



“Quote, unquote”

Quote, unquote is an eclectic sampling of things said at and about Hope College.



Although the geography differs, speaker Dr. Peter Schakel found in one visitor's journey through Narnia guidance for the members of the incoming Class of 2013 during their travels through Hope.

Dr. Schakel, who is the Peter C. and Emajean Cook Professor of English and an internationally respected scholar of the Narnia series' author, C.S. Lewis, presented “A Boy Called

Eustace and a Hope Education” during the Opening Convocation on Sunday, Aug. 30, in the Richard and Helen DeVos Fieldhouse.

Dr. Schakel centered his remarks on the experiences of Eustace Clarence Scrubb in *The Voyage of the “Dawn Treader.”* Scrubb, he said, was broadened by his time in Narnia, just as Dr. Schakel noted that he hoped that the students would be transformed by their time at Hope.

“Before he went to Narnia, Eustace Clarence thought that education was about mastering content,” Dr. Schakel said. “But accumulation of information, Lewis believed, is not the real goal of education; rather, the aim is the attainment of understanding and ultimately of wisdom. And these come through the ability to think clearly, critically and perceptively; the ability to analyze problems and situations acutely; the ability to ask probing, incisive questions; the ability to reflect deeply.”

Hope, Dr. Schakel said, provides such an education as a liberal arts college in the traditional sense that was prized by Lewis, who was a college educator himself and taught at Oxford and Cambridge for nearly 40 years.

“The origin of the word liberal is the Latin word for ‘free,’” Dr. Schakel said. “Thus the Roman orator Cicero says a liberal education is the education of free persons for a life of freedom.”

“That tradition carried over to the early colleges of America—they were liberal arts colleges,” he said. “Education was preparation for leadership, not preparation for a specific career.”

“A Hope education does aim to equip students for future jobs and careers, but that's not its primary aim,” he said. “The primary purpose of a Hope education is the development of the whole person; it is a preparation for life.”

Dr. Schakel explained that the college would correspondingly seek to educate the students in four dimensions: intellect, imagination, outlook and spiritual growth.

Their intellectual development, he said, would come through improving and reinforcing good mental habits such as curiosity, questioning, analysis, reflection, making connections and considering implications.

Imagination, Dr. Schakel said, is also a habit of mind that can be developed, and is necessary in every field, a key ability in reaching beyond what is to a vision of what can be.

Expanding one's outlook, he said, involves being open to other positions and beliefs while at the same time subjecting them and one's own beliefs to rigorous scrutiny, and a willingness to recognize that not all questions have safe, tidy answers.

In discussing spiritual growth he referenced Lewis's book *Mere Christianity*, in which Lewis called for people of faith to receive the Kingdom of God with a child's heart but a grown-up's head, so that their understanding of God is large enough to handle complex issues and difficult questions.

Stubb, Dr. Schakel said, returned home from Narnia much improved—wiser and more compassionate for the lessons that he had learned during his travels. In the same way, he said, students who make the most of their voyage through Hope will also find themselves changed for the better.

“That's what I, and my faculty colleagues, and the administrators and staff members at Hope wish for each of you in the next four years—that a Hope education will help you mature and grow and change as a human being, and develop to its fullest the great potential God has placed in each of you,” he said. 🐉

On the Cover

When more than 150 years ago he established the Pioneer School that became Hope College, the Rev. Albertus C. Van Raalte described the young institution as his “anchor of hope” for the community for the future. Today's economic challenges are among the most challenging ever known in the U.S., but Hope remains committed to the vision upon which it was founded: to shape young lives holistically, not only for their betterment, but for the sake of a world in need.



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Editor

Gregory S. Olgers '87

Layout and Design

Wesley A. Wooley '89

Printing

IPC Print Services of St. Joseph, Mich.

Contributing Writers

Greg Chandler, Nicole Brace '07

Contributing Photographers

Rob Kurtycz, Lou Schakel '71

Hope College Office of Public Relations

DeWitt Center, Holland, MI 49423-3698

phone: (616) 395-7860

fax: (616) 395-7991

relations@hope.edu

Thomas L. Renner '67

Associate Vice President

for Public and Community Relations

Gregory S. Olgers '87

Director of News Media Services

Lynne M. Powe '86

Associate Director of Public and

Community Relations

Kathy Miller

Public Relations Services Administrator

Karen Bos

Office Manager

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