

# Gender Ideology Meets Christianity in Post-Truth Arena

by Richard Nelson

CNN reporter Devan Cole created a stir last week when he said, “It’s not possible to know a person’s gender identity at birth, and there is no consensus criteria for assigning sex at birth.” If there’s any confusion in determining male or female at birth, aside from any genetic defect, one’s sensory faculties must either be seriously deficient or there’s a lack of courage to state the obvious.

Welcome to the post-truth culture.

When people who are charged with telling the truth, otherwise known as journalists, boldly assert that gender is unidentifiable at birth (it’s actually knowable at around week 10 in utero via noninvasive prenatal testing screening), we are in bigger trouble than we realize. But journalists aren’t the only ones supposed to tell the truth. So are pastors, of which there are approximately 6000 in Kentucky. Yet when it comes to questions of truth and human identity, including gender identity, their voices have too often been marginalized in the public square.

Some 2,700 years ago, the prophet Isaiah gave a glimpse of society where truth stumbles in public. “Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey” (Isaiah 59:14-15).

Who knew that cancel culture is that old?

It’s clear that our cultural ethos is dramatically shifting. But truth doesn’t shift on its own. Nor does it shift simply because pastors’ voices aren’t welcomed or heeded in

the public arena. Truth is chiseled away one word, one court ruling, one journalist’s opinion at a time. In 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court redefined marriage by removing the opposite-sex requirement. In 2020, the Court expanded the categorical definition of biological sex to include the term sexual orientation or gender identity for civil rights purposes.



Now we’re on the cusp of embracing the idea that gender is self-defined, an essential human right protected by law. Pres. Biden’s Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation, and the Equality Act recently passed in February by the U.S. House of Representatives, elevates homosexual and transgender identity to protected status. Such actions makes one wonder if something of an idol of self is in the works.

A 21st century American idol may not be gold and silver deities found in Isaiah’s time but are often fashioned in the mind, girded up by intellectual hubris, and occasionally receive Congress’ stamp of approval. When people turn from the living God, they turn away from the source of unchangeable and objec-

tive truth. The Psalmist warned the Israelites about the folly of turning from truth and devoting themselves to idols. Those who worship them, become like them—mouths that don’t speak, eyes that don’t see, ears that don’t hear, noses that don’t smell, and hands that don’t feel. (Psalm 115:5-8) In other words, people ensnared in idol worship become something less than human.

The consequences for any society embracing such falsehood looms large. Girls’ athletics competitions will be crowded out by boys who identify as girls. Women’s-only spaces that afford privacy and safety will be opened to men identifying as women. Public ministries, including foster care, adoption agencies, and women’s shelters, will be forced to align their values with the novel understanding of gender identity. Religious professionals, including therapists, counselors, and healthcare workers, will face a crisis of conscience if they’re forced to facilitate gender transition therapy. Redefining truth to conform to individual desire impacts everyone, including those committed to walking in the truth.

Our cultural moment demands that people committed to the truth engage the public realm. This means pastors should teach from the pulpit the doctrine of the imago Dei and related biological and sociological realities. It means people in the pews embracing orthodoxy and walking it out in public. It will undoubtedly be uncomfortable and difficult for many, but what will be more uncomfortable is to allow our neighbors and co-workers to hurt themselves because they embraced a fiction.

# Christianity & Culture Conferences Equip Kentuckians

There is no question that our culture is undergoing a dramatic shift and is increasingly hostile to Christian values. More than ever, it is necessary that Christians across the Commonwealth are equipped with the tools necessary to be salt and light in this dark culture. To that end, CPC launched the Christianity & Culture Conferences this past spring.

We hosted conferences in Lexington, Louisville, Bowling Green, Paducah, and Somerset. Former senior pastor of Southeast Christian Church, Bob Russell, spoke at two of our events, and said, “CPC has done an excellent job providing attendees with a program that informs Christ-followers with ways to engage the culture without alienating those with whom we disagree.” Other speakers included Pastor Robert Cunningham, who casted a new vision for cultural engagement, and Pastor Hershael York of Buck Run Baptist Church and Dean at Southern Seminary. President and co-founder of Sisters For Life Angela Minter equipped attendees on how to restore a culture of life in the Commonwealth with radical compassion.

Each event was well attended and received high praise. “This conference was one of the most informative and impactful I’ve been to!” wrote one attendee.

As our conferences have come to a close, we will now edit and digitally distribute each of the sessions so that those who were unable to attend can also be equipped to look to Christ as our model as we love the commonwealth. Be on the lookout for this valuable resource!



C&C Conference in Somerset

## Yes For Life Campaign Launches



Yes for Life Rally at the KY Capitol

In November 2022 Kentuckians will vote on the constitutional amendment on abortion. This amendment was passed by the General Assembly, and, if passed by Kentuckians, will state that abortion is not a constitutional right in Kentucky. It will also ban tax payer dollars from being used towards abortions. To educate and equip Kentuckians to vote on this amendment, CPC joined the Yes for Life Alliance. Yes for Life hosted a press conference at the State Fair in August. To learn more about Yes for Life, go to [www.yesforlifeky.com](http://www.yesforlifeky.com), and follow the Alliance on Facebook and Twitter.

CPC Executive Director Richard Nelson said, “The Commonwealth Policy Center was pleased to be at the Yes for Life launch this morning at the KY State Fair. CPC is committed to restoring the sanctity of life in the Commonwealth and as a founding member of the Yes for Life Alliance, we believe passage of the pro-life constitutional amendment next year is a significant step.

Yes for Life cannot do this alone. If you feel led, please consider donating to this cause. You can write a check to CPC and write “Yes for Life” in the memo line, or donate on our website and do the same in the comment section. We thank you for your consideration and look forward to the passage of this Amendment in November.

# Engaging the Culture with Love, cont.



Pastor Robert Cunningham casted this vision at our C&C Conferences

Here’s the question: can we really love the world apart from a template that Jesus gave us? God incarnate came not to condemn but to save sinners (John 3:17). He came to bind the wounds of the brokenhearted (Psalm 147:3), reconcile lost people to himself (2 Cor. 5:18), and restore all things (Acts 3:21).

Jesus loved well, and he did it outside the norms acceptable to the religious establishment of his day. He went to dinner with tax collectors and sinners—vile

people outside the reach of the Pharisees. He spent time talking with a woman who was in multiple marriages and interceded for the woman caught in adultery. The prostitute wept at his feet and anointed him with perfume before his death on the cross. “But only if he knew who this woman was,” the pharisees said to themselves. But only if we understand the grace lavished upon us to save us from our sins, should be the response.

Humility and love are distinguishing characteristics of Christ followers. As we step out of our comfort zones to engage hurting people living in a broken world, we need to be reminded of the One who stepped down from heaven’s perfection to engage each of us in our brokenness and imperfection. He modeled love and sacrifice for our good. The question now is whether we’re willing to participate in the mission he began.



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## Director's Corner

We at the Commonwealth Policy Center believe that the gospel transforms lives. When people come into saving relationship with Jesus, it changes everything including the culture. At CPC, we're committed to bringing the gospel and biblical principles into the culture.

We see the Commonwealth as a mission field. Do you? Specifically, our mission field is the realm of public policy and politics. Our team is dedicated to being light in the darkness and bringing biblical values into the public arena, and we are deeply committed to doing public policy in a way that honors God. We follow Jesus' principle of engaging people with grace but we always land on the truth.

One of our primary issues is religious freedom. Do you have an advocate working to protect your religious freedom in Frankfort? In a cancel culture age, it's important to have someone who will fight to protect your freedom of speech, conscience rights, and freedom of religion. To that end, we've brought in Blaine Adamson, co-owner of Hands on Originals, to participate in two events and share his story of maintaining his conscience rights in the face of LGBT intolerance at our Christianity & Culture Conferences.

Our Christianity & Culture events were CPC's most significant activity this year. These regional conferences were led by top speakers and pastors like Bob Russell, Hershael York, Robert Cunningham, Daniel Mingo, Richard Dixon and Angela Minter. We tackled tough issues like racial reconciliation, transgender identity, LGBT outreach, sanctity of life, and religious freedom. Overall, the conferences were well received.

2021 was a quiet political year but we've been productive nonetheless. Here are a few highlights:

- Founding member of Yes for Life Alliance which is dedicated to passage of the 2022 constitutional amendment to affirm life and prevent tax dollars from funding abortion.
- Produced election resources for Ky State House and State Senate special elections.
- Deepening relationships with top Kentucky political and church leaders.
- Leading conversations on pressing moral and social issues from a biblical worldview through our two radio programs: The Commonwealth Matters and The Commonwealth Minute which air on over 60 radio stations.
- Conducted weekly CPC Facebook Live programs with Christian thought leaders, state and national political leaders, and pastors.
- Helped the Christian Community in Augusta think biblically about the proposed Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity proposals that threatened religious freedom
- Successfully hosted 5 Christianity and Culture Conferences across the Commonwealth.

Bob Scott, our church outreach director is in his second year and making progress connecting with and serving Kentucky churches. We hope to hire another regional church outreach person soon. It's our conviction that the answer to our cultural deterioration is not primarily through political solutions, more conservative news outlets, or academic institutions. Rather, the only way our culture will become healthier is when the church appropriately engages, when it becomes that shining city on a hill—teaching God's truth and modeling His love. To that end, would you consider partnering with us financially?

It takes resources to sustain our team and our efforts. Would you kindly consider putting CPC in your budget this year? It takes funds to keep this ministry going. Thanks in advance for your consideration and please let me know if I can be of further help.

Yours in Christ,

*Richard Nelson*

Richard Nelson  
Executive Director

Help us preserve the bedrock values of the Commonwealth by donating  
at [www.commonwealthpolicycenter.org/donate](http://www.commonwealthpolicycenter.org/donate)

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# COMMONWEALTH POLICY

Reinforcing the Commonwealth's Founding Principles - Renewing the Commonwealth's Future Promise

## ENGAGING THE CULTURE WITH LOVE

by Richard Nelson

I was reminded of an important truth the other day at a conference comprised of pastors, political leaders, and Christians in south-central Kentucky: Jesus radically transform lives. At Commonwealth Policy Center's (CPC) Christianity and Culture conference, one speaker talked of his struggle with LGBT identity. Another, shared her story about her pro-abortion past that ended the lives of two of her children. One segment was on a biblical view of racial reconciliation. All hot topics. All in need of better dialogue and engagement initiated by the church.

A new vision was cast by one speaker for how the church can effectively engage culture. Instead of seeing culture as an enemy to be opposed, we should view it as a neighbor to be loved. This doesn't mean conforming to worldly standards or compromising biblical truths. Rather, it means taking biblical truths to a world and people in desperate need of love and compassion.

Those cultural hot-button issues weren't just theoretical, political sparring trials. They settled into real lives and resulted in real trauma. The trauma wasn't healed through an argument or an election. It was healed by a real person named Jesus, who suffered real trauma himself. He wasn't only gracious and kind by taking on our sins and our bad choices, but he modeled for us how we ought to do

it for others.

A church sign said, "Whoever stole our air conditioning units, keep one because it's hot where you're going." Unfortunately, that message was displayed by a church not far from my office. But is that really the message that neighborhood needs?

Too often, evangelicals are identified as fearful and judgmental. Fearful of people who don't look like us or think like us. Judgmental with a condemning spirit quick to point out all that is wrong in the world—including those who steal

air conditioners. But followers of Jesus are supposed to be defined and known not by their fear or acerbic judgment, but by something greater. "For God so loved the world... ." (John 3:16) Right? And "Greater love hath no man that he lay his life down for a friend." (John 15:13) "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

We can adhere to the right theology, have all the right answers, win all the elections, and even get good laws passed, but if we have not love, we're like a hammer beating on a metal trash can lid at five in the morning. (1 Cor. 13:1). Utter irritation is hardly the impression we can afford to have on a world that is in desperate need to be loved and cared for.

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The Commonwealth Policy Center is a non-profit public policy group helping Kentuckians value life, protect natural marriage, defend religious liberty, and promote fiscal integrity.

Learn more about our work at  
[CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org](http://CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org)

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