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Farewell to Kuyper Scholars

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Editor's Note: Dr. Carl Fictorie, Co-Director with Dr. Mary Dengler for the Kuyper Scholars Program, made this presentation at the KSP Farewell Party, hosted by the Kuyper Scholars, on May 8, 2019.

Farewell to Kuyper Scholars



by Carl Fictorie

Welcome, everyone. As this is the last KSP seminar of the semester, and the last that Mary Dengler and I will lead as co-directors, I would like to take a few moments to express some thanks and give an encouragement.

First, allow me to thank Mary Dengler. Her wisdom, dedication, and care for the Kuyper Scholars has been an inspiration to me. I am a better scholar, a more gracious advisor, and a stronger advocate for the educational needs of academically gifted students. Her high standards and determination to see students succeed have produced many a successful scholar. Thank you, Mary, for 12 good years being colleagues and friends.

Second, I want to thank the 92 graduated and 42 current Kuyper Scholars that I have had the privilege to serve. Your curious minds, your willingness to have those minds stretched, your

persistent efforts to grow, and your amazing and thought-provoking ideas are what KSP is all about. I will miss working with you.

With that in mind, I offer one word of encouragement and challenge to you and to everyone in this room. As I consider what the essence of KSP is about, the following words from Abraham Kuyper, the program's namesake, provide a word of encouragement and challenge to all of you who strive to be faithful citizens of the Kingdom of Christ. Speaking at Princeton Seminary, with the academic world in view, Kuyper speaks, in what is my favorite passage, to the critical need of energetic, courageous, and resolute Christian scholars in academia. He writes,

Instead of seeking relief for your scientific conscience in downhearted complaints [don't whine about being persecuted], or in mystic feeling [don't hide in an isolated pietistic Christianity], or in unconfessional work [don't buy into the cultural paradigms], the energy and the thoroughness of our antagonists must be felt by every Christian scholar as a sharp incentive [for us] also to go back to [our] own principles in [our] thinking, to renew all scientific investigation [the search for knowledge] on the lines of these principles, and to glut the press with the burden of [our] cogent studies.

If we console ourselves with the thought that we may without danger leave secular science in the hands of our opponents, if we only succeed in saving theology, ours will be the tactics of the ostrich. To confine yourself to the saving of your upper room [theology], when the rest of the house is on fire [all of culture and creation], is foolish indeed.¹

Engaging culture in this manner is absolutely necessary and requires the skills of intelligent and

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gifted Christian scholars. Be so good in your professions and careers that you and your Kingdom vision cannot be ignored. Kuyper Scholars, this is what it means to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal as Christian scholars in all aspects of academic life.

May God prosper the work of your hands, may

he transform the work of your mind, and may he bless the meditations of your hearts. Thank you!

Endnotes

1. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Eerdmans, 1931), 138.