For Immediate Release

Contact:

Robin Gordon Jr.

503-890-5393

robindgordon@gmail.com

**CANCEL CULTURE**

**Native Child of a Global Pandemic**

**E.D. Mondainé Jr.**

The America I learned to pledge allegiance to as a child in school taught me to believe that the bedrock of our Constitution is the sacred and protected belief that everyone is innocent until proven guilty. However, in this present-day America, one is innocent until accused, then conveniently erased. There is no possibility of launching a defense in a canceled culture context because there is no legitimate platform to defend oneself. The only options are to concede to the accusations or challenge the tyranny of your accuser's self-fulfilling subjectivity and suffer the witch's fate.

A fellow pastor, Dr. David Jerimiah, who has written extensively on the dangers of cancel culture, describes it in this way:

"There's an attempt to publicly humiliate the person by flagrantly exposing the supposed wrong he or she committed. Once the person has been exposed, he or she is pushed mercilessly to confess and apologize. Whether that person has actually done anything that requires regret is irrelevant. Simply to be accused means a retraction and an apology is expected. Regardless of whether the accused apologizes or not, attempts are made to remove that person from public life and from all public conversation once and for all. As a result, people are fired, mocked, threatened, de-platformed, and delegitimized in every way."

Dr. Jerimaiah has described in detail what I've experienced personally.

To be clear, I am not saying that I am without responsibility; some of my past choices have been unwise, and I deeply regret where those decisions may have hurt others.

However, I will not concede to false allegations because this is precisely the point I am making here. We're living in a time when mere accusations have the power to exceed the force of law as a means to establish guilt. Doing so becomes a dangerous state for a free society, and we minimize its impact at our own risk. But, unfortunately, it is also the hallmark of what has become "Cancel Culture."

About a year ago, there was a comprehensive and unjustified attack on my character. The impact of this unwarranted and politically strategic offensive was nothing short of eviscerating. I will spare us all the detailed litany of the losses I incurred, but I will say this: Watching everything I worked to build over four decades reduced to rubble in a matter of weeks was debilitating. Thus, "the magic of Cancel Culture."

Since then, people have often asked me why I did not respond immediately. The truth is three-fold:

1. Stunned by the force of the toxic misrepresentations of my behavior, it took every bit of strength and courage to face the days, weeks, and even months that followed.

2. Defending myself would have only appeared guilty while further dragging those who love me, and have trusted my leadership, through the filth of false accusations.

3. I was frightened.

It took time for me to understand what was so frightening, but when an answer was clear, I saw that it stood as a dire warning, both for me and for our society. We are in peril so long as we permit a "culture of cancellation" to prioritize condemning personalities over upholding the principles that guarantee our essential freedoms.

The Salem Witch Trials, the Red Scare in the 1920s, and the House of Un-American Activities in the 1950s were self-endowed with the same punitive power of mere accusations. Today, we see these identical attitudes rising from a generation that sees itself as righteous champions of defenseless victims. What started as necessary and courageous movements such as, MeToo and Time’s Up that challenged a culture of misogyny and sexual abuse has morphed into a modern-day Lord of the Flies. The goodwill of these organizations has become compromised and used to shatter the lives of sound but imperfect human beings. It becomes villainous when one's livelihood can be erased on a whim, with not much more than an accusation, without so much as a backward glance.

As a survivor of sexual abuse in my childhood and my lived experience as a Black Man, now surviving societal abuse, it makes me eager to work hard to overcome the obstacles in my path that were not of my own making. Doing so in good faith, hoping to become a contributing member of my society - especially in the community in which I live. Having succeeded in many ways makes me proud of the man I've become. However, it does not mean that I am without fault or sin. Having accomplished much over many decades erased by false accusations asserted by a naive mob of heedless accusers (and those afraid to confront them) ought not to go unchallenged.

I agree with great passion that we must hold bad actors accountable for their participation in America's toxic systems of oppression. But we must also find ways to confer credibility on victims without empowering random gangs of accusers who abandon temperance, understanding, and forgiveness as a means of acquiring social power.

So, even as we work to set higher standards for a better world, we must remember that being human is imperfect. To this end, the bible has a clear mandate on how we judge matters clearly:

We must consider the beam in one's own eye rather than the speck in the eyes of our brothers and sisters.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

E. D. Mondainé Jr. is an activist, entrepreneur, recording artist, and former president of the Portland Chapter of the NAACP. Founder of the Black American Chamber Of Commerce, he is also Sr. pastor of Celebration Tabernacle Church in Portland, OR and Grace Center, St. Louis, MO.