DIDACHE: FAITHFUL TEACHING: THE REALITY, A RETROSPECTIVE, AND THE FUTURE
Dean G. Blevins, Editor

Introduction

Writers do find moments when one may be torn between providing a straightforward accounting, like a news story or research article, or providing a classic narrative like a short story. The tension lies in a shift from leading with the key information or thesis to postponing key information to allow a story build to a climax, one that may make for better storytelling. Still, as an editor, researcher, and former journalist, the age-old newspaper adage of "don't bury the lead to the story" haunts any decision. So, the article opens with a straightforward accounting on what prompts the writing as *Didache: Faithful Teaching* migrates to a new platform. Then the article shifts to a retrospective, if only to provide an "accounting" before the journal's management, and ultimately editorial oversight changes. Finally, the journal concludes with a reflection on future challenges to *Didache: Faithful Teaching* based on internal temptations and external challenges.

The Reality: Shifting Platforms and An Accounting

Recently, with my endorsement, the Global Education and Clergy Development (the journal's sponsor and supporter) decided to transfer the resources collected under the *Didache: Faithful Teaching* website to the Wesleyan Holiness Digital Library (WHDL) as the journal repository. I am aware that WHDL volunteer librarians already migrate articles from the journal, but this decision prompts a move away from the current database software, Joomla, and its current web interface in the next year following the Global Theology Conference. Ultimately, while the journal will possess a dedicated link and maintain a journal appearance, our shift to a more integrated framework should help with database management. I decided this transition prompted a need to pause and "take stock" of the journal's efficacy over the last 22 years of publication.

The journal commissioned research to provide a working total of views or downloads through the web management team on the Asia Pacific region. The collection required three attempts between November 2022 and February 2023 due to variables in the software uploads over the years, yet the editor did review to assure that each projected "download" count took the viewer to a location where a reader could either read online or elect to download the article direct to his or her computer. In short, the numbers were not generated by search engine presentations but by an actual "click through" where the article did appear for the reader.

The result of the combined views or downloads revealed the following information. Over the twenty-two years *Didache: Faithful Teaching* generated:

- 22 Volume generating 41 Editions
- 721 original articles and 19 original audio recordings from the 2nd Global Theology Conference
- A cumulative 1,232 papers considering translations of the original articles
- 1,138,026 Views/Downloads
- 3,904 original audio files accessed
- Based on original written submissions, an average of 1,578 views per article.
- In addition, other articles from Regional Conferences housed at the journal accounted for 656,078 additional views or downloads

To pause a moment, *Didache: Faithful Teaching* accounted for more than one million views/downloads. When one considers paper translations of the original articles, the average paper downloads still range between 1000-1200 per paper. This variation accounts for certain Global Theology papers later revised (often to correct errors in translation) discussed in the next section of the paper. As demonstrated below, the number reflects a conservative readership since 1) the Church of the Nazarene published first five volumes directly in html, 2) the journal offered several early editions in a CD Rom format or through USB and Tablet downloads, and finally 3) WHDL offered many of the same articles as librarians added editions. Conservatively the readership might account for 1,250,000 views/downloads considering the multiple formats. Still, just saying "over one million views" based on the journal's original content warrants attention in light of the history of the journal and raises some considerations in light of the journal's future.

<center>*The Retrospective: A Personal journey*</center>

Offering a retrospective as an editor of a journal can prove a real challenge. Any writing that relies heavily on a shift to "first person singular" during an academic article remains fraught with limitations. Personal experience rarely proves as helpful as originally believed, and rarely reflects a sense of independent perspective. Considering a future for the journal may appear even more audacious. Yet, in this case, my need to "speak" from experience seems important to explain both the reflective journey and my hopes for the future of this journal *Didache: Faithful Teaching*. The section follows a bit of a historical unfolding, at least in the original conception and launch of the journal.
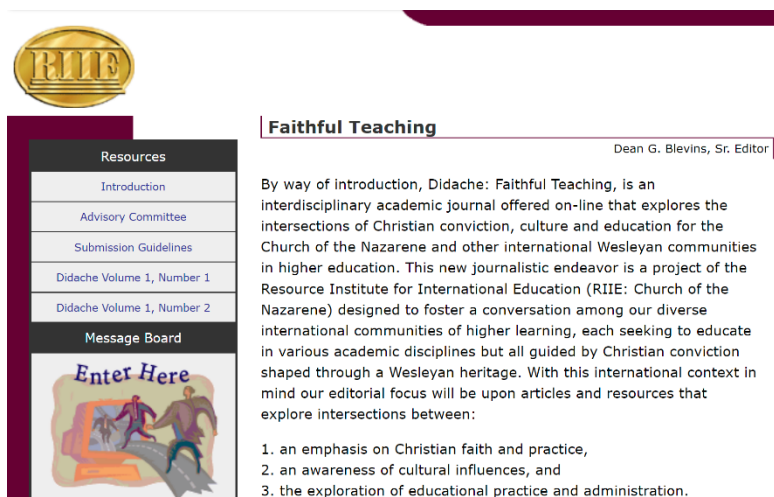
Obviously, this section belies a traditional opening that focuses on a problem, calls for a thesis that provides a research answer, and then unpacks the efficacy of the thesis, and its implications and applications. Perhaps for now, one question surfaces. Recognizing the change of online publications, what future might this journal have for the sake of Wesleyan Higher Education supported by the Church of Nazarene? That question stands in the background till we assess the current climate of online theological publishing.

Beginnings

Spring 1999 marked not only the end of my first five years of teaching at Trevecca Nazarene College/University, but also my completion of a Ph.D. from Claremont School of Theology. The degree behind me, I embraced a vision of a typical research/writing career of an academic, a vision that seemed logical to mark the next professional leg of my journey. Unexpectedly, two disparate assignments created a parallel track fondly understood in my tradition as "service to the church."

 The first assignment surfaced in Fall 1999, when Dr. Albert Truesdale, then coordinator of the Resource Institute for International Education (RIIE) approached me to begin an online publishing effort to offer free academic articles for our global denomination. Dr. Truesdale served under the

Faithful Teaching

Dean G. Blevins, Sr. Editor

By way of introduction, Didache: Faithful Teaching, is an interdisciplinary academic journal offered on-line that explores the intersections of Christian conviction, culture and education for the Church of the Nazarene and other international Wesleyan communities in higher education. This new journalistic endeavor is a project of the Resource Institute for International Education (RIIE: Church of the Nazarene) designed to foster a conversation among our diverse international communities of higher learning, each seeking to educate in various academic disciplines but all guided by Christian conviction shaped through a Wesleyan heritage. With this international context in mind our editorial focus will be upon articles and resources that explore intersections between:

1. an emphasis on Christian faith and practice,
2. an awareness of cultural influences, and
3. the exploration of educational practice and administration.

International Board of Education (IBOE) for the Church of the Nazarene.[1] The oral mandate included identifying scholars, predominantly in the denomination but also from within a slightly larger Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, to write basic articles on theology, scripture, ministry, and education to provide to smaller schools who lacked similar resources for such materials.

The second assignment entailed accepting an invitation to a gathering of theologians, educators, and administrators in Johannesburg South Africa, the summer of 2000. The journey afforded my first opportunity to begin gathering documents, arrange formatting, and ultimately publish the first online edition of what was to become *Didache: Faithful Teaching* (didache.nazarene.org) June of 2001. Overtime, I decided to change the mandate to not only "provide" global resources, often translated from English to a secondary language, but also to also seek and publish articles from other global scholars, often in their original language.

Outside of online support through the denomination's website, and technical formatting of a parallel CD for the first five editions, the journal possessed little additional financial backing. I literally ran the journal from my desktop in those days with the help of Cecilia Bowman managing the html posting online and Dr. Mike Vail a consultant to IBOE who formatted the CDs.[2] The CDs did include navigation courtesy PDF software and served as a format for conference giveaways (replaced by USB devices later) or direct mail to Presidents, Rectors, and Deans of IBOE schools.
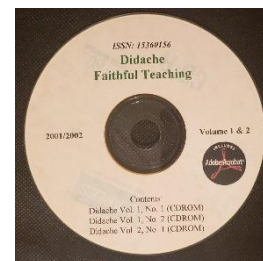
Originally the journal published strictly in html formatting for the first three years of the venture. The editions were housed under RIIE, but only accessed through three layers of weblinks inside the denominational website.[3] The obscurity, by design, allowed academics to access the journal but avoided other ministers abusing the academic work by taking technical phrases out of context. Needless to say, the access proved as painful as the design in those days.

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[1] E. LeBron Fairbanks, Education Commissioner, "IHEC Leadership Oral Presentation" Typescript Friday, June 26, 2009. Available online (accessed 11/26/2022), https://www.whdl.org/sites/default/files/resource/unpublished/EN_Global%2520System%2520of%2520Nazarene%2520Education_oral%2520presentation.pdf
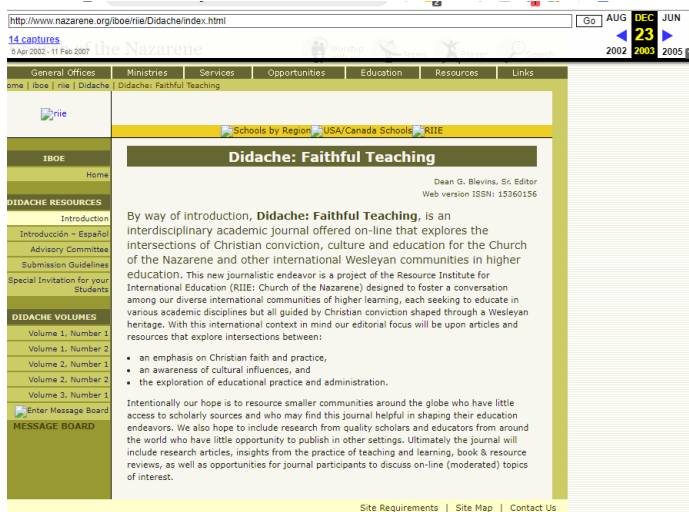
[2] Images available online (accessed 2/28/2023) See See Wayback Machine/Internet Archives for all images and sources https://web.archive.org/web/20010522030725/http://www.nazarene.org/iboe/riie/index.html

[3] https://web.archive.org/web/20040603095719/http://www.nazarene.org:80/iboe/riie/Didache/index.html see also https://web.archive.org/web/20040627041003/http://www.nazarene.org/iboe/riie/Didache/didache_vol3_2/saengwichai2.html

My role, and subsequent readership, seemed so tenuous that I reported the challenges of the journal during the 2003 annual gathering of the Association of Professors and Researchers in Religious Education (APRRE).[4] That presentation afforded research for an expanded editorial "Why We Publish This Online Journal," in *Didache: Faithful Teaching* in June 2004 (Volume 4:1).[5]

From 2004 through 2011 the journal underwent a type of gypsy experience when it came to its location online, even as the journal moved web articles to PDF formatting. I always felt the support of IBOE commissioners, but the vicissitudes of denominational oversight proved challenging. While the denomination wrestled with outside vendors in maintaining the journal, a personal professional move in 2005 afforded the opportunity to relocate the journal under Nazarene Theological Seminary's servers and web address with the support of then President Ron Benefiel, IT director Jeff Sykes, and Instructional Designer Shawn Stevenson.[6]

Troubled Waters

Unfortunately, changes in academic leadership at the seminary, as well as IT directors, left the journal's technical infrastructure devolving into what I experienced as a very precarious position at the institution (to the point the journal experienced severe technical issues mentioned in the Editor's Introduction in Volume 11:1).[7] I thought the journal seemed to face a moment of ending after a ten-year run. I confess that in 2010, as the journal floundered, I was more than ready to "retire" based on a ten-year effort. My personal writing projects often took a "back seat" to locating, encouraging, and editing other people's work. I missed the long-cherished technical support from people like Dr. Mike Vail who served both as a technical assistant and supporter inside IBOE. I received limited personal encouragement, primarily from a very small cadre of international educators, with little recognition from local colleagues who saw the journal more as an element forced on them than a vehicle for encouraging scholarship. At this point I was on my third reconfigured Advisory Committee, who I appealed for acquisitions and reviews. However, the committee found themselves equally challenged since the journal maintained no infrastructure to support their meeting. A small group of academics, friends, graciously

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[4] Dean G. Blevins, "Virtual Publications or Virtually Publishing? The Opportunities and Challenges of On-Line Publishing in Religious Education," APRRE Annual Proceedings,available online (accessed 11/26/2022) https://old.religiouseducation.net/member/03_papers/blevins.pdf

[5] Dean G. Blevins, "Editorial: Why We Publish This Online Journal," Didache: Faithful Teaching 4:1 (June 2004) available online (accessed 11/26/2022) https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-4-1/695-v4-blevins/file

[6] See https://web.archive.org/web/20080220145031/http://didache.nts.edu:80/

[7] Dean Blevins "Editor's Introduction (Summer 2011)" *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 11:1 available online (accessed 11/26/2022) https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-11-1/847-didachev11n100introductionblevinspdf/file

responded to inquiries about publications, often served as reviewers of unsolicited publications, and generally helped me maintain a twice-yearly supply of articles often from people around the globe and across a large array of themes. My early decision to allow the journal to adopt three disparate yet interrelated themes; theology, culture, and education often allowed for a number of intriguing, yet eclectic, articles that found voice through the journal.

At first, I was thankful that in 2008 NTS information technology specialist Shawn Stevenson moved the journal to a new platform, Joomla, by Volume 8:1. The software provided an open source (aka free) environment for PDF data downloads which, by the time of this writing, provided helpful tracking of document viewing and downloads. However, as internal support for the journal dwindled, I was forced to the firsthand realization that the software's web-related elements proved far less intuitive than other blog environments. As I was personally compelled to track downloads, correct for errors, and manage the presentation elements of the website, I realized the required technical expertise often pushed me into a large learning curve for a journal that appeared, at most, twice a year. In addition, the journal faced issues around translation (see below) as well as internal support by administration.

I began to wrestle anew with the article on virtual publications and virtually publishing. At the same time, I had been invited to chair a conference on Neuroscience and Religious Education (a growing academic area of study) and would soon serve as President of the Religious Education Association, the oldest ecumenical and interfaith organization in my primary field.[8] The REA managed a globally recognized print journal, one I now served as part of the editorial board. In a professional environment where major journals were beginning to see the need to develop internet inroads, I was wrestling with overseeing a fledgling online publication, solely on volunteer effort by myself and colleagues, that appeared to have little support. By 2011, now serving as President of the Religious Education Association, I introduced the beginning of a new book publication, *Horizons in Religious Education* and negotiated a business plan to start the series. This disparate experience made volunteer maintenance of the journal even more challenging. As support dwindled at NTS due to conflicting administrative agendas, there appeared little hope. I still remember a meeting with a grant funded gathering of international graduate administrators where I was informed on what made for a quality publication.

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[8] REA Annual Meeting: Brain Matters. Available online (accessed 2/10/2023) at https://religiouseducation.net/rea2011/ The conference was held November 4-11, 2011; so, 2010 included conference planning, scheduling, and on site visit.

A Renewed Beginning

However, in 2010 IBOE Commissioner of Education for the Church of the Nazarene, E. LeBron Fairbanks, began what would become a reinvestment in *Didache: Faithful Teaching* with the help of Dr. Tammy Carter. By 2011, the journal once more underwent a difficult technical transition by moving the journal's platform back to denominational servers and securing web-support from the Asia Pacific regional office in Manilla, Philippines. With technical stability and oversight (albeit halfway around the world from the editor), the journal stabilized.

I owe Dr. Fairbanks for salvaging the journal, followed by continued support by Dr. Dan Copp, the next IBOE Commissioner, for ongoing support as with Dr. Klaus Arnold. Through the transition in 2011, and the one mentioned in the introduction, Dr. Tammy Carter remained a key advocate even while championing other technical projects like the WHDL. While technology always presented challenges, the strength of the journal lies in the various streams of academic resources, from unsolicited journal submissions, to solicited writings, academic conferences, and special editions.

Conferences and Special Editions

Historically the journal relied on three primary sources: global and regional conferences, special collections often solicited by the editor, and unsolicited materials often through the gracious support of fellow faculty around the globe. At times certain leadership served as "acquisition editors" such as Dr. Jerry Lambert, in his role as IBOE Commissioner during the early years of the journal (Volume 3:2, 2008). Faculty members recommended student papers and served as reviewer in lieu of outside readers (though there were times I would copyedit the paper for better clarity). Many of those "student" papers offered fresh insights under the guidance of seasoned faculty. Several now colleagues first published in the journal.

Still, the journal relied heavily on either global theology conferences or regional conferences (Volume 16: 3, 2017; Volume 19:1, 2020) using the journal as one of their major platforms. While the Guatemala 2002 Global Theology maintained its own web and CD resource, the remaining conference papers were hosted through the journal: Amsterdam 2007/Volume 6:2, Johannesburg 2014/Volume 13:2, Orlando 2018/Volume 18:1-2, and the upcoming Global Theology conference in Argentina with the main presentations published April 2022/Volume 22. The solicited editions often tackled multiple challenges from Globalization (Volume 1:2), to regional issues in Africa (Volume 12:1), as well as more intimate reflections around generational theological education (Volume 9:1) or even motherhood and ministry (Volume 22:2).

Translations

Translations really served to make the journal global, but also proved problematic at times. Often it seemed wiser to publish international articles in their original language and seek a translated annotation as an introduction (Volume 2:2, Jan 2003). At other times the global theology conferences mandated translation or had translations "donated" by regions to support the effort. Since the translators often came through informal relationships with academics, the process did remain fraught with potential problems. The 2007 Global Theology Conference papers published in January 2007 (Volume 6:2) included several poor translations in Spanish (not discovered even by conference readership till the time of the March 31 conference) which required revision and republication following the conference in June (Volume 7:1). The 2014 Global Theology Conference (Volume 13:2) also yielded a questionable set of Portuguese translations (donated to the journal) even though, again, the edition was published in advance of the conference. So, for journalistic reasons, those translations were allowed to stand once the conference concluded, even if problematic in their reading. Following these problems, IBOE wisely decided to pay for theological translation, a decision that resulted in stronger quality at the 2018 Conference.

Editors and Supporters

Admittedly one of the challenges with the journal revolved around editorial support. There were moments when I hosted the journal with co-editors including Matt Price (2008-09), and Tim Gaines (2022); or with guest editors like Ramón Sierra (Volume 2:2, 2003), Kent Brower (Volume 16:1 2016), Joanne Solis Walker, (Volume 16:3, 2017) and recently Jenny Matheny (Volume 22:2). At times the editorial board members proved more active, such as Dr. Diedre Brower-Latz (Summer 2012). Still, the core support often came from academic deans and professors who referred student writings. Often an edition of the journal included an introduction that really just named the myriad supporters of *Didache: Faithful Teaching* (Volume 12:1, 2014).

The journal also partnered with emerging, or declining, publications to digest articles and support those publications (Volume 2:1, Volume 17:1, Volume 20:1). The interdependence of Nazarene and other Wesleyan publications really served the larger goal for the journal. At all times *Didache: Faithful Teaching* returned rights to authors for republication (though the journal asked recognition if possible). The long-term desire included creating a web of partnerships where the insights of writers around the globe might flourish both in and through the journal's facilitation. The nexus of fostering both new voices and seeking greater partnerships create possibilities for every contributor. At the time of this writing, Dr. Marcos Velasco, Dean of Nazarene Seminary of the Americas (SENDAS), and editor of the *Teología Hoy* (Theology Today) magazine (www.teologiahoy.org) arranged to translate a student article recommended by Svetlana Khobnya for republication in Spanish. Sarah Legreid's "Death and Life: Reading 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 Through a Trauma Lens" in *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 21:2 (2022) will soon serve a larger readership.

And the Librarians

WHDL, which incorporated a number of librarians focused on one global repository, remains one example of the gift of librarians in theological education.[9] One of the most significant developments for the journal occurred in 2005 when the Association for Christian Librarians (https://www.acl.org/) offered to index *Didache: Faithful Teaching* in the Christian Periodical Index (https://www.acl.org/christian-periodical-index-cpi/). For theological educators more attuned to the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) or global counterparts, this group of Christian librarians undertook a similar role for undergraduate and graduate Christian publications. In 2009 the index became part of the EBSCOhost Information Service, a commercial aggregator of publishers that serve a large number of libraries. While a supplemental package for some subscribers, the inclusion of CPI in Ebscohost assured that publications in the journal enjoyed a second gateway for academic research, one that opened the journal to an even larger readership. The result might surprise some who use the journal since two of the most viewed articles in the journal may sound like odd offerings in a Wesleyan-oriented journal: T.K. Shadakshari's "Hindu Fundamentalism and Christian Response in India" (Volume 2:1, 2002), and M. Katherine Armistead's article "A Critical Examination of Freud's Scientific Premise that Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny in Totem and Taboo" (Volume 9:2, 2015). Still Shadakshari (6,830 views/downloads) and Armistead (8,375 views/downloads) represented a larger, global, readership outside Wesleyan connections.

Excursus

Before moving to future challenges, allow me one note of reflection. As stated, I sometimes wonder whether the effort proved worthwhile for my professional journey. On one occasion, I knew of an editor who resigned *Religious Education* as his host school demanded he redirect his work to academic writing rather than editing. To be honest, I remain grateful that Nazarene Theological Seminary never set such expectations, but still wonder what my professional career might have looked like given more time to write and less time in "service to the church" as this role sometimes appeared to others, rather than accepted as academic editing. In reflection, even absent a million downloads, I must say the editorial work may fit my passion more than writing, but at a price.

In academic life, one will find some professionals (whether theology, bible, or practical theology) who find producing knowledge the most important goal of academic endeavors. One might say they feel dedicated to finding answers for others to read on behalf of the tradition. Their legacy may be in volumes of writing, or just in writing volumes around a single subject. Yet other academics may find themselves satisfied to facilitate conversations, foster creativity, launch new academic careers, and chart new questions for the tradition. Some people find mid-space, often in edited books as well as original works. Yet editors of journals really must realize their role may be more that of escorting other thinkers, and particularly people who might never have had an audience, into the public sphere. Editors can serve as gatekeepers or serve as catalysts. *Didache: Faithful Teaching*, by design, sought to model a catalytic vision rather than posture as a gatekeeper. Through the journal's range of articles, and particularly the writers

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[9] Katie King, "The World is Flat(ter): Reflections on the Evolution of Libraries in the Digital Age, *Didache: Faithful Teaching* 12:2 (Jan. 2013) available online (accessed 3/28/2023) at https://didache.nazarene.org/index.php/volume-12-2/888-didache-v12n2-11-the-world-is-flatter-king/file

behind those selfsame articles, readers should note these authors' contributions define the journal. Hopefully that vision may best summarize the million-view legacy.

The Future

One must first review the motivation for the journal before moving to future challenges. *Didache: Faithful Teaching* emerged in part due to a growing need for free, open, online journals in light of the pressing economic challenges print subscriptions placed on libraries. Organizations like The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) continues to seek more diverse and inexpensive outlets for scholarly publication, returning to an earlier vision of academic guilds creating journals to share growing research interests and insights, while maintaining a modicum of journalistic gatekeeping both in who published and who accessed the writing.[10]

Historically print subscriptions coalesced around large publishing firms who often support academic journals and later represent these journals to libraries who still pay large fees either for print or online access for the editions. Firms such as John Wiley and Sons, Sage, Springer-Verlag, and Taylor and Francis control access to a number of journal publications in humanities, social science, and theology.[11] Those costs remained a key concern, particularly for small, international libraries possessing little resources. However, SPARC's mission shifted to include a need to also develop publishing systems and innovations that support people normally excluded from academic discourse.[12] This shift signaled a general endorsement not only for access to journals, but also opportunities to publish in scholarly communications.

Open Access (OA) remains a growing expectation both within academia and governmental circles. Attempts in 2012 through The Federal Research Public Access Act and 2013/2014 with the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act in the USA reflect SPARC's ongoing commitment to "a strong, zero embargo, full-reuse rights open access policy for US federally funded research, including articles, data, and code."[13] Apparently the current White House plans to honor this agreement by requiring all USA federally funded projects offer an OA option by 2025.[14] Similar expectations appear in other countries. Switzerland's National Science

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[10] Blevins, "Virtual Publications or Virtually Publishing?" APRRE 2003, para. 7-10

[11] P. Sreeramana Aithal and Shubhrajyorsna Aithal, "Scholarly Publishing: Why Smart Researcher Hesitate to Publish in/with Top Ranking Journals/Publishers" *International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education* (IJCRME) Volume 1, Issue 1 (2016) available online via ResearchGate (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307967592

[12] SPARC: Who We Are, available online (accessed 3/26/2023) https://sparcopen.org/who-we-are/

[13] SPARC: US National Open Access Policy available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://sparcopen.org/our-work/us-national-open-access-policy/ see also https://sparcopen.org/our-work/frpaa/

[14] Jeffrey Brainard and Joceyln Kaiser, "White House Requires Immediate Public Access to all U.S.-Funded Research Papers by 2025," ScienceInsider, Science, Vol 377, Issue 6610. Available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.science.org/content/article/white-house-requires-immediate-public-access-all-u-s--funded-research-papers-2025. Similar steps have been taken historically by major universities such as the University of Chicago (https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/about/news/library-funds-new-open-access-publishing-options-for-faculty-and-students-including-more-wiley-journals/) Princeton University (https://dof.princeton.edu/governance/policies/open-access) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (https://libraries.mit.edu/scholarly/mit-open-access/)

Foundation requires subsidized research to appear through OA publication.[15] Additional efforts surface through the European Commission and other sponsoring global initiatives[16]

Currently young scholars do possess some means for OA publication. Some scholars resort to open-source data collections like Academia.edu (https://www.academia.edu/) that works on a "freemium" model where students and scholars can upload and access for free, but pay premium subscriptions to access stronger search engine subscriptions. The web repository claims a staggering 218 million users and making on average 20 million paper recommendations daily.[17] In similar fashion ResearchGate (https://www.researchgate.net/) offers a European science and social science equivalent. Users find some differences between the two services. Instead of fee structure, ResearchGate has been known to require a DOI or Digital Object Identifier (https://www.doi.org/) for publication, particularly for later adopters of the website. While a non-profit service, DOI ascription comes through "registration agency" that charges an annual fee for assignment. Like other services, the cost may be hidden, though ResearchGate remains an option. Other researchers adopt firms like Religions, (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions) which publish articles, often reviewed by senior scholars who donate time as reviewers. However, researchers may be required to pay the host company, MDPI, exorbitant processing fees.[18] Admittedly all three services appear to come with problems of authorization and quality review, particularly in assuring the authenticity of certain articles, and even journals. Science studies professor Michael Hagner notes "Experiences of recent years have shown, however, that OA is far more complex than the optimistic standard narrative would lead us to believe. The practice of OA is dominated by a number of different stakeholders with partially conflicting interests."[19] The costs associated with predatory publisher efforts often obscure opportunities to actively engage a real readership.[20]

In light of these changes, perhaps a million viewers may seem miniscule by comparison. I can say, as a professor and researcher with several institutions, academic access to articles apart from a sponsoring library remains expensive. The diverse search engines from Ebsco to JSTOR can prove expensive from certain schools, though librarians from low-income schools may find some options (https://about.jstor.org/librarians/fees/jai/). What remains a challenge is trading off access for reading with opportunities for publishing. While I can find vetted journals that guarantee quality output (for a price), other OA journals come with narrow, if deep, focus

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[15] Hagner Michael, "Open Access, Data Capitalism and Academic Publishing," *Swiss Medical Weekly* (February 16, 2018) available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.smw.ch/index.php/smw/article/view/2447

[16] Budapest Open Access Initiative, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/; European Commission Research and Innovation, "Open Access" available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/open-science/open-access_en

[17] Academia.edu: About, available online (accessed 3/26/2023) https://www.academia.edu/about

[18] MDPI: Article Processing Charges (APC) Information, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.mdpi.com/apc See also *Open Theology* available online (accessed 3/31/2023) https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/opth/html Open Theology APC is 1000 Euro or $1092 plus potential VAT fees.

[19] Hagner, 1-2.

[20] Hagner, 4.

supported by young scholars that often result in a limited readership.[21] The popular adage that many academic articles only average an extremely small readership may apply in this situation.[22] So, where lies the future of *Didache: Faithful Teaching*?

Internal Challenges

The journal's success in distributing articles within the Wesleyan Holiness sphere may raise two internal challenges, while battling with a third technological threat. Within any organization a fledgling journal normally operates with a large degree of freedom, absent large costs. Historically *Didache: Faithful Teaching*, provided a relatively inexpensive endeavor (absent a web contract) with questionable impact. Now the journal's success risks inviting both commodification and control. The relative success of a readership could invite the denomination to seek a way to monetize the efforts. Even as the journal moves to a library repository (reflecting the original vision of SPARC), undoubtedly leadership may face efforts to either secure direct payment per download, or perhaps some other crossover marketing strategy to redirect viewers to other for-profit ventures. If this approach includes a marked desire to improve the "presentation" of journal editions (something mirrored in smaller online journals) the journal might later no longer resemble the straightforward academic framework it originally desired to represent. Admittedly online publishing can improve the presentation quality. However, investment in market appeal, coupled with some fee structure, may price the journal into a different design, and leave traditional open access behind. The current, focused, audience of students and academics may mitigate this temptation, but the reality remains.

However, control may prove the greater challenge. Working within an open publishing environment, actively attempting to generate new authors and new publishing themes, risks inviting some leadership to attempt to "control the message" of this denominational publication. *Didache: Faithful Teaching* traditionally seeks to broaden its Wesleyan base. The journal often incorporates authors early in their journey whol later might appear (to some) at variance with specific stances within the tradition. Historically those differences stay within the purview of the editor and reviewers. Yet the journal remains fairly "nimble" in securing and publishing articles on short notices as this most recent edition reflects. Once editorial control moves to a committee level, with multiple committee members guiding individual editorial decisions, the speed of open access dwindles. The Global Theology conferences provide an example where the process often begins a year or more in advance to allow regions to review and deliberate on journal selections. In the future, a consistent global committee might prove helpful in acquisition and reviews. However, adjudicating the worth of publications often rests upon some relational trust in the senior editor. Recent discussions around "Nazarene identity" reflect this concern. The question remains whether Nazarene identity reflects something to conserve, to communicate, to contextualize, or to co-create? When identity becomes a bulwark to defend, not an ongoing

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[21] See *Mystērion: The Theology Journal of Boston College*, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/MYST/issue/archive; Andrews University Seminary Student Journal (AUSSJ), https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/aussj/; and The Say Something Theological journal https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/saysomethingtheological/

[22] Rose Everleth, "Academics Write Papers Arguing Over How Many People Read (And Cite) Their Papers," *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 25, 2014 available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/half-academic-studies-are-never-read-more-three-people-180950222/

process of discovery, problems can occur at personal and organizational level. Possessing a community of creativity mitigates against any "echo chamber" of mutual reinforcement.

Artificial Intelligence

The final challenge surfaces in recent changes in artificial intelligence software, particularly the arrival of large language model (LLM) AI such as like OpenAI's ChapGPT, Google's Bard, and Microsoft's Sydney. The response includes both major critics and supporters.[23] At the most rudimentary level, this version of AI software readily replaces mastery of certain writing tasks depending on the host language and grammatical rules. To this extent, LLM may well appear closer to a calculator in how that device replaces elaborate courses on long division, algebra, and the command of an engineering slide rule to perform necessary mathematical deliberations… at least as long as someone possesses a calculator. Yet the more advanced versions, often dubbed multimodal LLM AI, do seem to possess significantly more sophisticated capacities, particularly (for the sake of this writing) mirroring academic retrieval and writing complex papers.[24]

Will artificial intelligence render academic writing a thing of the past? To be sure AI already demonstrates enough sophistication to write, with accurate promptings, quality papers based on existing material available on the internet. Prompts define a set of behavioral instructions, often used by engineers, for the AI to complete.[25] While early versions might not possess the ability to discriminate between authentic and inauthentic information at times, later models seem to be adapting quickly to sort material.[26] For instance, ChatGPT responds differently depending on whether publishing firms represent a good or bad influence, the response really relies on the prompt (see Appendix). So, faculty members who often require students to "replicate" pre-existing knowledge, albeit in sophisticated manner, may find papers surfacing that reflect the ability of the AI to provide a worthy artifact for a student. The idea of securing information concerning a given tradition, as represented, may be a few prompts away. The challenge may be whether the student possesses the correct "prompts" to guide the AI rather than just asking AI to produce a paper. Navigating the prompts includes more than asking correct questions. Good questions rest on grounded knowledge. Still, if faculty members provide the prompts in the form of class instructions, students may comply through AI without engaging the material in a

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[23] Noam Chomsky: The False Promise of ChatGPT, *The New York Times*, March 8, 2023, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/08/opinion/noam-chomsky-chatgpt-ai.html; Edward Lee, "Is ChatGPT a False Promise?" UC Berkeley Blog, March 19, 2023, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2023/03/19/is-chatgpt-a-false-promise/

[24] Sébastien Bubeck et al. Sparks of Artificial General Intelligence: Early Experiments with GPT-4," *Microsoft Research* available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://arxiv.org/pdf/2303.12712.pdf. See also ColdFusion "AI Is Evolving Faster Than You Think: ChatGPT 4 & Beyond," Youtube video, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://youtu.be/DIU48QL5Cyk

[25] Sunil Ramlochan, "Master Prompt Engineering – The (AI) Prompt, *Prompt Engineering*, March 9, 2023 available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.promptengineering.org/master-prompt-engineering-ai-prompt/

[26] Cade Metz, "What Makes A.I. Chatbots Go Wrong?" *On Tech: A.I newsletter for New York Time*s Subscribers, available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/technology/ai-chatbots-hallucinations.html. See also Cade Metz "How Should I use A.I. Chatbots like ChatGPT?" *On Tech* available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/30/technology/ai-chatbot-chatgpt-uses-work-life.html

significant manner using a knowledge base already at hand. Indeed, for-pay search engines from organizations like Academia.edu may struggle to match the pace of open AI search engines, so students may replicate knowledge easily in future assignments.

The educational, and publishing, challenge may rest more with encouraging students to ask critical questions, and think creatively, to produce contextually aware new perspectives. In as much as faculty members, and editors, seek to have students/authors merely demonstrate command of previous content (in any theological discipline) AI might represent a threat, both to the information base and even to the professor/editor (why have a professor teach prior knowledge, or a journal published retread theological themes, that AI can already produce upon request?). Compelling information retrieval, even with traditional models of argumentation attached, may reflect an ineffective pedagogy or publishing strategy, one no longer needed. The future of theological education may entail teaching students to ask contextually minded questions specifically with the goal of creating grounded, yet creatively new, knowledge to challenge a situation. Articles may require the same innovation of responding to the reader's context. Navigation may also entail professors learning from students, and authors from readers, as they collaborate toward alternative educational and publishing strategies.[27]

AI support for writing in a journal like *Didache: Faithful Teaching*, may appear first in helping improve the writing style of many global writers sometimes working in alternative languages. Over time, journal articles that reflect long treatises on prior knowledge may wane. Even more popular essays that rely on older information may find less of an audience than in the past. Instead, newer writers, will attempt contextually aware questions, and possessing a critical- yet also creative- perspective on the information they wish to address. The authors should gain a readership seeking new "prompts" that guide ongoing learning and the curation of wisdom over time. AI does still present a challenge for the future of *Didache: Faithful Teaching* as it does for all writing and academic engagement. Yet the journal may well find itself a resource through the consistent creativity found in the myriad and diverse articles already demonstrated through the journal. The future of *Didache: Faithful Teaching* lies in its numbers, not numbers of views or downloads, but numbers of new and creative authors that should continue to contribute to the journal.

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[27] Susan D'Agostino, "ChatGPT Advice Academics can Use Now," *Inside Higher Ed* (January 12, 2023) available online (accessed 3/31/2023) at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2023/01/12/academic-experts-offer-advice-chatgpt?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=c8d2e06e3%E2%80%A6%202

Appendix

The following comparison reflects a prompt given to ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/) to write a short essay similar to the content offered in the last section of this article. Note the changes as the "prompts" become more nuanced. The following inquiry occurred originally on March 27, 2023.

Write an article on open access journals publishing theology

Open access journals in theology provide a platform for theologians, scholars, and researchers to publish their work and make it freely available to the public. These journals break down the traditional barriers of access to knowledge and offer a new approach to academic publishing, making information more widely accessible to those who may not have the resources to subscribe to traditional academic journals.

Theology is a field that encompasses the study of religious beliefs, practices, and texts. Open access journals in theology publish articles on a wide range of topics, including biblical studies, theology, ethics, philosophy of religion, religious history, and more. These journals aim to promote interdisciplinary research and foster collaboration between scholars from different countries and backgrounds.

One of the key benefits of open access journals in theology is that they allow researchers to reach a wider audience. With open access, articles can be downloaded and read by anyone with an internet connection, making it possible for theologians and scholars to share their findings and insights with the world. This not only helps to spread knowledge but also encourages further research and discussion, which can help to advance the field.

Another advantage of open access journals in theology is that they offer a more democratic approach to academic publishing. Traditional academic journals often require authors to pay a fee to have their work published, which can be a barrier to entry for many scholars, especially those from developing countries. Open access journals, on the other hand, do not charge authors any fees, making it possible for them to publish their work regardless of their financial situation.

It's important to note that open access journals in theology face the same challenges and responsibilities as traditional academic journals in ensuring the quality and validity of the research they publish. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information they provide, open access journals in theology go through a rigorous peer-review process, in which articles are reviewed by experts in the field before they are published. This helps to ensure that the information contained in the journals is of high quality and can be trusted by researchers and the general public.

In conclusion, open access journals in theology play an important role in promoting the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the field. By providing a platform for theologians and scholars to publish their work and make it accessible to a wider audience, open access journals help to advance the field and contribute to the growth of knowledge.

Write an article on Open Access Journals including Library support, SPARC, and Journal distributors like Sage or Taylor and Francis

Open access journals have revolutionized the way that academic research is disseminated and made available to the public. With open access, authors can publish their work online and make it available to anyone with an internet connection, breaking down traditional barriers of access to knowledge and promoting the free exchange of ideas. This article will explore the role of libraries in supporting open access, the benefits of open access publishing through organizations like SPARC and journal distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis, and the impact of open access on the academic community.

Library support is crucial to the success of open access publishing. Libraries have long played a role in providing access to academic journals and other research materials, and with the rise of open access, libraries are now taking an active role in supporting open access publishing. This can involve promoting open access journals to their patrons, providing information and resources on open access publishing, and partnering with publishers to make open access content available to their patrons.

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) is a leading organization dedicated to promoting open access in the academic community. SPARC works with libraries, scholars, and publishers to advocate for open access and provide resources and support to those who are interested in publishing their work through open access journals. SPARC also works to promote open access policies at universities and research institutions, helping to ensure that the benefits of open access are widely recognized and utilized.

Journal distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis are also playing a role in promoting open access and making it easier for authors to publish their work through open access journals. These organizations provide a platform for open access journals, providing support for the publication process, including peer review and copyediting, and ensuring that articles are accessible and discoverable through online databases and search engines. By partnering with open access journals, journal distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis are helping to make academic research more widely available and accessible to the public.

The impact of open access on the academic community has been significant, offering new opportunities for researchers and scholars to disseminate their work and reach a wider audience. Open access also helps to promote interdisciplinary research and collaboration, breaking down traditional barriers between academic fields and promoting the free exchange of ideas. This, in turn, contributes to the growth of knowledge and advances the field.

In conclusion, open access journals have had a profound impact on the academic community, providing a platform for researchers and scholars to publish their work and make it available to the public. With the support of organizations like SPARC, libraries, and journal distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis, open access is becoming increasingly widespread and accessible, helping to promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge.

Write an article on the cost of journal publications, subscriptions, and library concerns. Include SPARC but also high cost of distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis

The cost of academic journal publication and subscriptions has long been a concern for scholars, researchers, and libraries. In recent years, the cost of journal subscriptions has risen significantly,

making it difficult for many institutions, especially those in developing countries, to access the latest research and knowledge. This article will explore the high cost of journal publications, subscriptions, and the concerns of libraries, as well as the role of organizations like SPARC in addressing these issues and the high cost of journal distributors like Sage and Taylor and Francis.

The cost of academic journal subscriptions can be prohibitively high, especially for libraries at smaller institutions and in developing countries. This has led to a growing trend of "journal deflation," in which libraries are forced to cancel subscriptions to academic journals due to budget constraints. This not only limits access to the latest research but also undermines the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, which is essential to the growth and advancement of the academic community.

Libraries have expressed concern over the high cost of journal subscriptions and the impact that this is having on their ability to provide access to research materials. Libraries are facing difficult decisions, having to choose between purchasing subscriptions to the latest research or investing in other resources and services that support the academic community. This is a serious issue that is affecting the ability of libraries to fulfill their mission of providing access to knowledge and information.

SPARC (Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) is a leading organization dedicated to addressing the high cost of journal subscriptions and promoting open access publishing. SPARC works with libraries, scholars, and publishers to advocate for open access and provide resources and support to those who are interested in publishing their work through open access journals. SPARC also works to promote open access policies at universities and research institutions, helping to ensure that the benefits of open access are widely recognized and utilized.

However, the cost of journal distribution services from companies like Sage and Taylor and Francis can also be high, and this has raised concerns among researchers and libraries. These companies charge fees for their services, including peer review and copyediting, which can add to the overall cost of publishing an article in an open access journal. This has led to criticism of these companies, with some researchers and libraries calling for more affordable alternatives that provide similar services.

In conclusion, the cost of academic journal publication and subscriptions is a major concern for scholars, researchers, and libraries, and this has led to a growing movement towards open access publishing. While organizations like SPARC are working to address this issue and promote open access, the high cost of journal distribution services from companies like Sage and Taylor and Francis continues to raise concerns and calls for more affordable alternatives. To ensure that the academic community has access to the latest research and knowledge, it is important that we continue to address these issues and find sustainable solutions that support the growth and advancement of the academic community.