

15th March 2022

Woke

“Let us awaken then, and evince a different spirit ... that shall inspire the people with confidence in themselves and in us [and] encourage them to persevere ... until their rights and liberties shall be established on a rock.”

Samuel Adams

Addressing a meeting of delegates to the Continental Congress, Yorktown (1777)

It would be simpler if I left the quotation above to speak for itself. So I'll confine myself to explaining what encouraged me to go back to Samuel words from two hundred and forty five years ago.

I recently came across a new book called *Young, Woke and Christian: Words from a mission generation*, edited by Victoria Turner. Not being “down with the kids”, the word “woke” is a new one to me. Originating from African-American vernacular English in the 2010s, it means “alert to racial prejudice and discrimination”. In recent times, it's used to cover a wider awareness of social inequalities, sexism issues, identity politics and issues of collective justice. I was encouraged, therefore, by the use of the word “woke” by young people who define themselves as Christians today. This book gives a voice to socially aware Christian young people.

“Young people,” writes Victoria Turner, “are often referred to as the church's ‘missing generation’. But perhaps it is not them that are missing from God's mission, but the church itself. *Young, Woke and Christian* brings together young church leaders and theologians who argue that the church needs to become increasingly awake to injustices in British society. ... Covering themes such as climate change, racial inclusivity, sexual purity, homelessness, food poverty, sexuality, trans identity, feminism, peace-making, interfaith relations, and disability justice, the collection is a cry for the reform of the Church to not ally with ‘woke’ issues because they are popular with youth, but because they are Gospel issues.”

This, surely, is Samuel Adams' “different spirit”, alive and well in our present age. Such passion and commitment should inspire *a//* people with confidence and encourage the whole Church to continue giving a voice to the marginalised. Woke? It's certainly inspired – and reawakened – me.

Young, Woke and Christian, Victoria Turner (ed) SCM Press, ISBN: 9780334061533

A prayer for today

Awaken me from my lethargy, Lord, to make me more aware of those in need. Amen

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