving, and showing up
1 John 3:18- 18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

F. Biblical Examples of Authentic Relationships

1. Jesus and His Disciples
2. David and Jonathon
3. Ruth and Naomi

G. What Must the Church do to build Authentic Relationships with the Disconnected?

Step 1: Characteristics

- A. Be Intentional
- B. Be Honest
- C. Be Consistent
- D. Be Encouraging
- E. Be Loving

Step 2: The Church's Role

- A. Creating a Welcoming Culture
- B. Cultivate Relational Pathways
- C. Conduct Training on Relational Ministry
- D. Caring Must Start at the Top

Step 3: Practical Tools- H.O.T.

- A. Hospitality
- B. Open to Dialogue
- C. Technology

Conclusion: People who have become disconnected from the church want to be noticed and nurtured. They want to be listened to and are not always looking for a response. A disconnected church is a dying church, but a connected church reflects Christ. Remember, building relationships is about love. That is why Jesus said in John 13:35, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”



III. Addressing Controversial Topics with Grace & Truth

John 1:14- 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Colossians 4:6 – “Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...”

A. Reality

- Our world is filled with hot-button issues like gender identity, politics, racism, sexuality, justice, abortion, etc. The Church must not avoid controversial topics out of fear.
- *2 Timothy 1:7- 7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*
- How we handle these issues and discuss them will go a long way to how successful we are in “Reaching Cancel Culture”.

B. Recognizing the Tension

1. What is Truth?

John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”

Truth is God's unchanging standard, revealed in Scripture.

2. What is Grace?

Romans 2:1-4- 2 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? Grace is the undeserved kindness of God.

3. When Truth and Grace Collide

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE

Jesus in John 8:1-11 when He is dealing with the woman caught in adultery modeled both.

“Neither do I condemn you” (grace)

“Go and sin no more” (truth)

He didn’t ignore the sin (truth), but He didn’t shame people either (grace)

C. Reasons why Conversations can be hard

1. Fear of offending others (or being offended)
2. Pressure to Conform
3. Lack of biblical training
4. Spiritual immaturity
5. Anger

D. Rules for the Church to Live By

1. Stay rooted in the Word of God

Let Scripture shape your belief

2 Timothy 3:16-17- 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

2. Speak the Truth in Love

Love without truth is enabling; truth without love is crushing

Ephesians 4:15- 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

3. Show Humility

We don't have all the answers—but we know the One who does

James 1:19- 19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

4. Seek to WIN HEARTS

Do not seek to “win” arguments but to win hearts.

Ephesians 4:29-32- 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

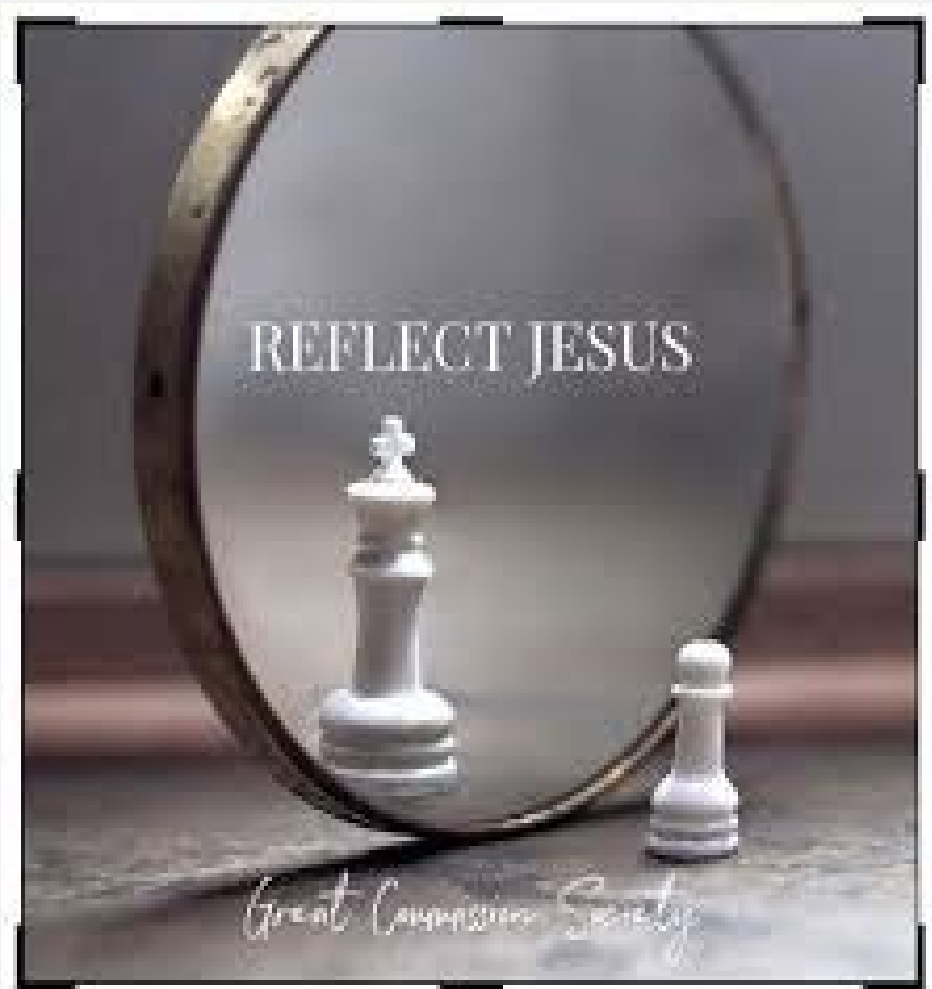
5. STICK WITH YOUR TRUTH

Sticking with truth takes courage. Courage means being willing to be misunderstood for the sake of Christ.

John 8:32- 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

E. Reflecting the Image of Jesus

- When we engage with both grace and truth, we reflect the fullness of Christ.
- Our goal isn't just to be right, but to be righteous in how we speak
- Jesus didn't avoid controversy, but neither did He weaponize truth. He embodied love with integrity, truth with tenderness, and courage with compassion.
- LEAD WITH COMPASSION- *Matthew 9:36* – “He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”
- LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY- *1 John 4:10-12- 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us*



IV. Reclaiming Influence & Expanding the Church's Reach

Matthew 5:14-16- 14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

A. The Model of the Early Church

- The Book of Acts
- *Acts 2:42-47- 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

B. The Model of the Church the last 100 Years

- The Civil Rights Movement

C. Why has the Church lost its Influence?

1. Compromise- Trading biblical conviction for cultural acceptance
2. Silence- Withdrawing from public discourse and difficult conversations
3. Division- Internal fighting dims the Church's external witness
4. Irrelevance- Failing to engage the real questions and needs of our time
5. Hypocrisy- A gap between what we preach and how we live

D. How Can We Reclaim our Influence?

1. Return to Living Right

Influence starts with personal integrity

Philippians 2:15- 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” [c] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

2. Reach People Where They Are

1 Corinthians 9:19-23- 19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings

3. Run towards, not from

The Church is not called to hide from culture, but to redeem it

John 17:15-18- 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by[d] the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

4. Responsibly, Equip Believers

We don’t just need training but responsible training. The Church must disciple people to be kingdom influencers in every sphere of life.

Ephesians 4:11-12- 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

E. Practical Solutions to Expand the Reach of the Church

1. Think outside the Box

- Embrace Innovation
- Use all the tools we have

2. Try things outside of Sunday Morning

- Meet somewhere else
- Go to where they are

3. TELL THE TRUTH

- WE ARE NOT PERFECT

4. Trust must be Rebuilt

- The world is looking for hope; the Church must show up in crisis, injustice, and suffering

Conclusion: As we conclude this journey, let us remember we are not called to escape culture, attack it, or conform to it—but to redeem it. Cancel culture may silence people, but the Gospel sets people free. The Church must be a place where truth is spoken boldly, grace is given freely, and people are loved unconditionally—even when they fail.

Our influence is not found in how loud we shout, but in how deeply we love. When the world cancels, Christ restores. When the culture divides, the Church unites. And when others withdraw, we press in with the relentless compassion of Jesus. “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Let us leave here with a holy resolve—not to win culture wars, but to win people. Not to fear being canceled, but to live un-cancelable lives rooted in Christ’s love. Now go—be salt. Be light. Be unshakable in truth and unstoppable in love.

