



HISTORY INTEGRITY TRUTH SCRIPTURE

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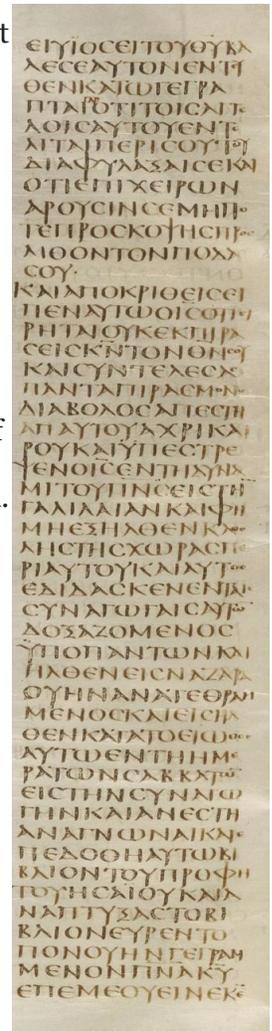


May 2019 Newsletter The Reliable Scripture

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is centered on four pillars: history, integrity, truth, and Scripture. In our April newsletter we considered claims of truth. Today I would like to look at the authority and reliability of Scripture, the collection of documents which make up the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In campus ministry I am regularly told about points of view which I allegedly have, or points of view which people think I should have. We'll look at just a few and see what we can make of them.

1. "You're some sort of conservative Christian (read those last two words with at least a little condescension). You must take all of the Bible as literally true." I would be described as fitting into conservative Christianity, but would say it without condescension and would prefer a term like "historic Christian orthodoxy." This does not imply a literalistic reading of Scripture. When people use that kind of language they normally imply an unthinking acceptance and some sort of credulity. Here's the truth. First, some parts of the Bible are to be taken as entirely literal, historic accounts. The New Testament describes Jesus and his disciples going to very real places at very real times. When they go to Capernaum it is just as real as when I go to St. Louis. The texts are well documented accounts which purport to be written by eyewitnesses or by people who interviewed eyewitnesses. At a few points there are suggestions that there may have been some collections of sayings of Jesus which we no longer seem to have. The bulk of the New Testament was written and widely circulated while there were plenty of eyewitnesses around. We don't have record of sources contradicting the claims or events recorded. Many parts are to be taken literally. However, Jesus particularly uses similes and illustrative stories. Those are patently not to be taken as literal, though they are presented as truthful. We look at Scripture as true and reliable, though not always to be taken literally. We recognize the use of figurative language.
2. "The New Testament was written by men who wanted to oppress women." I pause and roll my eyes on this one. The New Testament is actually clear that, counter to many historic and cultural roles, women are to be cherished and respected. The first witnesses to the Resurrection were women, whose testimony was accepted by the apostles. This would never have happened in other cultures of the time. Against custom, Jesus would speak with women, even foreign women, offering them grace rather than condemnation. However, also unlike customs of the paganism of the first century, women were not taken to be religious authorities. They were given other, very



valuable roles. Oppression of people based on sex is foreign to the New Testament. However, it does recognize that people will fall into different, but still valuable, roles which may be limited to one sex.

3. "The Church decided what books would be part of the New Testament and what writings should be suppressed in the early 4th century. This was imposed from above by power hungry men." This is yet another claim which is lacking in evidence. We have New Testament manuscripts dating to before the Nicene age. Canonicity and collections of writings were recognized but not decided upon in formal debates. Some of the recognition dates to the late 2nd century. The fourth century canonical lists are from the end of the century. They didn't emerge from the Council of Nicea. Writings which ended up on canonical lists had a long history of being published together and being circulated publicly, while the other documents normally were not collected with the canonical ones, and were circulated less publicly. Christians critiqued these documents because they departed from publicly held historic orthodoxy. They lacked the marks of apostolic teaching so were eventually ignored, not suppressed.

Those three ideas are probably plenty for one newsletter. Suffice to say we find the Scripture reliable, credible, and worthy of ongoing study. I invite you to join with us in our work as we help our collegiate communities make the most beneficial use of the Scripture.

Want to learn more about items 2 and 3 above? I can heartily recommend the second volume of Philip Schaff's *Church History* – a big book which will also work as a booster seat for a child at the dining table. Schaff is one of those scholars who does a great job of telling not only what the sources of his information are but who also gives a list of other useful resources.

You're Invited!

Who: You, Your Friends, and Your Family
What: Dinner and Conversation
When: Alternating Fridays 6-8 pm starting Feb. 15
Where: 6610 South Old Village Road, Columbia

Try plain, traditional American foods in a low-risk environment. Practice speaking English and learning about people from around the world.

As a Christian ministry we have a brief time of prayer and Bible reading as well. Everyone is welcome. Bring a friend, make a friend. Please let us know by Wednesday evening if you plan to come on Friday.

<https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/events/february-01st-2019>

See you there!
Dave Spotts, Pastor
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(573) 355-0347



Bible Discussion Thursdays @ 12:00

We at Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry are very glad you are here in Columbia. The college life is a great adventure. While we live and work around the University we learn about our academic subjects and about ourselves. It's a challenge to be faced and enjoyed.

Part of learning about our world and life is how our spiritual life is important to understanding all that we are doing. Christians believe the Bible will speak to all areas of life. Join with us to see how!

<https://www.wittenbergcomo.com/events/bible-discussions-thursdays-1200>

See you there!
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Real God Real Answers

What: Food, Drink, and Biblical Q&A
When: Tuesdays 5:30 pm
Where: The Heidelberg, 410 South 9th Street

Ask questions about Christianity or follow along with biblical topics presented.

Learn in a give and take atmosphere.

Half price appetizers!

See you there!

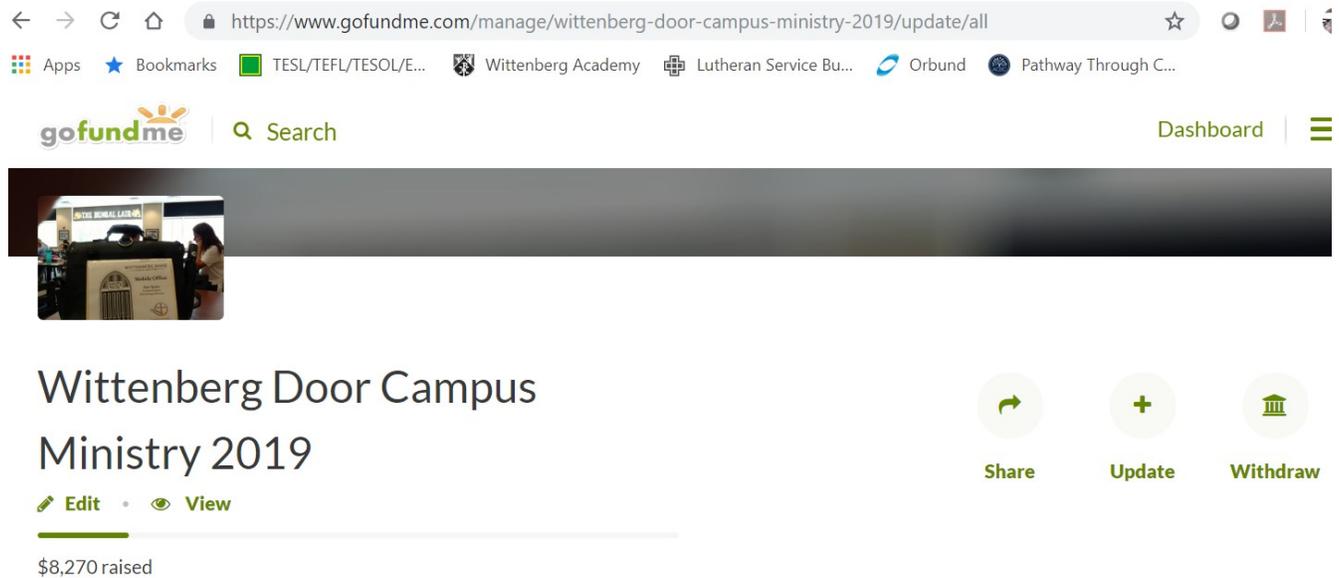
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All our regular gatherings are coming to an end for now. The campuses in Columbia change a lot during the summer. There are fewer undergraduates and resident students, but there are summer sessions which focus on graduate students and visiting scholars. We also see large numbers of people for special summer academic and athletic camps, as well as summer welcome participants.

Speaking of regular gatherings . . . Last week I began a new weekly Bible study with the men of Beta Sigma Psi fraternity. We're calling it *Biblical Change in a Dysfunctional World*. Our intention is to continue it during the next academic year. The Scripture speaks to all manner of struggles we face in our lives. We want to bring those words of hope and help to as many as we can.

Wittenberg Door Financial Update



The screenshot shows a GoFundMe page for "Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry 2019". The page includes a search bar, a "Dashboard" link, and three action buttons: "Share", "Update", and "Withdraw". Below the buttons, it states "\$8,270 raised".

Wittenberg Door Campus Ministry is entirely funded by the generosity of individuals and groups who want to help us bring on-site pastoral care to our campuses. This year we are asking for help with housing and medical care expenses, aside from the regular operating expenses of the ministry. For that reason we're asking for about \$60,000.00 from our supporters. So far, we've brought in a little over \$8,000. This is up considerably from last month's update. But there's still a long way to go. We are falling a little behind on the projected schedule. Giving is easy! Simply visit our website at www.wittenbergcomo.com or our fundraising site at <https://www.gofundme.com/wittenberg-door-campus-ministry-2019>. I've got many upcoming opportunities to tell local churches about this ministry. Is yours on the list? Let's get it moving! I'm always glad to tell church groups about what we do to make a difference on our local campuses and around the world.

Uganda Update:

When one part of the body hurts, it all hurts. Last week my friends at Love, Uganda informed me that the area of Uganda adjacent to where Simon Peter works was hit by an unusually heavy hailstorm which resulted in hundreds of people being displaced and the loss of roofs of many buildings. Simon Peter said this area is poor as compared to where he works. One of the challenges these people were facing was a



scheduled school examination in which students who pass can continue to the next level of school, but those who don't need to repeat the semester. Unfortunately, many of the students in this storm-struck part of Uganda lost their school books and were left unable to study for their exams. Love, Uganda raised some money for emergency school supplies, which has been transferred to Simon Peter, who is helping his neighbors. Meanwhile, our friend Alice continues to improve. She goes for another evaluation in Nairobi next week. If you wish to contribute to her care, it costs about \$2,200 per month. A link to give follows. <https://www.gofundme.com/alice-waako-brain-surgery>

I am eagerly awaiting the end of the school term here so as to devote more time to preparing materials that I will be using to supplement the education available in Kaliro to pastors. Simon Peter has asked if he can include pastors who are not Lutherans. Of course! We believe God's Word, rightly understood, will speak through faithful teachers regardless of the label on their church. Please pray for this opportunity in the middle of January 2020. By God's grace, we hope we can help fragile people improve in their ability to thrive where they are.



Upcoming Activities:

Tuesdays at 5:30 pm – Real God, Real Answers - at The Heidelberg Restaurant

Wednesdays at 5:45 pm – Biblical Change study at Beta Sigma Psi

Thursdays at 12:00 – Bible Discussion at Mizzou Student Center

Alternating Fridays from 6-8 pm – Dinner and Conversation Night

May 12 Traer Iowa – Ordination and Installation of Pastor Ben Baker

May 19 St. John's Lutheran Church Stringtown MO

June 2-3 Trinity Lutheran Church Columbia MO

June 8 Sat. Hold the Line Conference Franklin NC, stay over to 9th.

June 23 Christ Lutheran, Chippewa Falls, WI
stay in area vacationing until

June 30 Christ Lutheran, Chippewa Falls, WI

July 14 Christ Lutheran, Ellis KS

July 15-19 Youth Conference, Estes Park CO

July 21 Christ Lutheran, Ellis KS

August 4 St. John's Lutheran Church, Stringtown MO

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!