



Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™

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Renewing Terms 15 November 2005

Words that call people to action drop into the pond of language and create waves. Over time, however, the waves spread across the entire body of water. Others borrow the language for their own use. The power of the idea gets absorbed into the greater body of water.

It simply does not take long for powerful words to lose their meaning.

Methodism is one example. Where once it meant a disciplined approach to living one's Christian Faith, it is now more often used to identify a Christian denomination and its institutions.

Sunday School is another. It once meant a way for churches to engage in social ministry – teaching children to read and write because their work in factories prevented them from going to school. Now Sunday School means many types of congregational activity, including activities not meant to educate anyone in anything.

What words would you list that have lost their meaning? Here are a few from my own:

Stewardship

Redemption

Evangelize

Gospel

Saved

Born Again

Adore

Leadership

What benefit might you gain by resurrecting or at least refreshing original definitions?

What if you spent some time in sermons or board meetings or in leadership development revisiting words like these, recovering the power of the ideas they contain?

- mark l. vincent