

## Why Publish in *The Kabod*?

### The Difference Between a Student and a Scholar

By Dr. Brenda Ayres

Why would students want to publish in *The Kabod* or any other journal that is in Liberty's Scholars Crossing?

The answer is simple: to transition from being a student to a scholar. A student writes papers for a grade; a scholar produces publishable scholarship. A student earns a degree; a scholar is an active member of an academic community. Converting an "A" paper written in an Honors class into work that is to be read by fellow scholars because it contributes to an ongoing dialogue—this is the reason why an Honors student will want to publish in *The Kabod*.

Academe is a huge space. It exceeds a classroom, a major, and a university like Liberty. It exceeds all universities and colleges to include independent scholars and other people driven by intellectual curiosity and perspicacity. It exceeds the erudite in the United States to include an international range of thinkers. It exceeds the present to include the past and to project into the future. It is characterized by intellectual query and directed by a universal impetus to understand our world and to improve it.

Plato created the first academic space on the outskirts of Athens in an olive grove. He called it Akademia, an eponym from Plutarch's hero Akadēmos. The legend is that King Theseus (the founder of Athens and the slayer of the Minotaur) was smitten by a 12-year old beauty called Helen and abducted her. Her twin brothers invaded Attica and threatened to annihilate Athens if the king did not relinquish their sister. Akadēmos came to the rescue by revealing where she was hidden.

Akadēmos had been a farmer—an unlikely hero—but supposedly he did a favor for the sun god, Apollo. As a reward, he was given the olive grove, but an even greater bounty was that as long as he was in the grove, he enjoyed the freedom to say whatever he liked without retribution, even if he criticized the gods, even if he revealed secrets hidden by a king.

This grove of olive trees was called Eleonas then and was considered the sacred providence of Athena, the goddess of wisdom. It was in this grove that Akadēmos was buried. Then it became the site where Plato lectured, and he renamed it The Grove of Academe. Aristotle studied under Plato in this grove before he founded his own school, the Lyceum, which was located in another olive grove. These legends and etymological history delineate what is meant by “academe.”

Scholars have a passion for investigation. Academic journals publish their findings and questions. The American novelist Thomas Berger once said, “The art and science of asking questions is the source of all knowledge.” The underpinning for LU’s journal *The Kabod* is Proverbs 25:2, “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.” Likewise, Greek mythology has given us Akadēmos, a man who was able to reveal what was hidden and thus offered knowledge that prevented a war. Scholars excavate what is not readily apparent, and do it with the hope that revelation will solve problems and enhance life. This is the primary purpose of academic scholarship: to improve the world. Being able to articulate theories, advance ideas, invent, create, and analyze in an environment like Akadēmos’ olive grove without fear of retribution is what makes academe a privileged and necessary space.

That freedom is just as important to Christian scholars as well. We Christians, moreover, have a responsibility to follow God’s guidance in the use of our knowledge. We can engage in debate and disagree with other scholars, but the wielding of knowledge should not produce a

“philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). We must not exploit knowledge to cause conflict but instead allow it to comfort hearts and to knit people together in love (Col. 2:2). We know that all understanding comes from God, and it is in Him, in Christ, and in the Holy Spirit that “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (3). That is not to say that we shouldn’t read any book but the Bible, for indeed God’s treasures can be found everywhere because God is everywhere. But we are warned to be discerning. Although we do not worship Athena, throughout the centuries people have considered academe as a place where wisdom is highly prized.

Elihu gave good advice in Job 34 that is well worth following as we Christians “hear” a cacophony of ideas proffered in scholarship: “Hear my words, you wise men,” Elihu beckons, “And listen to me, you who know. For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food. Let us choose for ourselves what is right; Let us know among ourselves what is good” (2-4). As we consume knowledge, we must use the palate of the Bible and the power of discernment through the Holy Spirit, in order to distinguish good from evil (Heb. 5:14). After we take in knowledge, synthesize it, and apply it, we are to look to Jesus to send us forth “as sheep in the midst of wolves,” so we should be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matt. 10:16). Charles Spurgeon gave us a wise directive: “Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great as a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.” This wisdom, this biblical worldview, is what makes Christian scholarship different from the scholarship in the world. We can find truth in secular scholarship, but our scholarship must be grounded in God’s truth and be promoted in God’s way with a kindness and gentleness not often found in the world but is desperately needed.

We can find truths in Greek mythology; however, our understanding of truth does not come from a belief in false gods but from a belief in the one true God. Still, the Hellenic symbolism of the olive grove as academe has many implications to the Christian. In Leviticus 24:2 God told Moses to “[c]ommand the sons of Israel that they bring to you clear oil from beaten olives for the light, to make a lamp burn continually.” A Christian scholar beats olives in order to get a purity that will cause the light of God’s truth to “burn continually”—not for a season, not for a fashion, fad, or trend but for eternity. Our intellectual offerings to God are a mixture held together with oil or the Holy Spirit (Lev. 2:5) In academic terms, we combine what has been published already on a subject, add our own ideas as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and hold them together with God’s truth. The scholarship that we produce is like olive oil used to anoint the sick and bring healing (Mark 6:13). We remember that when the world was perishing because of its own wickedness and God brought about a cleansing through a flood, new life was promised through the returning dove who held a “freshly plucked olive leaf” (Gen. 8:11), so Christian scholarship should bring light and hope into a dark and dying world. It is a hope based on the Lord where there is steadfast love and plentiful redemption (Ps. 130:7). Hope built on anything else is built on “sinking sand.”

“Ignorance” Shakespeare wrote, “is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven.” Christian scholarship reveals the mysteries of God through the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that our papers are meant only for other Christians. In fact, God wants us to make available His knowledge to all people including intellectuals who are nonbelievers. So the papers that are published in *The Kabod*, while reflecting God’s truth, must present integrity, logic, language, and intellectual rigor that are expected of all academic journals, Christian or

otherwise. We Christians can do this. After all, God is the creator of the intellect and He is the supreme scholar.

Once published in *The Kabod*, papers will be accessible to the entire world. Thus Liberty students will participate in the olive grove where scholars exchange ideas. Students gain and offer, in economic terms, “academic currency”: They practice in the making of investment, exchange, purchase, and expenditure of ideas. Dialectically, they offer a thesis after synthesizing other scholars’ theses; others read their thesis and offer an antithesis. Still others synthesize from both and generate a new thesis, and thus ideas are shared, applied, and compounded. A student’s assignment, designed and constructed to enhance learning and demonstrate acquisition of knowledge, will not be restricted to only a class; it will be launched into a space where its author can network with those of similar interest. Readers may want to engage in discussion with the student author and use the work to further their own research.

Journal publications also boost the dossier. Potential employers may read the work and offer jobs, internships, graduate school, or other opportunities.

And perhaps most importantly in terms of eternal coinage, through publication a Christian scholar is obeying the Lord’s command to “bring salvation to the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47). If God has given you the gift of knowledge and excellent speech and faith as described in 2 Corinthians 8:7, then ask God to use your knowledge to reach others through Christian scholarship. Seek His hidden treasures, then He will guide you so that “wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you” and you “discover the knowledge of God” (Prov. 2) that you can share with others that will give them life and God glory.

