

“Cancel Culture” and the Christian: Where Should I Stand?

For some, this is an interesting if not intriguing topic. For others, it is a “Huh?” topic. It is certainly something I’ve never “done a lesson” on before, and when I’m finished, you might well say, “You *still* haven’t done a lesson on it” (and you may be exactly right!) But “cancel culture” is everywhere and seemingly “in” or affects everything these days.

“OK, what is ‘cancel culture’?” According to Wikipedia, *Cancel culture* “is a modern form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles – whether it be online, on social media, or in person. Those who are subject to this ostracism are said to have been ‘cancelled’.” What this definition doesn’t include, probably because it was written by a proponent or supporter, is that *cancel culture* basically seeks to destroy, take down, or “cancel” everything and everyone- past, present, and future, that it deems to be contradictory to its idealized view of a *socially conscience* and *politically correct* “**culture.**”

Before we go any further, let’s establish a few foundational principles that Christians ought to know:

1. As Christians, we should always be careful and considerate with our *thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions*, Eph.4:29-32.
2. Therefore *giving or being* “offensive” to others should be avoided unless necessary to establish or defend truth, cf. Matt.15:1-11,12-14. However,
3. We must also recognize that we, too, live in a “*crooked and perverse generation.*” Nonetheless, we have the same responsibility to “*be blameless and innocent, children of God... among whom you appear as lights in the world,*” Phil.2:15. Therefore,
4. We don’t get to decide what is “offensive” to or for other people, which has both *positive* and *negative* implications. For instance:
 - a. If Inuit people deem the name “Eskimo Pie” offensive, we ought to stop calling the treat that and find another name for it, Col.4:5-6.
 - b. But on the other hand, the franchise name “Cleveland Indians” isn’t offensive to Native Americans, neither should we demand a MLB organization change the name its had in honor of former Native American, Louis Sockalexis, since the early 1900s. After all, Native Americans refer to themselves as “Indians,” cp. Titus 1:10-14 (this reference is not utilized to compare Indians to Cretans, but to illustrate the point that *one of their own* made the statement about Cretans, with which Paul simply agreed).
5. Feeling bad, or even penitent, for history does not change it. History is supposed to *teach us*- positively and negatively. Therefore, seeking to *revise* or “cancel” history of which we do not approve deprives us and future generations of the lessons that can and should be learned from these things, cf. 1Tim.1:12-17.
6. Sin is always going to be *sinful*. Calling it something “less offensive” only masks its true nature. We all ought to be and we all need to be “offended” by sin, Rom.7:7; cf. Gal.1:11-15; 1Cor.5:1-13 → 2Cor.7:8-13.

So, how should Christians feel and what should we do while living in this “Cancel Culture” world? (Can I still drink Coke products???)

- **Avoid giving offense when possible and beneficial, Matt.17:27; 18:6,8,9.**
There is no need or benefit to being unnecessarily *offensive*, and we need to always keep in mind our *spiritual obligation* to everyone, 1Cor.10:19-23.
- **Be willing to go the *extra mile*, Matt.5:38-42.** Fighting *fire with fire* is still fighting, and is not God’s way, Rom.12:17-21; and it seeks to incorporate *fleshly weapons* in what is supposed to be a *spiritual warfare*, 2Cor.10:3-6. Which brings us to the following...
- **Understand the *nature* of the relationships you sustain with others.** While in every relationship we should manifest a Christ-like spirit and demeanor, not every relationship is founded upon a *spiritual foundation*. For instance, on what is your relationship with your:
 - Mechanic founded? His understanding of the Scriptures, or his mechanical knowledge, abilities, and integrity? I’m trying to get my car fixed, not supporting his views on fornication or homosexuality. Now if he makes such part of his business by posting pornographic or pro-homosexual posters in the lobby, I certainly can take my business elsewhere.
 - Doctor/Dentist founded? If I go to the Franciscan Hospital, I’m seeking medical attention not supporting Catholicism. At one time, my doctor (G.P.) smoked like a chimney (even in his office) and cussed like a sailor, but he and I had an agreement: I went to him when I thought I needed medical attention, and he was going to come to me when he thought he needed *spiritual* treatment (sadly, I attended his funeral without him ever doing so). I went to him because he was a good *doctor*, not for *moral* teaching, support, or encouragement.
 - Businesses with whom I do business founded? “The business of business is business.” I suspect the current trend of social/political awareness in business is much more about the bottom line than any cultural or social responsibility. But if a business forgets or undermines the nature of my relationship, that’s on them- I can continue to purchase their product or service (because that’s the nature of the relationship on my end) or take my business elsewhere. So, if you like Coke and want to continue to drink it, do so- it’s no different than purchasing medical treatment from a Methodist or Catholic hospital. If *your* conscience won’t allow you to drink Coke (or watch professional sports), then by all means don’t, cf. Rom.14:16,20-23.
 - Fishing Buddy or Fellow Ballgame or Movie Enthusiast founded? These *relationships* are founded on a shared (and non-sinful!) and enjoyed activity. They are not endorsements of spiritual character, though they may lead to spiritual opportunities. Jesus spent time with *sinner*s too, cf. Matt.9:10-13.

Conclusions: 1) We should never be unnecessarily *offensive*; 2) When we buy a product or purchase a service, we’re doing just that rather than endorsing a company and its perspectives; 3) Christians are always going to be *strangers* to and *aliens* in this world- just be sure you are “*fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone,*” Eph.2:19-20.