

Journal of Faith and the Academy
Call for Papers: 2026

Theme: The Writing's on the Wall

I confess, I would have loved to have seen his face. Amid the festive Babylonian indulgence, the perversion, the blasphemy, a hand appeared to King Belshazzar, and it wrote upon the wall: your time, your power is over, you lack what is necessary, and what you have, God will pour out to others—as succinct and certain a judgement as one can imagine, direct from the Lord Almighty. A terrific, satisfying scene. A proper comeuppance. Something that hints at the final moment when the soul “should know itself a failure,” as Lewis writes of Hell. And yet, I find myself looking at my own walls, not wholly confident. Sans hand, we play a similar king's game. We do not drink from stolen cups or pray to pagan gods, but that's the trick, isn't it? Rarely do the warning flags fly so cleanly and discernibly as they do when observing someone else's faults, someone else's history. No, we assess our current condition, often too favorably, we imagine we have more time, and we rely on a bit of cheap grace, offering the rest up to careful estate planning. True self-scrutiny, true knowing of oneself, *hurts*, and by necessity it must take place before we set that scrutiny to greater circles, to areas of government, culture, or church. Take stock then: effectively identifying and responding to genuine warnings, both personal and communal, requires a dying of self, which costs before it credits, presents a host of thorny problems, difficult, complex, and seemingly perpetual, and takes place amid a context in which other parties, those natural and supernatural, actively work against you. You asked for it though, so no complaining. The good life is not for the faint of heart for anyone, and as stewards within your academic disciplines, you assume authority, which means you also assume responsibility. If there are warning signs, fissures, if we are on the wrong path, we rely on you, the experts, to speak up. Say it now. We've no time to waste and too much to lose. The trial, the truly painful trial, lies in catching the warning signs before the hand appears and in responding wisely, for by the time the writing appears, it's too late. You die within the night.

Organizers invite those interested to submit a paper concerning any *writing on the wall*, any red flags within their discipline. Consider the following possible paper topics:

- *Education*: Learning gaps have grown wider because of the pandemic, not only in those grades directly affected, but in everyone. Per Dean Ledwell, “The current four-year-old population (students who are in pre-k now) are vastly different than previous generations, especially in regard to self-regulation and developmentally appropriate maturation and milestones. This [gap] will impact us here at the university level for the next 15-20 years!”

- *Literature*: Literature functions as both a driving force and symptomatic output of culture. With literature being produced—or rejected—how do we argue literary value? What trends offer warnings?
- *Business*: The Trump-Vance administration has initiated an aggressive approach to American use of tariffs, initiating them to prompt action to the flow of illegal drugs, spur American manufacturing, and in general further advantage America economically on the national stage. Not everyone agrees with this strategy, however. As a discipline, how does business make sense of it all?
- *Psychology*: Mental health, especially in young people, continues to suffer, with increases in levels of depression among adolescents and young adults. Our young people are suffering—the red flags are clear. But what do they signify?
- *Political Science*: Recent conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have erupted, resulting in horrific loss of life and inching the nations closer to a global conflict. Amid this international turmoil, the question of how one responds, in terms of politics and faith and the intersection between the two, begs for response.
- *Computer Science*: Artificial Intelligence “went live” in 2020, yet even such language, evoking human birth, reveals a dearth of clarity, tentatively drawing links between AI processes and human thought. Is it Skynet, or is it a better Roomba?
- *Biology*: Dare we even ask? What is—no, the statement cracks, fraught with tension and hard feelings all around. In this case, human biology, a discipline once seen to inform and affirm with some sense of clarity, seems more confused than ever.
- *Health Sciences*: Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., recently appointed as the new United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, has vowed to encourage good science and effectively trace the cause for the current American health crisis. A myriad of warnings abound—with each seeming to declare something different.
- *Bible*: For generations the Bible remained not only a foundational text for the home, guiding believers in matters of behavior, work, play, and value, but also a landmark cultural text, more familiar than not. Biblical illiteracy, however, appears to be rising, certainly in culture, but more alarmingly within the church itself.

All article submissions should be approximately 3,000 to 9,000 words in length including footnotes, 12-pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, and should follow The Chicago Manual of Style (15th Edition). All submissions should also include an abstract of the manuscript (under 150 words). The author’s name, address (including email address), title, and institutional affiliation should appear only on a removable cover page. All submissions will be reviewed by an appropriate blind-peer group of readers. Submissions should include an electronic email with a document attachment in MS Word. Hard copy submissions will not be returned.

All authors of accepted manuscripts will be notified promptly and will receive a complimentary copy of the *Journal*. We do reserve the right to edit manuscripts for usage and style. Accepted manuscripts are also subject to editorial modifications with consultation and permission of the author.

Please submit articles by **June 1st, 2026** to Dr. Taten Shirley at tshirley@faulkner.edu.