



HISTORY INTEGRITY TRUTH SCRIPTURE

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February 2022 Not Ashamed

Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (NKJV). A younger Christian recently asked in a public forum whether he was rightly understanding the idea of being ashamed. He gave a fairly noncontroversial definition based on an English language definition. While several others provided help with the Greek word and its definition, I thought it was important to go in a slightly different direction. The definition of the word wasn't a great mystery. The importance, however, was being overlooked.

When Paul speaks of the possibility that the gospel would create shame, the concept that comes to mind immediately based on his language is that of a shameful situation that would defile you, that would place you under a rightful curse. In ancient drama and poetry the defiled person in a shameful situation might be Atreus, who welcomed his brother Thyestes to a banquet. Thyestes' sons were on the menu. It might be Oedipus, who accidentally killed his father, married his mother, and fathered his own siblings. The person who is ashamed in these settings is someone whose crime brings his downfall and cannot be reversed.

In Paul's time, Roman civilization already despised Jewish people, and it considered Christianity to be a sort of radicalized form of Judaism. Where communion practice was known, it was associated with cannibalism due to Jesus' claims about his body and blood. The Christian habit of referring to other Christians as brothers and sisters suggested to the wider culture that Christians were marrying their brothers and sisters. And there were known instances in which slaves had been elevated to leadership of the Church, so free people were being ruled by slaves.

The culture didn't understand Christianity, and it considered it vile and dangerous. Do you believe Jesus? Then your culture would say you should be ashamed. You are doing something that can never be accepted in polite society.

Dr. Gene Edward Veith recently summarized a longer article by Aaron Renn about the way Christians in the late 20th and early 21st centuries respond to cultural hostility. The articles identify a shift in American public opinion toward Christianity, around 2014, at which time, "Society has come to have a *negative* view of Christianity. Being known as a Christian is a social negative, particularly in the elite domains of society. Christian morality is expressly repudiated and seen as a threat to the public good and the new public moral order. Subscribing to Christian moral views or violating the secular moral order brings negative

consequences" (Veith).

If Renn and Veith are right in their analysis, in general, our secular culture thinks Christians ought to be ashamed of themselves. If Renn and Veith are right, we are right back to where Paul was in the middle of the first century.

What's Paul's response? It's the response we should have also. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's good. It's the power of God. It saves. On the contrary, those who don't believe the gospel are the people who should be ashamed. They are the people who are in that situation that has placed them under a curse from which they can't escape.

Paul spends the rest of Romans chapter one describing how God has allowed people to go their own way, and how their path of choice puts them on the throne in place of God yet entangles them in all sorts of problems that will drag them down. He warns his readers that the thing which brings shame is depending on yourself. The gospel of Christ is what releases us from shame.

Are you ashamed of the gospel of Christ? You shouldn't be. Come, renew your walk with Christ, receive His Word and Sacraments eagerly. His gospel is the power of God, given for you.

Dr. Veith's article <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2022/01/how-should-churches-respond-to-cultural-hostility/>

Renn's article <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2022/02/the-three-worlds-of-evangelicalism>

Wittenberg Door Financial Update



Thank you for the great response, not just in the past month, but over the past several years, as we have let everyone know about our ministry finances. We try to take stewardship of finances seriously, and you can be assured that all contributions are received with thanksgiving. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

This year, after fighting with the heating system in the Intergalactic Headquarters for eight winters, we have broken down and developed a plan which should allow us to have climate control in all the rooms of the house at the same time, and not merely sometimes and at random. Unfortunately, it will cost a good deal as much of the heating system needs to be re-worked, taking a couple of technicians a full week.

Thanks be to God, we are able to pay for this repair! At the same time, though, we recognize that every dollar we spend getting the heat in order and taking

care of other nuts and bolts potentially stands in the way of some opportunity to focus on face to face, on campus, pastoral care.

Please keep remembering Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry in your giving, and encourage others who want to bring this ministry to the collegiate communities in Columbia to give as well. Your monthly support of \$30-\$50 can make an eternal difference in the lives of our friends on campus.

Though I'm serving a local church on a part time basis, I do have the ability to make a visit to a congregation that is thinking of providing support for this ministry. We can and will work out a visit so your congregation can hear how to be partners with us in providing the face to face pastoral care on campus that is our hallmark.

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Checks mailed to us are deposited with no commission paid to any intermediary. Most of our contributions are actually received this way, but we can receive funds sent through Paypal or Google Pay as well. Giving is easy! Simply visit our website at www.wittenbergcomo.com and click on "about" and "support us."



Special Prayer Updates

Our friends and partners at the AALC Women of Life asked for additional updates, beyond the regular newsletter. What's been going on and how can you all pray for us?

Since we re-engaged in a more or less regular ministry schedule in August of 2021, hoping we are in a post-COVID world, we've found that the type and frequency of contact with students, faculty, and staff has changed. The Mizzou International Center now allows us and other community organizations to announce activities in an email which goes to all the international community on a weekly basis. We've found that these announcements have brought a lot of first-time visitors into our Friday dinner and conversation events. Interestingly, though they will sometimes come repeatedly, we have not found a growing group of people who attend regularly, as we did in the past. We have more different people who consider themselves involved, and we see them less frequently.

Pray that we will be faithful to care for each person we are brought in contact with.

Pray that people's hearts will be open and that they will reach out when in trying times, like one young lady who has made email contact asking for prayer, though she has not been in contact with us before.

Because of my hectic schedule, I had to stop trying to reach the athletic department at Stephens College specifically. I was simply unable to take the time to attend their events, though I have been able to stay in contact with several of the students and coaches.

Pray that the seed of God's Word planted in that field will grow!

Our Bible studies in the fraternity house have been put on hold. The student spiritual life chair thinks he may have more success urging students to come to our Heidelberg Discussions on Wednesday evenings.

Pray that we will continue to have fruitful contacts with the students in the Greek system.

Pray that the Lord's Word will show itself powerful to draw young men to him.

Pray that we will be able to continue to minister with consistent care and attention.

Our Wednesday evening studies at the Heidelberg are working through a series I prepared some years ago, called *That You May Know*. It's a study focused on Bible passages which discuss the various articles of the Augsburg Confession, walking through important aspects of the Christian life as identified by the Lutheran Reformers.

When we first did a Heidelberg discussion, it took about a year before it started drawing interest. Pray that we will be steadfast and patient.

And a big prayer request has arisen. In the past year I (Pastor Spotts) was diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea, which is severe enough that my physician moved quickly to get breathing support in place for me when sleeping. She thinks I have not slept adequately for a number of years. It was a severe enough problem and I had a serious enough fatigue situation that I was having significant problems with attentiveness and short term memory. In January of 2022 I reached a point of fatigue that looked like it could provoke a move to retirement. In the past several weeks I have cut back my involvement in both the parish work and the campus ministry. I have been resting enough that I am beginning to recover some energy, enough that on several days I have begun the day without immediately feeling exhausted. Admittedly, being snowed in for the past few days has been a blessing.



Pray for continued recovery and rest.

Pray that I will find a workable balance and schedule that will allow productive ministry.

Pray that the Lord will make it clear to me what is critical and what is not.

In all things I give thanks for you and your care which you have shown for me, both now and over the past several years!

Upcoming Activities:

Thursdays at 12:30 pm – Lunch and Learn Bible discussion at the MU Student Center - restarting 2nd week of January

Wednesdays - Heidelberg Discussions – *That You May Know* Bible discussion 5:15 pm at The Heidelberg Restaurant on 9th Street. If you can't find us, ask the bartender where the pastor went.

Sundays - Adult Bible Class 9:00 am, Divine Service 10:00 am, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Centralia MO

Friday, February 11, 6-8 pm Dinner and Conversation Evening at the Intergalactic Headquarters

Friday the 25th, no dinner and conversation, next one will be March 11.

Watch the calendar at www.wittenbergcomo.com, follow our Facebook page, and friend WDCM Chaplain on Facebook to see times and places where Pastor Spotts can be found around campuses in coffee shops or restaurants!

We always have something new at the website, the blog, and the activities calendar. Please be a friend on Facebook and follow us on Twitter. If you're in Columbia, let's get together on or near campus. Go to <https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/support-us.html> to provide financial support. The Wittenberg Door 300 needs you!