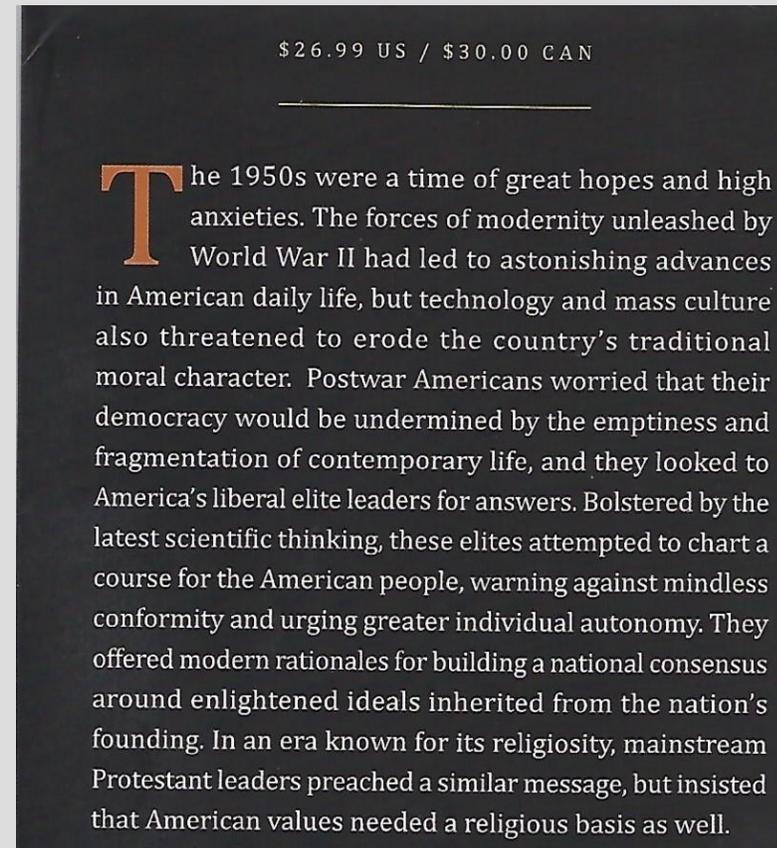
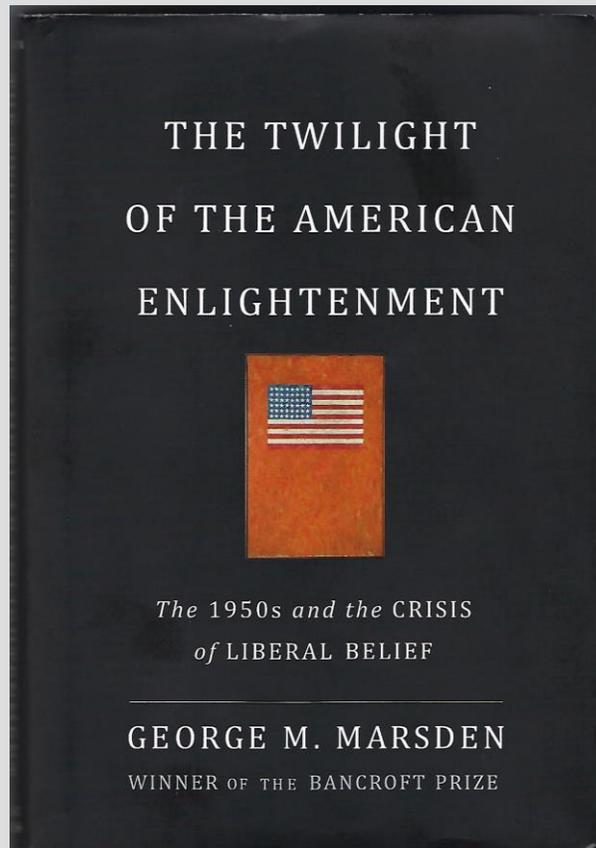


DISCIPLESHIP AND “WHAT IS TRUTH”

- Ask anyone today, "What is truth?" and you're sure to start an interesting conversation.
- One of the most profound and eternally significant questions in the Bible was posed by an unbeliever.
- John 18:37-38 Pilate said, "So you are a king?" Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true." 38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. NLT
- Two thousand years later, the whole world breathes Pilate's cynicism.

• Major Shift:



Defining Enlightenment:

- the state of having knowledge or understanding: the act of giving someone knowledge or understanding
- the Enlightenment: a movement of the 18th century that stressed the belief that science and logic give people more knowledge and understanding than tradition and religion

- **What Do We Mean by 'Scientific Truth'?**

- Calling something a “scientific truth” is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it carries a kind of epistemic (how we know) credibility, a quality assurance that a truth has been arrived at in an understandable and verifiable way.
- On the other, it seems to suggest science provides one of many possible categories of truth, all of which must be equal or, at least, non-comparable. Simply put, if there’s a “scientific truth” there must be other truths out there. Right?

- **“But whose truth?”**

- **Subjective Truth**

- **Deductive Truth**

- **Inductive Truth**

- **Post-Truth: Hegemony on Social Media and Implications for Sustainability Communication**

- **Keywords:** post-truth; ideology; hegemony(1 : preponderant influence or authority over others 2 : the social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence exerted by a dominant group) science communication; Facebook; social media

- **I. Introduction**

The communication of scientific information faces new challenges. The notion that science is an appropriate means for informing policy may no longer hold the weight it once did; this trend has been commented upon in news media, as well as within academia [1], with some labeling these conditions as a post-truth age [2]. **In 2016, the Oxford English Dictionary dubbed post-truth the word of the year, defining it as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion or personal belief”** [3]. These circumstances correspond a widespread rejection of the establishment in the forms of the mainstream media, experts, elites, officials, and scientists, while embracing arguments couched in the logic of commonsense [4,5], and pose a significant challenge for any efforts to foster a collective and just transition toward sustainability, especially when communicating facts about climate change to the public.

Specifically, this study understands the conditions of post-truth in regard to the rise in social media platforms that now serve as a dominant medium of communication, a development that has had profound implications for science communication due to the shift in how individuals access and interact with information [1].

New research suggests that these conditions may be a dominant characteristic of social media.

Emotional content has been shown to travel faster and wider on social media platforms [11,12], while the largest study of its kind found that false news stories travel faster, wider, and deeper in online networks than truthful ones, with the degree of novelty and emotional reactions of viewers cited as likely causes of the heightened diffusion of false information [13].

Because online spaces are inundated with false information, **the line between what is real and fabricated is often difficult to distinguish [14,15].** The result is a proliferation of conspiracy theories and falsities that at one time would have been considered fringe [16] but are now corroborated by networks of individuals and independent media outlets [15,17].

- **So, what is truth?**

- Here's a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: ***Truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God.*** Even more to the point: *Truth is the self-expression of God.* That is the biblical meaning of truth. Because the definition of truth flows from God, truth is *theological*.
- Truth is also *ontological*—which is a fancy way of saying it is the way things really are. **Reality is what it is because God declared it so and made it so.** Therefore God is the author, source, determiner, governor, arbiter, ultimate standard, and final judge of all truth.
- The Old Testament refers to the Almighty as the “God of truth”
 - Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. NKJV
 - Isaiah 65:16 So that he who blesses himself in the earth Shall bless himself in the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Shall swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My eyes. NKJV

- **John 14:6** Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. NLT
- Jesus also said that the written Word of God is truth. It does not merely contain nuggets of truth; it is pure, unchangeable, and inviolable truth that (according to Jesus) "cannot be broken"
 - John 10:35 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came — and the Scripture cannot be broken— NIV
- Praying to His heavenly Father on behalf of His disciples, He said this: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"
 - John 17:17 Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. NLT
- Moreover, the Word of God is eternal truth "which lives and abides forever"
 - 1 Peter 1:23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, NKJV

- Of course, there cannot be any discord or difference of opinion between the *written* Word of God (Scripture) and the *incarnate* Word of God (Jesus). In the first place, truth by definition cannot contradict itself.
- Second, Scripture is called “the word of Christ”
 - Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, NKJV
- It is *His* message, *His* self-expression. In other words, the truth of Christ and the truth of the Bible are of the very same character. They are in perfect agreement in every respect. Both are equally true. God has revealed Himself to humanity through Scripture and through His Son. Both perfectly embody the essence of what truth is.
- Scripture also says God reveals basic truth about Himself in nature.
 - Psalm 19:1-4 The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. 2 Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. 3 They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. 4 Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world. NLT

- His other invisible attributes (such as His wisdom, power, and beauty) are on constant display in what He has created
 - Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. NIV
- Knowledge of Him is inborn in the human heart
 - Romans 1:19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. NIV
- A sense of the moral character and loftiness of His law is implicit in every human conscience
 - Romans 2:15-16 They demonstrate that God's law is written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right. NLT

- And for those who wonder whether basic truths about God and His moral standards really are stamped on the human heart, ample proof can be found in the long history of human law and religion. To suppress this truth is to dishonor God, displace His glory, and incur His wrath.
 - Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, NASB
- The Bible is the touchstone to which all truth claims should be brought and by which all other truth must finally be measured.
- **It should be obvious truth means nothing apart from God. Truth cannot be adequately explained, recognized, understood, or defined without God as the source.** Since He alone is eternal and self-existent and He alone is the Creator of all else, He is the fountain of all truth.

- Try defining truth without reference to God
- The whole concept of truth instantly becomes nonsense (and every imagination of the human heart therefore turns to sheer foolishness) as soon as people attempt to remove the thought of God from their minds.
 - Romans 1:21-23 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. NASB
- **There are serious *moral* implications too, whenever someone tries to dissociate truth from the knowledge of God.**
 - Romans 1:28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. ESV

- Abandon a biblical definition of truth, and unrighteousness is the inescapable result. We see it happening before our eyes in every corner of contemporary society. In fact, the widespread acceptance of homosexuality, rebellion, and all forms of sin and lawlessness that we see in our society today is a verbatim fulfillment of what Roman 1 says always happens when a society denies and suppresses the essential connection between God and truth.
- **Every truth claim apart from Him is preposterous.**
- After thousands of years, the very best of human philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Marx, James, and others) have all utterly failed to account for truth and the origin of human knowledge apart from God.
- In fact, the one most valuable lesson humanity ought to have learned from philosophy is that it is impossible to make sense of truth without acknowledging God as the necessary starting point.

- **Truth is not subjective, it is not a consensual cultural construct, and it is not an invalid, outdated, irrelevant concept. Truth is the self-expression of God. Truth is thus theological; it is the reality God has created and defined, and over which He rules. Truth is therefore a moral issue for every human being.**

