

The battle for a culture always involves a fight for hearts and minds, and the fight for hearts and minds is always a fight for words, especially the power of defining words. In this important book, Scott Allen has provided an essential handbook for our most significant cultural conflict: the words that matter most, how they are being redefined, and the definitions we must fight for.

**John Stonestreet**

President of Colson Center and host of *Breakpoint*

*Ten Words* is an eye-opening book. Words such as *love*, *justice*, *human*, *freedom*, and *sex* no longer mean what they used to. Allen is right that words have power. If we want to disciple the next generation of young Christians and wisely engage our culture, we need to clearly understand the reasons behind these shifts in meaning and be discerning in our use of words. This book will help you do just that.

**Sean McDowell, PhD**

Professor at Talbot School of Theology, author or editor of over twenty books, and a popular YouTuber.

Words matter. Successful revolutions begin by rewriting the dictionary to radically alter how people think about core concepts such as truth, justice, and humanity. Scott Allen's fascinating exploration of ten essential words shows how this battle over words works and how to reclaim their biblically based meanings to bring restoration and flourishing. This is an excellent book for anyone who wants to think more clearly—and biblically—about how we use language.

**Jeff Myers, PhD**

President, Summit Ministries

Scott Allen's book hands us the key to reclaiming our culture and nation. True words give life, vision, and purpose to families and nations, but enemies of the gospel hijack words to destroy us. Our weakness is their greater power. Revival requires Christians to speak words with true, biblical definitions. Only God's truth is true love.

**Kelly Monroe Kullberg**

Founder of the Veritas Forum and author of *Finding God at Harvard*.

General Secretary, American Association of Evangelicals (AAE)

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I immediately understood its utmost importance, and I think you will, too. The power of words to shape us and to shape culture is so simple and yet so profound an idea. I thank God that Scott wrote this book. It is a blessing, truly. His mastery of the subject and the certainty of his thesis (just read the last paragraph of the introduction!), combined with the simple clarity of his writing, makes this book both readable and urgent. If you want to know why America is rapidly becoming unrecognizable, this book makes it obvious. The stakes could not be higher, especially for our children and our children's children. A book like this concerns the cultural battles ahead and the ones that are raging right now. Read it and be equipped to take the stand we all must take.

**Jon Benzinger**

Lead Pastor, Redeemer Bible Church (Gilbert, Arizona), President, Redeemer Seminary, and Founder of *HelpingPastors.org*

As the secular, postmodern world continues to demand the right to redefine its own reality and truth, Scott Allen's book serves as a timely reminder for Christians. It underscores the urgent need for an intentional, authentic Christian philosophy of first principles. Allen's book is a Declaration of Intellectual Independence from a world that doesn't share even the most basic principles of right, justice, or truth with Christian believers. Christians must not be content to permit the world to define the truth for them but must seek it at the font: the cornerstone, the solid rock, Jesus Christ. Allen begins a long-overdue conversation among Christians about whether we will finally begin to take responsibility for our worldview or abandon thought to the secular world. I recommend that Christians interested in taking responsibility for their fundamental worldview begin by reading and considering Allen's book as the beginning of what must become a broad, fruitful conversation among Christians about the roots of our intellectual and social lives.

**Dr. Benjamin L. Mabry**

Lincoln Memorial University

One of the most critical battles our society is currently facing is the war over language. Whoever controls language establishes culture. By combining a social and cultural understanding with a missional theology of discipling nations, Scott Allen addresses the importance of language in this timely and highly relevant book. Allen reveals the Scripture's importance in forming Western culture. This book is about his refusal to embrace the modern redefinition of critical words and to recover their true biblical meaning. It carries the power to truly help people and impact culture.

**Teófilo Hayashi**

Senior Pastor of Zion Church (Sao Paulo, Brazil); Leader and Founder of the Dunamis Movement; and Co-leader of The Send

Scott Allen's resources have been a staple in my ministry for years. I've used them to train pastors, parents, grandparents, and the board members of some of the world's largest evangelical ministries. Scott has written a timely book that every Christian needs to read. Secularists are guilty of linguistic theft. They steal biblical words, redefine them to mean something different, and then use those words to shape our beliefs into secular views and values. This book will help you and those you love develop biblical clarity about ten important topics and remain deeply rooted in God's Word. Highly recommended.

**Dr. Josh Mulvihill**

Executive Director, Renewation  
Author of *Biblical Worldview*

The redefinition of critical biblical terms is one of the most important emerging fields of defending the Faith. Scott Allen makes an important contribution to that effort by writing a highly accessible book I hope many Christians will read and share with others.

**Krista Bontrager**

Vice President of Educational Programs and Biblical Integrity at the Center for Biblical Unity and Co-author of *Walking in Unity*

In a historic moment of embedded relativism, Scott Allen is joining a growing prophetic army of truth soldiers pushing back with both antidotes and warnings about the cost relativism has already demanded from us. Having chosen ten significant words to defend their historical meaning, Scott proceeds to give us all an excellent primer on biblical worldview as an essential housing within which these ten words must dwell. He pulls plenty of quotes from today's cultural experts on related subjects to add to the depth of his observations. Scott has done his homework in this book, and it deserves a "must read" label. Thank you, Scott!

**Dennis Peacocke**

Founder GoStrategic

In every generation, Christians are called to contend for the truth of the gospel. This truth is always communicated in language. Unfortunately, many Christians today are confused by the redefinition and distortion of uniquely Christian words and concepts. As a local church pastor, I cannot emphasize enough how helpful this book is. Scott gives a clear and structured explanation of the changing landscape of language and morality in our culture today and points us, by contrast, to the unchanging truth of God's Word. *Ten Words* is a must-read for any Christian in the West today. This book is a simple, clear, and timely work that helps Christians separate truth from error when morality and language are being redefined in our culture.

**Blaine Braden**

Lead Pastor, Eastmont Church (Bend, Oregon)

As much as ideas have consequences, language is the vehicle for perceived meaning. When words are redefined—whether knowingly or unknowingly—confusion ensues. Many of our day's great confusions and debates can be traced back to the varied meanings of shared words. Scott affirms what we often take for granted in this thoughtful and systematic work. Whoever controls the language and its meaning controls the culture. This is a wake-up call to return to the true meanings of words and understand their value and impact on the culture.

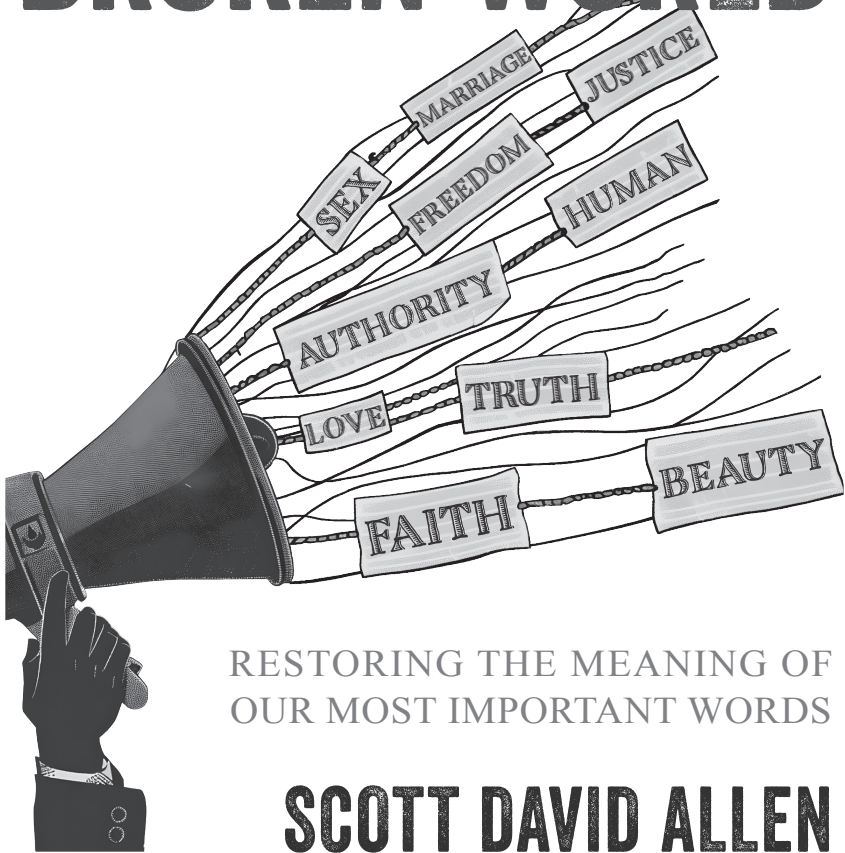
**Katherine Gallagher**

CEO of GoStrategic

**10 WORDS  
TO HEAL OUR  
BROKEN WORLD**



# 10 WORDS TO HEAL OUR BROKEN WORLD



RESTORING THE MEANING OF  
OUR MOST IMPORTANT WORDS

**SCOTT DAVID ALLEN**

*Ten Words to Heal Our Broken World*

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*In reconstructing a society in collapse,  
the first priority is to restore the proper meaning of words.*

CONFUCIUS

*The words of the Lord are flawless,  
like silver purified in a crucible,  
like gold refined seven times.*

PSALM 12:6

	<b>True Meaning</b>	<b>Redefined to Mean</b>
<b>Truth</b>	That which accords with, or corresponds with, objective reality.	(1) An internal, personal, and subjective sense of reality that exists only in the mind. (2) A social construct created to advantage the dominant group.
<b>Human</b>	Pertaining to man (male and female), mankind, humans are physical and spiritual beings, created by God in His image, with intrinsic dignity, incalculable worth, and unalienable rights to life and liberty. Humans are created for an intimate relationship with their Creator, as well as relationships with one another. God created humans to wisely steward and govern the created world, and they are accountable to Him for how they carry out this task.	(1) A form of animal life, the product of a purposeless process of material evolution; a biological machine. (2) A radically autonomous, willing creature. An independent, self-determining agent. (3) A socially and historically determined being, a representative of a particular culture or identity group.
<b>Sex</b>	(1) The God-created male-female division. (2) Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman; a comprehensive one-flesh union of heart, mind, spirit, and body, often issuing in the gift of children. Sexual intercourse is a gift from God exclusively for the uniting of husband and wife in marriage.	(1) Synonymous with gender, a social construct; a person's subjective sense of their sexual identity, without regard to biology or anatomy. (2) The ultimate source of personal identity and meaning. (3) Any form of recreational sexual activity done to give pleasure.
<b>Marriage</b>	A God-ordained, comprehensive, exclusive, and permanent union that brings a man and a woman together as husband and wife, to be father and mother to any children their union brings into being. It is based on the anthropological truth that men and women are different and complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the social reality that children need both a mother and a father. <sup>1</sup>	A legally recognized, romantic caregiving relationship between consenting adults who intend to live together as sexual and domestic partners.
<b>Freedom</b>	The capacity to self-govern; to act according to one's choices within God's created order and under His moral law.	The power or right to act, speak or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.

<b>Authority</b>	The power or right to issue commands, rules, or laws and to ensure they are carried out. Human authority is delegated from God, the supreme authority, and is accountable to Him. When properly exercised, authority creates conditions in which people thrive by providing wise leadership in a context of ordered liberty. Jesus, our model for authority in practice, sacrificially serves those under authority for their good.	An arbitrary, self-serving, and often harsh and oppressive use of power and control. A concentration of power in human government or rule that is unaccountable to God, constitutional limits, or the people under authority.
<b>Justice</b>	Conformity to God's moral standard as revealed in the Ten Commandments and the Royal Law: "love your neighbor as yourself." (1) Living in right relationship with God and others; giving people their due as image-bearers of God. (2) Impartially rendering judgment, righting wrongs, and meting out punishment for lawbreaking. A task reserved for God and God-ordained authorities including parents in the home, elders in the church, teachers in the school, and civil authorities in the state.	Deconstructing traditional systems and structures deemed to be oppressive, and redistributing power and resources from oppressors to their victims in the pursuit of equality of outcome.
<b>Faith</b>	To assent to the weight of evidence; to trust in the truthfulness and reliability of something or someone based on a careful search of available evidence and personal experience.	Affirming the truthfulness of something without regard to evidence, or even despite a lack of evidence.
<b>Beauty</b>	A combination of qualities present in a thing or person, both externally and internally, that gives joy and deep satisfaction. Beauty can move us deeply and fill us with awe and wonder. Because God is its ultimate source, beauty has an objective reality that transcends personal tastes.	A combination of aesthetic qualities that appeal to one's personal, subjective senses or tastes. Beauty is entirely a matter of personal preference and individual expression.
<b>Love</b>	(1) A source of pleasure, joy, or delight. (2) A strong affection, often accompanied by romantic feelings and sexual attraction. (3) To value, cherish, or treasure. (4) Fidelity and devotion. Faithful commitment. (5) To seek the good of another, to give for his or her benefit, even at a significant personal cost.	(1) A source of pleasure, joy, or delight. (2) A strong affection, often accompanied by romantic feelings and sexual attraction.



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## FOREWORD

If you are concerned about the events unfolding in our world today, this book is a must-read. Western elites, in tandem with the woke mob, have effectively transformed the landscape of our culture here in the United States and throughout the Western world from that of flourishing, pluralistic democracies to relativistic, feelings-driven tyrannies. But, you might wonder, how did they do this? In short, they did this through the redefining of words.

I, Darrow Miller, am a co-founder of the Disciple Nations Alliance. I'm also an author and teacher. In my youth I was mentored by Francis Schaeffer in Switzerland, and I have worked for fifty years to help the poor and hungry. I've lived at the unlikely intersection of worldview and development for most of my life. I have seen firsthand the power of language to build culture and the power of culture to build families, communities, and nations.

I recruited and trained Scott Allen to work overseas as a cross-cultural missionary in Japan forty years ago. Scott has become a good friend and co-worker at the Disciple Nations Alliance. He is compassionate, thoughtful, analytical, and passionate about ideas. We share an interest in the power of words to shape a culture and a nation. In addition to being an excellent administrator, Scott is a gifted writer who has authored or co-authored several books.

Scott's interest in words started decades ago and has culminated in this book. Scott understands that words serve as containers for ideas and that ideas have consequences.

Christian worldview teacher Dennis Peacocke says,

Whoever controls the language controls the culture.  
Words have incredible power because they set the agendas

of whole nations. The words we use describe a situation or problem and frame how we approach it. They actually trigger a series of emotional and conceptual releases within us that capture our minds and inhibit our ability to view reality from another perspective. It's not bullets that ultimately win wars; it's words. A bullet won't make you die for someone, but the right word lodged within you will make you fearless.

When we think of words in terms of bullets, we realize that enemies of the gospel have effectively disarmed the church. The church today, often ignorant of the biblical definitions of words, learns from our dominant postmodern culture how to define essential words like *human*, *sex*, *marriage*, and *justice*.

Scott has seen the expansion and power of this tactic and now offers you the antidote: the recovery of truth through the recovery of God's definitions of words.

In this book Scott quotes historian Thomas Cahill's book *The Gift of the Jews* to illustrate where the language of freedom and opportunity came from. Cahill writes:

The Jews gave us a whole new vocabulary. . . . Most of our best words, in fact—new, adventure, surprise, unique, individual, person, vocation; time, history, future, freedom, progress, spirit; faith, hope, justice [and I would add love, compassion, human dignity, and human rights]—are the gifts of the Jews.

The Jews gave us this language through the Bible. In *Ten Words to Heal Our Broken World: Restoring the True Meaning of our Most Important Words*, Scott contrasts the historic, biblical meanings of essential words with today's current, redefined meanings to show how these critical word that have shaped the West have been



consciously changed and manipulated to conform to the atheistic, materialistic, and postmodern worldview of our age.

If you are watching the world shake under your feet and our culture decline before your eyes and want to understand why this is happening, you must understand the power of words.

May we, as the church, understand our heritage and the language of freedom. May we recover the lost tools of culture-building as we recover the words that can heal our land. In these chaotic times, may we build cultures founded on the Rock of Jesus through the power of His Word.

Darrow L. Miller  
Phoenix, Arizona  
August 2024



## INTRODUCTION

“Through your offspring, all nations on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3; 22:18). So promised God to Abraham, the forefather of Israel, and of the church (Galatians 3:7–9). The great, unchanging plan of God through the ages is to work through His people, the offspring of Abraham, to bless the nations He loves.

God saved His people for a purpose—to be a light to the nations and work for the good of our neighbors. To be part of creating cultures that are free, just, and compassionate. To be salt that preserves all that is good, true, and beautiful from dissolution and decline.

We know that sharing the gospel is central to this task, as we invite our neighbors into a personal relationship with their Creator through faith in Jesus Christ. The gospel is the starting point of renewal and transformation, personally and culturally. But there is much more work to do. Cultures thrive in the rich soil of truth, and the biblical definitions of words and language lead us into truth.

Words are incredibly powerful. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” begins the Gospel of John. The Word spoke the universe into being. It’s no overstatement to say that we live in a word-based universe.

God created us in His image with the capacity to use words and language to create culture. “Culture lives by language,” wrote Catholic historian Robert Lewis Wilken, “and the sentiments, thoughts, and feelings of a Christian culture are formed and carried by the language of the Scriptures.”

In his masterful book *The Gifts of the Jews*,<sup>2</sup> historian Thomas Cahill tells us that four thousand years ago Abram (later Abraham)

heard the voice of God and followed that voice in faith. As he turned from worshiping pagan idols to the One True God, his understanding of the world was transformed. Subsequently, his vocabulary changed, and so did the world's. He writes:

The Jews gave us a whole new vocabulary, a whole new Temple of the Spirit, an inner landscape of ideas and feelings that had never been known before . . . We can hardly get up in the morning or cross the street without being Jewish. We dream Jewish dreams and hope Jewish hopes. Most of our best words, in fact—new, adventure, surprise, unique, individual, person, vocation; time, history, future, freedom, progress, spirit; faith, hope, justice [and I would add love, compassion, human dignity, and human rights]—are the gifts of the Jews.

I love the title, *The Gifts of the Jews*, because it correctly describes these words as “gifts.” Indeed, they are very precious gifts God gave as He spoke through the Holy Scriptures, which He entrusted to the Jewish nation and the church for the whole world's good.

These words and concepts created what Cahill described as “an inner landscape of ideas and feelings that had never been known before.” In other words, they created a new mental space that enabled people and nations to prosper and flourish.

Do we see these words as priceless gifts from God? Not given *to* us, but given *through* us, to the world? We should.

Most of us take words for granted. We spend our days using them, not thinking deeply about their meanings, or where their definitions came from. We assume the words we use have always existed, or have similar meanings in other cultures. Not true. As Cahill says, most of our “best” words came into our language through the Bible.

For native English speakers, this transformation happened more than four hundred years ago, through the heroic and sacrificial work of Christian Englishmen such as John Wycliffe (c. 1328–1384) and William Tyndale (c. 1494–1536), who first translated the Bible into the English language.

With this, native English speakers were able to read and reflect on biblical words and definitions for the first time. Entirely new ideas, such as the biblical concepts of justice, freedom, compassion, and human dignity, began to expand and transform the minds of ordinary Englishmen, leading to profound transformations in their cultures—in politics, education, and law.

The same thing happened in France, Spain, Germany, and Holland when the Bible was translated into their native tongues, and this same process has been repeated all over the world through the hard work of Christian missionaries and Bible translators. It continues today.

Previous generations of Christian missionaries not only translated the Bible into native languages, but they taught indigenous peoples to read, so they could access the Bible directly. They set up schools and universities to institutionalize biblical definitions in education, government, law, and civil society. In this way, they transformed the world. They disciplined nations.

This happened in my own country, the United States. Our nation's early institutions were built on the solid foundation of true, biblical definitions. One of our great Founding Fathers, Noah Webster, made this his life's mission. Webster is "the father of American education." He compiled the American Dictionary of the English Language in 1828, recognizing that a nation of free people required a dictionary built "from the Bible up."

His dictionary contained more biblical definitions than any other reference volume before or since. Notwithstanding the blight of slavery and other sins, this biblical legacy produced one of the

freest, most prosperous, generous, and humane nations in human history—a legacy we are tragically throwing away in my lifetime. Today, in the United States and throughout the Western world, our “cultural elites” have discarded Webster’s 1828 Dictionary and are busily redefining words at breakneck speed. We are abandoning God and going our own way—and with a change in worship comes a shift in language and culture.

This redefinition of words has created tremendous tension and confusion. Communication becomes fraught. We use the same words but seemingly different dictionaries. We look sideways at one another and think (with a nod to Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride*), “You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.”

I’ve had the privilege of traveling to scores of nations during my career, first with the international development organization Food for the Hungry, and then with the organization I now lead, the Disciple Nations Alliance. I’ve seen the importance and power of words and language in human development and poverty alleviation.

One of my colleagues, Arturo, for example, worked with the Pokomchi, a Mayan people in the highlands of Guatemala—one of the poorest groups in that nation. The Pokomchi are subsistence farmers, and corn is their staple. Yet Arturo noticed that every year at harvest, rats would eat as much as half of the crop. Arturo wondered why they didn’t protect the crop from the rats. They replied, “Rats have always eaten the crop this way. It was like this for our grandfathers, and our fathers, and will be this way for our children as well.”

Missionaries had come to the Pokomchi villages, and some of the tribe were followers of Jesus. Churches had been planted. Many missionary organizations would consider this group “reached” and move on to the next frontier. Yet they remained in abject poverty with one of the highest infant mortality rates in the Western Hemisphere.

If the Bible had been translated into their native tongue, they were unable to read it, so for them, it remained a closed book. Arturo began to question them about their local language and learned that they had no word in their language for “dominion.” For them, the idea that human beings were to rule or have dominion over the animal kingdom was completely alien. Instead, it was the opposite. What we call “nature” was more powerful than they were. So powerful, in their minds, that they were largely helpless in the face of it, and this shaped the way they thought about something as simple as rats eating their corn crop.

So Arturo began to teach them from the Bible, starting in Genesis, chapter one. He taught them that God had created them in His image. He is the great King over all, and because we are made in His image, we too are created to rule over His creation. Arturo then asked the Pokomchi: Who has dominion over the corn crop at harvest? You, or the rats?

Arturo could see the lights go on, and a whole new idea—a new mental space that never existed before—came into their minds. They answered, “The rats.”

“Is this what God wants?” Arturo responded.

“No.”

“So what are you going to do about it?”

With that simple question, a remarkable transformation happened in the village. The farmers developed simple corn cribs that protected their crop from the rats, and the food supply doubled. Infant mortality rates plummeted, and the Pokomchi farmers began to innovate in completely new ways. One word, *dominion*—human authority over creation—transformed an impoverished village.

This story, and similar ones, changed my entire perspective on how to help impoverished peoples and communities to rise out of poverty. The key wasn't transfers of money or technology. It would have been so easy for a Western development organization or short-

term church group from North America to build corn cribs for them, but how effective would this be if the Pokomchi didn't have a word or concept of dominion?

In the West, we take words and ideas like "dominion" for granted. We were born and raised to think that we should have authority over plants and animals, and not vice versa. We assume that everyone thinks this way, but they don't.

The concept of dominion came into the world through the Bible. So did many other ideas, such as the supreme dignity and worth of all human beings regardless of their sex, ethnicity, or social status, or words and ideas such as freedom and equal justice under the law. Words such as mercy, compassion, or love, understood as sacrificial service for the benefit of another, even at great personal cost, and even if that love is not reciprocated.

All of these words and ideas came into the world through the Bible.

The key to human development is found in the Bible and in the power of biblical words. Of course, those words need to be accessible in indigenous languages; the people must be taught to read and understand them, and those words and ideas must root themselves into their cultural institutions, particularly their educational practices and systems.

This holistic understanding used to be at the very heart of Christian missions, but no more. Today, the goal for most Christian missionaries is to proclaim the gospel of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and to gather new converts into churches. And while there remains a robust vision to see the Bible translated into native languages, there is far less interest in literacy, and almost no interest in establishing schools or universities where biblical words can be learned deeply in order to begin shaping cultures and nations.

The relatively new idea in Christian missions is that Jesus is returning soon, so we need to prioritize gospel proclamation



to get people saved out of this fallen world, which is destined for destruction. Efforts to change cultures or shape nations through literacy, schools, or other forms of what some call “cultural engagement” are seen as either a secondary priority or even a complete waste of time—a distraction from the highest priority.

But just because Christians no longer have a vision beyond spiritual conversion and filling seats in local churches doesn’t mean that other people don’t have a vision to transform the culture by leveraging the power of words.

As my friend and mentor Darrow Miller has taught me, if you want to change culture, you must begin by changing language. The enemies of the gospel understand this very well. Someone is going to shape the culture. Someone is going to define words and embed those words into the systems and institutions at the foundations of a culture. If not Christians with true, biblical definitions that lead to freedom and human flourishing, then non-Christians with false redefinitions that destroy nations will do it.

This destruction has been happening in Western nations for the past century. Christians have largely given up on their primary calling to be salt and light by defending true definitions in the public square. Instead, we’ve been content to limit our faith to evangelism, attending Sunday morning worship services, and personal piety.

The church’s failure to carry out her mission doesn’t only harm our nations; it harms the church as well. We give our systems of education over to non-Christians and send our children through those same systems. Twelve years later, we are surprised when our children have fully absorbed the false, redefinition of many words and are no longer able to articulate true biblical definitions. Again, quoting my friend Darrow, “If the church fails to disciple the nation, the nation will disciple the church.” This is where we find ourselves today, with secular postmodern culture shaping the church, and not the other way around.

As a consequence, the church loses her power as she jettisons biblical truth and tries to regain her societal role through an endless quest for relevance. This quest leads, in fact, to the church falling into deeper and deeper and deeper holes of irrelevance. The downward progression looks something like this:

- The church tries to speak relevantly to the culture;
- The church adopts the language of the culture;
- The church makes accommodation to the culture;
- The church is held captive by the culture.

Yet this is not just a disturbing sociological process. We must remember that our enemy isn't flesh and blood but is composed of "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). Satan uses the redefinition of words to advance his counterfeit kingdom. His tactic is parasitic. He latches onto words given by God and redefines them—empties them of their God-given meaning, and ultimately destroys the very words and their meanings.

We see this tactic in his challenge to the words of God given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1–7). "Did God truly say . . . ?" Satan casts doubt on God's words, causing confusion that leads to rebellion and, ultimately, destruction.

Here's how this works today. Look up "marriage" in Webster's 1828 Dictionary, and you'll find this definition:

The act of uniting a man and woman for life; wedlock; the legal union of man and woman for life. Marriage is a contract both civil and religious by which parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity, and for securing the maintenance and education of children.

Now look at the definition embedded in Microsoft's popular word-processing software "Word." It defines marriage as:

A legally recognized relationship, established by a civil or religious ceremony, between two people who intend to live together as sexual and domestic partners.

Marriage, as it has been understood for millennia, is being intentionally redefined out of existence—in our lifetimes. Think of the enormously destructive cultural repercussions that the change in definition in just one word will bring about. As John Milton said, "When language in common use in any country becomes irregular and depraved, it is followed by their ruin and degradation."<sup>2</sup>

As I write this, efforts are well underway to redefine marriage even further by replacing "two people" with "any group," and this will almost assuredly happen, for if God doesn't define words like marriage, then the most powerful among us will. Unmoored from God, definitions change like shifting sands, and words lose all meaning.

This change in definition wasn't accidental. There was (and is) a defined, carefully executed strategy to bring it about. Behind this effort are spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, intent on destroying all that God created and declared to be good, true, and beautiful.

When the United States Supreme Court enshrined this new definition of marriage as the law of the land in its *Obergefell v. Hodges* 2015 ruling, the redefinition had already been written into the dictionaries. In reflecting on this ruling, John Stonestreet of the Colson Center says:

The absurdity of these rulings is mindboggling until you understand the ideas driving them. [We find] a clue from the self-absorbed ramblings of *Alice in Wonderland's* Humpty Dumpty, who said, "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."

For Humpty, co-opting the meaning of words makes perfect sense, because his goal is not to communicate Truth, but to become the master. The recent court rulings—and many cultural disruptions over the past decades—are really about who will be master . . . .

There's a long history detailing the manipulation of language for social control. George Orwell described the process well in his book *1984*. The language was forever being altered, “to make all other modes of thought impossible. . . .” This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings. . . .

He continues:

But this isn't something only of science fiction. When Communists took over mainland China, they perpetrated a “Cultural Revolution” that disrupted family bonds, discouraged religious devotion, and dismantled the Chinese language. Simplified characters replaced five thousand years of meaning and culture.

Now, we have it here. Words like “husband” and “wife” are discriminatory, confining marriage to two people is hateful, and “religious freedom” is bigotry. And many in our society wish to make words mean just what they want them to mean.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the most important words in the English language—not only marriage, but words such as freedom, love, justice, sex, human, truth, and the others highlighted in this book have been redefined in a deliberate effort to advance non-biblical ideologies.

But contra postmodern deconstructionism, words are not empty vessels to be filled with whatever meaning we wish. These are God-spoken words, and to redefine them is an act of rebellion against the Creator.

I wrote this book for two main reasons. The first is my growing alarm at how rapidly many “load-bearing” words in our culture are being redefined and all the destructive consequences that will inevitably follow.

Compounding this alarm is an ever-growing awareness of how many brothers and sisters in Christ have unwittingly absorbed and adopted these redefined meanings. This ignorance of true definitions is not only a disaster for the church but for the nations the church exists to serve. Pastor Kevin DeYoung said it well:

[Christians] are people of the Word—worshippers of the Word incarnate and believers in the importance of faith-invigorating and faith-defending words in creeds and confessions. Of all people, Christians should care about definitions.<sup>4</sup>

Our formation in Christlikeness must be grounded in the proper, biblical meaning of words. If we are to experience a revival in the church and a reformation of culture, it won't happen without recovering a biblical lexicon. We must heed Robert Lewis Wilken's dire warning: “We cannot be the Church if we lose our vocabulary and the conceptual framework that makes us Christian.”<sup>5</sup>

The second reason I wrote the book, is that our mission at the Disciple Nations Alliance is to help the church recover its true mission to bless and disciple the nations. We are not content to stand by passively while the enemies of Jesus have their way in destroying nations by redefining biblical worlds.

We Christians long to see our neighbors and their families, communities, and nations flourish. We long to see nations struggling with corruption become more just. To see nations struggling with poverty become more prosperous. We are convinced this will not happen unless the dominant culture of any nation develops a biblical vocabulary and a moral and mental ecology that comports with reality.

This book can start the process by helping the church reclaim the true meaning of ten significant words that have been dramatically redefined today. Each chapter will explore a different word, following the same outline.

- We'll explore the true, God-given meaning of these words as revealed in Scripture and lived out by the church for over two thousand years.
- We'll look at how these words led directly to building free, humane, and just cultures.
- We'll then reveal how each word has been redefined and how the new meanings lead to profoundly harmful and destructive cultural changes.
- We'll conclude each chapter by exploring practical ways Christians can be salt and light by preserving and acting upon the true meanings in our daily lives.

Why these ten words? Because they are so foundational—so basic. How they are defined and understood will do more to shape a life, a family, or an entire nation, for good or ill, than almost anything else.

My motivation isn't to win a culture war but to be faithful to the calling to love our neighbors and bless our nations. I agree with the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, who sagely wrote, "In reconstructing a society in collapse, the first priority is to restore the proper meaning of words."

There is a true meaning for the ten words covered in this book (as well as many others). These actual definitions come from God through His Word, the Bible.<sup>6</sup> These true, biblical definitions are not merely valid for Christians. They are true for everyone—Christian and non-Christian alike.

Christians, as much as anyone else, need to know these true definitions and build our lives on them. This is where it starts. In our own lives, in our families, and in our places of work. From there, we need to work to conserve and defend these true definitions in the public square. We need to do what we can to see that they are institutionalized in our various social systems. Again, they are true not just for us, but for everyone. Unless our society is built on the foundation of truth, it will inevitably be built on the foundation of falsehood, and we will reap the terrible consequences.

While I trust that this book will be helpful to brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world, I have a particular concern for what is happening in the United States and other Western nations. Over the past two hundred years, they have undergone a profound shift in core worldview assumptions from biblical theism to secular materialism, to the now-emerging postmodern neo-paganism.

As the tectonic plates of culture shift in the West (and around the world), societal pressure mounts against the church. The dominant culture in the West has moved from post-Christian to anti-Christian almost overnight, and with that shift, the pressure to discard Biblical definitions grows stronger with each passing day.

Increasingly, policies and laws are being established to compel speech and action based on false redefinitions. Adhering to biblical definitions more and more results in cultural stigma and sometimes legal penalties. It even can necessitate civil disobedience.

Will the committed Christian remnant in Europe and North America withstand the pressure? Ultimately, this question will be

answered by each of us, and it will primarily come down to this: Whose dictionary do we trust?

Rosaria Butterfield was doing everything she could to advance the new cultural redefinitions. She was an atheist, having rejected her Catholic childhood and what she perceived to be the superstitions and illogic of the historic Christian faith. For years, she had lived in monogamous lesbian relationships and even coauthored Syracuse University's first successful domestic partnership policy while working there as a professor of English and women's studies. At the time of her conversion, she was working on a book exposing the religious right from a lesbian feminist point of view. She approached the Bible and the biblical meaning of words and language with an agenda to tear them down. Rosaria believed the Bible to be dangerous and irrational.<sup>7</sup>

However, God used the gracious hospitality and genuine love of a Christian who came into Rosaria's life to break through her defenses. Over time, Rosaria began to question her worldview. Here's how she describes the change:

This was the first of my many betrayals against the LGBT community: *whose dictionary did I trust?* The one used by the community that I helped create or the one that reflected the God who created me?<sup>8</sup>

That's the question. How about you? Whose dictionary do you trust?

Like the great Noah Webster before us, I hope that this book, in some small way, will contribute to a revival of the church and a reformation of culture. May it open your eyes to the power, beauty, and truthfulness of biblical words—and motivate you to faithfully steward, preserve, and pass these words and meanings down to future generations.



God has called us for such a time as this. Let us be salt and light by telling the truth about sex, marriage, love, freedom, justice, and truth itself. My prayer is that you will allow these true meanings to inform every area of your life and through you, to make an impact in your neighborhood, in your place of work, and in the broader culture for the glory of God and the good of our nations.

*Scott D. Allen*

Bend, Oregon

July 2024

CHAPTER 1

TRUTH

*For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.*

JOHN 18:37, ESV

## TRUTH

That which accords with factual, objective reality.

## TRUTH REDEFINED

(1) An internal, personal, and subjective sense of reality that exists only in the mind. (2) A social construct created to advantage the dominant group.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2018 Golden Globes, billionaire entertainer and television mogul Oprah Winfrey’s powerful acceptance speech stirred the audience attuned to the proliferating accounts of sexual abuse in the media. It even prompted speculation that Winfrey might one day run for president.<sup>2</sup>

“What I know for sure is that speaking your truth is the most powerful tool we all have,” Winfrey said at one point, “and I’m especially proud and inspired by all the women who have felt strong enough and empowered enough to speak up and share their personal stories.”<sup>3</sup>

Later, she added, “For too long women have not been heard or believed if they dared to speak their truth to the power of those men. But their time is up.”

Winfrey’s repeated formulation “your truth” perked up some ears. Byron Tau of *The Wall Street Journal* tweeted, “Oprah employed a phrase that I’ve noticed a lot of other [celebrities] using these days: ‘your truth’ instead of ‘the truth.’ Why that phrasing?” He suggested