

**Institute of Faith and the Academy Conference**  
**Call for Papers**  
**September 2024**

**Theme:** A Time Such as This

Being good makes one a target. History rattles off instances of virtuous individuals cracked by circumstance and at the mercy of a world that seeks its own ends apart from a universal pattern anchored in the Divine. Should one register shock, then, at the violence directed at those whose faces reflect the goodness of God, for the world “hated me first” Christ reminds his disciples. No, we cannot feign surprise. Nor can we fail to act. When Mordecai implored Esther to approach the king on pain of death, he did so with the assurance that God would provide regardless of her choice, and yet, he asked her, “... who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such as time as this?” Yes, God will provide, and perhaps we are that provision. If troubled times come and darkness presses upon us, we cannot balk, but we must meet the time and place that demand our faithful and intelligent response, whether in word or deed. We might plead like Moses, no, not us. Surely another will help, someone better suited. For how can I, as ill-equipped as I am, do the impossible? In such moments, we cannot be small of heart, but move forward, like Esther, accepting that “if I perish, I perish.” Such necessary courage does not mean, however, that we must *step into it* recklessly. When opportunity allows, we must utilize and train those elements of our nature that God has gifted us, those brilliant features that place us within a particular region of the Church body: eyes, mouth, hand, or foot. In that diversity, united in Christ, lies our strength, and we must use all our God-given talents to meet the challenges of the day, to love, in wisdom, strength, and discernment, for such a time as this.

**Organizers invite those interested to submit a conference abstract within their discipline concerning “a time such as this”--or how a particular, relevant problem or challenge demands the attention of a skilled person of faith. Consider the following suggested topics:**

- *Education:* At a time when data continues to suggest major shortfalls in learning, when trust in public education lingers in the midst of the complex navigation of school choice, how must the Christian educator or parent respond?
- *Business:* Cleveland-Cliffs Steel recently announced it would close its tinplate production plant in Weirton, West Virginia, costing the town roughly 900 jobs. The company simply couldn’t compete, the argument goes, in the face of government regulation. At a time when the liberty to work and receive profit seems hampered by bureaucracy, how must we conduct business Christianly?
- *Political Science:* In the 2024 primary election, it appears the number one concern on the minds of most American voters is immigration. At a time when challenges over border security, immigration law (and enforcement of that law), and national and international

responsibility concerning immigration appear to be reaching a bitter frenzy, how does the individual, a citizen of the City of God (first) and Humanity (second), respond?

- *Literature*: Literature functions as both a driving force and symptomatic output of culture. With the literature being produced—or rejected—how do we argue literary value? What trends offer warnings?
- *Criminal Justice*: At a time when public concern over crime appears to grow with the crime rates themselves, when the purpose and practice of law enforcement itself seems in question, how do we create and enforce laws that respect both the rights of the public and the criminals?
- *Humanities*: At a time when anything linked to Western Civilization appears suspect, how do we reclaim the virtues inherent in her history, players, and ideas and demonstrate their value?
- *Computer Science*: At a time when Skynet inches towards becoming a reality—in point of fact, when the reach and powers of artificial intelligence appears to spread, with promises of ever-increasing use and capability, how do we—as sub-creators—mirror God in its use?
- *Kinesiology/Exercise Science*: At a time when traditional boundaries between men and women’s sports no longer remain distinct, with biological males participating (and winning, in many cases) in women’s sports, how are the sports organization, the schools, the families, or the female athletes to respond?
- *Psychology*: Mental health, especially in young people, continues to suffer, with increases in levels of depression among adolescents and young adults. At such a time,
- *Health Sciences*: Clearly, the Covid pandemic represented a time-such-as-this moment. Now more than two years since the start, we’re faced with a new set of issues. How do we meet those challenges, and how do we plan ahead for the future?
- *Bible*: At a time when marriage rates continue to decline, and culture seems to encourage the dissolution of the traditional family, how must we respond? How do we both advocate for and protect the family faithfully?

Please submit a 300-word abstract and 50-word bio to Dr. Taten Shirley at [tshirley@faulkner.edu](mailto:tshirley@faulkner.edu) by August 1, 2024. If accepted to the conference, you will be encouraged to submit your paper to the journal the following summer, which will share the conference theme.

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.