

# A BIBLICAL VIEW ON Wokeness

Kerby Anderson





# Wokeness



We frequently hear the term “woke” in current discussions. Campuses, corporations, and even some churches are described as being woke. What does the term mean? How are these ideas influencing society? Is there any connection to ESG mandates and stakeholder capi-

talism? And how should Christians respond to the influence of wokeness?

## **Definition of the Term**

The term means that one is “awake” to the true nature of the world at a time when so many in society are asleep. In his book on *Christianity and Wokeness*, Owen Strachan explains that “wokeness occurs when one embraces the system of thought called critical race theory. CRT teaches that all of societal life is structured along racial power dynamics.”

I have found that woke theology often surfaces in the non-Christian world as a substitute religion. Woke theology also surfaces in some churches that are legitimately concerned about injustice, want to be relevant to the cultural dialogue, and thus adopt wokeness.

These terms are sometimes

misused, which is why Strachan also devotes a section on explaining what wokeness is not. Here are just five statements of the fifteen he discusses.

Wanting societal harmony across backgrounds does not make you woke. Seeing massive failings in American and Western history, sustained patterns of racist thought does not make you woke. Doing everything you can and know to do to build bonds with people different from you in various ways does not make you woke. Praying for greater diversity in your church through saving of fellow sinners does not make you woke. Wanting greater justice in the world doesn't make you woke.

## **Woke Ideology**

Wokeness includes the ideas of critical race theory (discussed in a previous booklet on *A Biblical Point of View on Critical Race Theory*) and

antiracism but is broader than just these ideas about race and racial justice. It also includes other social, legal, and even environmental concerns. These ideas were first developed and promoted on university campuses but have made their way into government, corporations, and nearly every part of society.

It is most visible through the actions of people who call themselves “social justice warriors.” Critics might describe them as “virtue-signaling liberals” or merely call them “the woke.” Whatever name you give to these groups, they have been successful in influencing nearly every institution in America and much of the Western world.

They used inflamed rhetoric and what one commentator calls “ex-cathedra incantations of pseudo-values so absurd that only a few years ago it would have seemed like

they must be kidding." That's a fancy way of saying that you can't believe people are completely serious when they are saying crazy things about race, gender, and science.

Much of this began on university campuses across the nation. Professors promoted ideas about cultural transformation that influenced the young minds who became the future opinion-forming elite of today. These ideas were reinforced because of a liberal media forming a feedback loop between a leftist academy and a liberal establishment media.

This is an important principle to understand. In the past, we used to hear parents and others argue that the nutty ideas in the heads of college students would fade away as they had to earn a living and deal with the realities of the world of business. What happened was the fact that these college graduates

found previous graduates in some of these corporations who were woke soul mates. The woke ideas on campus often became the foundational ideas in business and government. The media continued to reinforce those crazy woke ideas.

In her book, *Awake: Not Woke*, Noelle Mering explains how many in this emerging generation do not believe they are defined as being in the image of God but instead are called to fight evil in society. They are merely one entity in a group identity rather than someone made in the image and likeness of God. They aren't praised or criticized by their actions and attitudes. Instead, they are elevated or condemned based on their group, their racial background, or their gender. They are not only being indoctrinated by critical theory on race but also by critical theory on sex and gen-

der. And obedience to these ideas is achieved through thought and speech control.

## **Woke Corporations**

Corporations that have gone woke have been increasingly involved in politics. Here are just a few examples from the last year.

When the Georgia legislature debated and then passed voter integrity laws, the CEOs of several corporations took to the media to express their displeasure. For example, the CEO of Coca-Cola complained the voting law was oppressive, which then brought attention to the fact that the company was doing business in China with oppressive human rights violations. The CEO of Delta Airlines complained about voter IDs as other critics were reminding them that you couldn't get on a Delta flight without showing a form of ID. Major League Baseball

even pulled the All-Star Game out of Atlanta. But if these Georgia laws were supposedly an attempt at voter suppression, they failed since the number of voters in the latest election set records.

The Disney company protested Florida's "Parental Rights in Education" bill that prohibited classroom instruction on sexual orientation and gender in early years of grade school. Yet when the bill was accurately described, pollsters found that a majority of Floridians (in both parties) and a majority of Americans agreed with the legislation. Many of these same people then decided to avoid Disney in the future.

Many of these companies seem to be reevaluating their past actions. They can see the downward trajectory of past woke companies like Target, Gillette, and Dick's Sporting Goods. The common phrase "get

woke, go broke" seems to be true.

They also have noticed how members of Congress have responded. Senator Rick Scott wrote an open letter to "Woke Corporate America" saying that he hoped they were having fun with their virtue signalling and the attempts to one-up each other. But he reminded them they destroyed working people's jobs and destroyed some small businesses. Senator Ted Cruz said that Congress might not "look the other way on Coca-Cola's \$12 billion in back taxes owed. This time, when Major League Baseball lobbies to preserve its multimillion-dollar antitrust exception, we'll say no thank you." Also, Congress may reassess whether Disney should have been given 56 years of copyright protection.

Although there are some members in Congress who want to pressure corporations to be less woke,

there are other significant pressures on these companies to be more woke. This comes from the enforcing of ESG standards (also discussed in the previous booklet, *A Biblical Point of View on the Great Reset*). The “E” stands for environmental concerns. What is the company doing to address the threat of climate change by lowering carbon emissions? The “S” stands for social and looks at the company’s relationship with stakeholders (often called stakeholder capitalism). Does the company donate to the local community or does the company encourage employees to perform volunteer work? The “G” stands for governance and desires diversity on the board of directors and corporate transparency.

While many of the ESG goals are admirable, recent examples show how it has been used as a political tool against anyone who

dissents. A senior HSBC banker was canceled merely because he correctly observed that some of the climate change rhetoric was shrill and unsubstantiated. Recently Tesla was removed from the S&P 500 ESG Index, even though they are the largest producer of electric cars and a few months ago had the fourth largest weighting in the index. Could it be that this change had more to do with the words and actions of Elon Musk than anything at Tesla?

## **How Should We Respond?**

We are living in a time when we can be canceled for something we say or even for our lack of enthusiasm for a particular policy or piece of legislation. That is why Rod Dreher warns us in his book, *Live Not by Lies*, of a coming “soft totalitarianism.” The old, hard totalitarianism came from the state (Germany, Russia) and was dedicated to the

eradication of Christianity. This new totalitarianism usually comes from the Left in society but is also dedicated to the eradication of Christianity.

The soft totalitarianism of today demands allegiance to a set of progressive beliefs. Compliance is forced less by the state than by elites who form public opinion, and by private corporations that control our lives through technology. Citizens won't be taken away in handcuffs by the state, but their lives will be devastated by Leftist elites that will do what they can to destroy their lives.

Dissenters from the woke party line find their businesses, careers, and reputations destroyed. They are pushed out of the public square, stigmatized, canceled, and demonized as racists, sexists, and homophobes. In his chapter about woke capitalism, Dreher details how the

corporate threat to Indiana when the state passed a “religious freedom restoration” bill set the stage for the current trend of business and media forcing their Leftist agenda on the American people.

His book is full of stories from Christians who endured hard totalitarianism and provide us with models for how to address this more insidious form of soft totalitarianism. Often this is coming from business and the media. We are also seeing this pushed through the federal government in the form of executive orders and bureaucrats.

## **Biblical Perspective**

In previous booklets we have provided a biblical perspective on race, gender, climate change, and stakeholder capitalism. As we have discussed, wokeness incorporates these issues and much more. We might add that Christians and

churches are facing prosecution because many of these woke ideas are contrary to Scripture. Nevertheless, many of these woke ideas are making their way into the pulpits and Sunday School classes of many churches. That is why we recommend you buy some of the books listed in Additional Resources.

Woke religion rejects the salvation of Christ and supplants it with a utopian view that true salvation can be found in environmental activism, racial activism, and stakeholder capitalism. We can applaud young people looking to make the world a better place, but they have put their allegiance into a worldview contrary to biblical principles.

Woke faith at its core is atheistic and denies God and Christ. Much of it is rooted in a Marxist view of the world. Second, it also replaces the biblical idea of sin (Romans 3:23)

with salvation through environmental activism and racial struggle. Third, it is a utopian vision that assumes we can create “heaven on Earth” without Christ.

If we want to address real social problems in our society, we need to come back to biblical principles. Many of the successful social movements in the last two centuries (abolition, suffrage, civil rights) rested on a biblical foundation. We don’t need woke theology to bring salt and light to our fallen world.

## **Additional Resources**

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Capitalism and Socialism*, Point of View booklet, 2018.

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on Critical Race Theory*, Point of View booklet, 2021.

Kerby Anderson, *A Biblical View on The Great Reset*, Point of View booklet, 2022.

Rod Dreher, *Live Not by Lies: A Manual for Christian Dissidents*, New York: Sentinel, 2020.

Noelle Mering, *Awake: Not Woke, A Christian response to the Cult of Progressive Ideology*, Gastonia, NC: Tan Books, 2021.

Vivek Ramaswamy, *Woke, Inc.* New York: Center Street, 2021.

Owen Strachan, *Christianity and Wokeness: How the Social Justice Movement is Hijacking the Gospel and the Way to Stop It*, Washington, DC: Salem Books, 2021.





# Point of View

Point of View Ministries · PO Box 30 · Dallas, TX 75221

[pointofview.net](http://pointofview.net) · 800-347-5151

July 2022 · A Biblical View on Wokeness

© Point of View Ministries 2022