A Sustainable Knowledge Exchange System for S.D.A. Theological Education [Poster]

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A SUSTAINABLE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SYSTEM FOR S.D.A. THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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HISTORICAL MODELS OF FINANCING KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SYSTEMS

Premise 1: It’s all about money — Knowledge Exchange Systems have always been extremely costly, both to develop and to maintain.

Premise 2: It’s all about power — Knowledge is power, and those who have it enjoy significant advantages.

Church History Model 1: Patronage

In the age of the manuscript:

Origin: (1546–1569) was supported by Ambrosius, a wealthy layman
Jerome (c. 347–420) accumulated a huge library for his time, thanks to the patronage of wealthy Roman clientes
Monasteries throughout the medieval period built libraries by having monks borrow and copy works.

These libraries were deemed a treasure, and access was strictly controlled.

Universities emerged as centers of learning, supporting and preserving scholarship, i.e. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) in Paris and Italy, and Wycliffe (c. 1329–1384) in Oxford – both were engaged in theological education.

But by the end of the 16th century, patronage for scholarship had largely disappeared.

Church History Model 2: Publisher support

In the age of the printing press, publishers superseded the patronage model:

Trinidad (c. 1484 – 1526) had support from both rich merchants and from the sales of his books
Luther’s (1483 – 1546) work was disseminated by printers/merchants

Current Model: Reader pays, market driven

With the convergence of the technologies of inexpensive paper, lithography, and steam press in the end 19th century, publishing exploded exponentially and literary trends approached universal.

Copyright became an issue.

Adventist publishers by necessity focus on what readers will pay for, and because they are challenged by media, and to choose the 10 percent you can read? Isn’t it better to be an academic citizen than an academic serf?

Another response is that we already have too much to read without letting in more, but blame the Internet for that. As academic journals try to keep up with the flood of new information, 10 percent of state knowledge that flows through their mails costs them in Accessing information. If they really want to keep know everything, it’s better to be a search engine to see if there is 10 percent you can read? Isn’t it better to be an academic citizen than an academic serf?

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VOLUME BASED HURDLES IN CURRENT KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE SYSTEMS

1. Reader pay production models
2. Knowledge is a private economic/political good
3. Time/institutional support
4. Lack of community support
5. Need: A Knowledge Exchange System for Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education that will serve a global organization.

DEFINITION

A “Knowledge Exchange System” is a method of communicating knowledge from an author/speaker to a reader’s heart. Academic Knowledge Exchange Systems include the publishing of books and journals, mediated by the library.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the Seventh-day Adventist Church facilitate knowledge exchange in theological education on a global scale?

THE CURRENT SITUATION

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Global Organization, with over 90% of membership outside the historical Christian West.
2. There is a growing need for professional and theologically sound Seventh-day Adventist Church-Laudes and Passion on every continent and in every region of the world.
3. The church supports over 60 tertiary educational institutions that provide some theological education, with about a third of those that have a graduate level program. New Seminaries are now launching.

SUGGESTIONS FOR VALUES BASED DISCUSSION

1. Infrastructure investment model: costs justified by higher productivity and effectiveness of leaders. Creation costs absorbed by institution, distribution costs use current digital infrastructures and so are sustainable.
2. Knowledge as organizational/public good
3. Time valued as commodity of exchange time: the same purchasing value in Canada, Germany, Korea, India, Paris, Brazil, and Ghana, and is not subject to the laws of international currency exchange
4. Adapt the Whitworth/Florida model to the needs of SDA Theological Education. This would provide for publishing and providing access competent, valid, and pedagogically useful material that supports the mission of SDA theological education without the limiting criteria of “new” contribution or market forces, while maximizing the true value of contributions, without restricting global participation.

Knowledge is power only when united with true piety. A soul emptied of self will be noble. Christ abiding in the heart by faith will make us wise in God’s sight.” — Ellen G. White, 1928/29 23 (1995)