

Take Theology to the Real World!

Theology goes far, far beyond ancient manuscripts and arcane language; it “speaks to the whole of reality”—and that changes lives! Theological Horizons echoes the Gospel at the very heart of culture, where the ideas, values and beliefs of our society take shape. Please join us as we seek to witness with relevance and power to “how the world and human life hang together.”

With a tiny staff and limited resources, we certainly cannot fulfill this task alone. We rely on your prayers, your encouragement and your financial support to carry forward this critical mission.

So whether in a war zone or in a living room, in the public square or in the national headlines, every place is God’s place and each truth is God’s truth. With your partnership, Theological Horizons can communicate this vital message.

Please generously support Theological Horizons with your donation. All contributions are tax deductible. Theological Horizons is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EIN #581594037

Giving is quick and easy through our website! Just go to www.theologicalhorizons.org. Or send your check to 1841 University Circle, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

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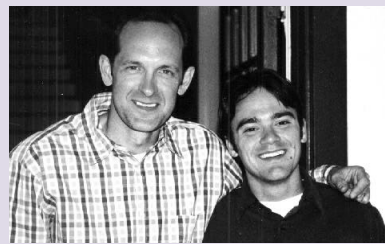
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Theology in a War Zone, Cont'd from pg. 2



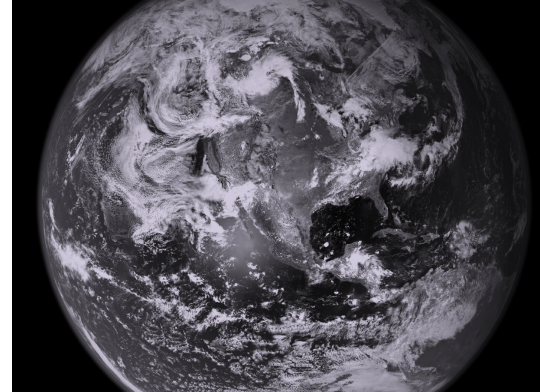
Charles and Ross at the Bonhoeffer House

an ecumenical church body that carries out international human-rights advocacy on behalf of the Sudanese and facilitates a grassroots reconciliation process among warring Sudanese tribes known as the People-to-People Peace Process. He loves to cook and play jazz saxophone. To read more, see the Reuters Foundation article, “Warriors turn peacemakers in southern Sudan,” <http://www.alertnet.org/the facts/reliefresources/109664474497.htm>

us daily to wrestle with the question: what does this living hope mean for me today? May this hope penetrate our lives as we find inspiration from our brothers and sisters in Sudan.

An “alumnus” of Theological Horizons, Ross Kane graduated from UVA in 2002, majoring in Foreign Affairs and minoring in Religious Studies. The past two and a half years he worked for the New Sudan Council of Churches,

TheologicalHorizons
Christians Engaged In Ideas and Action



OUR MISSION

To renew Christian thinking and discipleship.

OUR VISION

Church

Theological Horizons seeks to bring the rich resources of the Christian faith to bear in the church’s distinctive identity and its engagement with culture.

Academy

Theological Horizons seeks to witness in the forums of intellectual life, communicating the good news that all truth belongs to God.

Community

Theological Horizons seeks to demonstrate the power of the Christian faith to heal and transform society.

STAY IN TOUCH

Between newsletters, we occasionally share Horizons happenings and prayer requests as well as brief readings and devotionals by email. Do we have your email address? Please drop us a quick note at info@theologicalhorizons.org and we’ll include you. :-)

www.theologicalhorizons.org

Real World Theology

The word “theology” may evoke images of ivory towers, complex academic arguments and lofty pulpits. But as you’ll discover here, theology is at the heart of human existence, informing how we see God, our neighbors, our very selves. When each of us seeks truth and struggles to discover spiritual meaning and purpose, we are thinking theologically. Read on to see how Theological Horizons has a voice in the headlines, in the public square, in the wilderness, among friends, even in a war zone. That’s real world theology!

“Religious faith is not just a set of private beliefs about supernatural things but a comprehensive ground for reflection on how the world and human life hang together.”

— Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury

“Theology wrestles with questions of meaning, truth, beauty and practice in relation to the whole of reality before God. Theology explores dimensions of life that academic learning tends to bracket out—suffering, joy, the purpose of existence.”

— David Ford

“Those who look for the Lord will cry out in praise of him, because all who look for him shall find him, and when they find him, they shall praise him. I shall look for you, Lord, by praying to you and as I pray I shall believe in you... It is my faith that calls you, Lord, the faith which you gave me and made to live in me through the merits of your Son...”

— St. Augustine

TheologicalHorizons
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THEOLOGY in the Headlines

Since its January publication, **The Beloved Community**, by Theological Horizons director Charles Marsh, has been reviewed favorably by newspapers, journals and magazines across the country. Here is a sampling of the coverage...

The Boston Globe

Finding and keeping faith, in 10 new religious titles

By Rich Barlow - Boston Globe, March 27, 2005

Books can save your life. Or so said Ashley Smith, who talked a fugitive in Atlanta into surrendering earlier this month by reading to him from a book of Christian inspiration. With that added incentive, Easter is an apt time to survey recent or soon-to-be-published religion titles. These books seek variously to inspire, to give voice to long-silenced women, to upend conventional wisdom about Jesus, to plumb history for lessons about tolerance, and, sometimes, just to make us laugh.

#1. *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice, From the Civil Rights Movement to Today*, by Charles Marsh (Basic, \$26). Martin Luther King Jr. didn’t want to be a hero. He planned a comfortable and comforting life until history hijacked him into spearheading the Montgomery, Ala., bus boycott. This counterintuitive portrait anchors University of Virginia scholar Marsh’s argument that the civil rights movement was fundamentally a religious, not political, campaign to realize what King called the “beloved community” of Christian compassion and justice. Marsh cites contemporary Christians following King’s path of rejecting material pursuits to lead lives that seek to summon the beloved community.

For the other nine titles, go to http://www.boston.com/ae/books/articles/2005/03/27/finding_and_keeping_faith_in_10_new_religious_titles/

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR csmonitor.com

A new book by theologian Charles Marsh offers valuable insights for that discussion ...by capturing a very different grass-roots movement and Christian sensibility. *The Beloved Community* explores in some intimate detail the religious impetus behind the US civil rights movement and how, despite its collapse, that movement has inspired a growing number of local initiatives grounded in the same spiritual vision... This is a stirring account of Christian faith in action, and the author makes a fervent plea for spiritual renewal and recommitment. ... Marsh is a theologian concerned with “lived theology,” and here he provides a resource for those yearning to put their faith more fruitfully into action, and to reach beyond what he sees as the “ideological box” that has narrowed Christian values to a short list of issues. President Bush’s faith-based initiative was intended to give new impetus to social programs run by churches and other religious groups, but Marsh seeks a renewed commitment to racial reconciliation and a genuine pursuit of community within a divided country.

ChristianityToday magazine

The Work of Faith: How the torch of racial reconciliation, once carried by Christian civil-rights workers, is now being held by faith-based organizations

An excerpt of an interview with Charles Marsh by Rob Moll, *Christianity Today*, Feb. 21, 2005

Charles Marsh: “The Christian life and the new being that we are in Jesus Christ are incomplete until we begin to live out our discipleship to Jesus in the fullness of our social selves. I think the individualism that is still a part of some white evangelicals has made our witness fairly narrow... When I look around the United States and see what places are digging in and rekindling the vision of beloved community and doing the work of justice, mercy, and building community in distressed places, I see that being played out daily in this quiet, intentional way among Christian communities, often called faith-based communities.”

To read the interview, go to <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2005/108/32.0.html>

THEOLOGY in a War Zone

Three years ago, as UVA undergraduate Ross Kane sat in the theology seminar at the Bonhoeffer House, the violent realities of Sudan were far away, seemingly distant from the thoughtful living room discussion of concepts such as “Christology” and “eschatology.” Could Theological Horizons offer anything of use to a young man bound for life as a missionary amidst conflict and despair? In the “real” world, does theology matter? In this article by Ross, you will see that the rich Christian tradition has become a framework for thinking theologically about a desperate situation—and that the truths of the Gospel have sustained Ross’s work and hope.



With Sudan: A Reflection on Hope

Perhaps more than anything in my time working with Sudan, I will remember the hope that I have seen in the midst of grief. Hope is a word that is thrown around quite a bit in Christianity, but I have never before understood it as I do now, having lived with the Sudanese. In this year my picture of hope has become far bigger than it ever has been, and what is remarkable is that this hope is found in a most hopeless place. There have been times I went to my room for solace after a hard day and could do nothing but fall to my knees asking my Father in Heaven whether or not good is really winning out in Sudan. I read a Sudanese prayer, and in each line—“into the pain of the tortured, breathe stillness; into the misery of displacement, breathe comfort; into the pain of the widowed and orphans, breathe hope”—I see the faces of people I have met and with whom I have shared my life. I find myself, like the Psalmist, crying out to God, angry because I do not understand how atrocities like those in Sudan can occur in His world.

What in this leads me to hope? Why should I find hope in such sorrow? Why amidst sincere questions of God’s sovereignty in tragedy do I speak peace? There is no logical reason pointing me to hope here. There is only the cross.

I say that, because to hold onto hope in the midst of what I see around me, in the midst of the Sudanese struggle, can only be a Christological claim. “How do we hold onto God’s sovereignty when we are losing, and it appears that we stand only to lose more?” seems to be the question. But in the moment of that question I see the God-man upon the cross, in an act in which he appeared to be losing, and stood only to lose more. Yet in that moment of apparent loss, Christ was redeeming His world, “reconcil[ing] to himself all things...making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col 1:20 NRSV). In my despair I see the ultimate depiction of hope: the God-man upon the cross, in the act of redemption when it appears all has fallen apart.

In this moment upon the cross we see God as He is paradoxically both revealed and hidden, and in a sense this is the way I see God at work in Sudan. In this event upon Calvary, when Christ was so broken, so seemingly hidden and unlike anything resembling God to human minds, He was carrying out the ultimate and truest revelation God has given: that of a God who heals, purifies, and redeems His world. A God who is actively participating in calling human beings back to the goodness of creation. A God inviting them to join the intended purpose of creation, to lay aside the abuse of creation and exploitation of other human beings, so that they may enjoy the good, which He has made and given to them. In those moments of ultimate despair upon Calvary, an act of even greater redemption was taking place. As Christ Himself was asking, “my God, why have you forsaken me,” God was showing ultimate solidarity with those suffering, while redeeming that very suffering at the same time. In the moment of greatest hopelessness, the greatest hope is found. Yes, in light of this act of Christ and the promise of a fulfilled redemption I find hope in Sudan....

In Sudan, the hope of the Church for peace has informed its witness in such a way that peoples are being reconciled as they have been by no other actor. Rather than becoming discouraged and losing hope in the complexity of problems in the Sudanese situation, the Church can view Sudan with different lenses: the lenses of redemption. The Church has the ability to see beyond hopelessness to the redemption already being made present, while also looking forward to the promise of fulfilled redemption.

It is not a hope that finds its center only upon another world at the expense of the world around us, of God’s world around us, but rather it is a living hope. It is a hope that challenges

Cont’d on pg. 4

WHO WE ARE

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This newsletter provides information about the efforts of Theological Horizons, Inc., to foster Christian reflection & responsibility in the church, the community & the academy. It is distributed free to interested parties. Address questions & comments to Karen Wright Marsh.

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Leslie Doughty
Cloud Nine Design

THEOLOGY in the Public Square

On Tour with *The Beloved Community*, Charles Marsh has given more than fifteen public lectures, many book signings and a dozen radio interviews. These events have all served to bring into focus the truths of the Gospel and the witness of many unsung Christians. A few highlights include:

- Preaching at Martin Street Church of God, Atlanta
- An evening at New Song Community Church & City Seminary, Harlem
- Speaking at Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta
- Bookstore signings in Washington, Atlanta, Oxford & Jackson, Mississippi
- Chapel talk and lecture at Covenant College, Tennessee
- Virginia Festival of the Book talk with community organizer Rydell Payne
- Martin Luther King Day lecture, Enoch Pratt Central Library, Baltimore

THEOLOGY among Friends

A Conversation Across the Centuries



What does a fifth century African bishop who wrote in Latin have to say to a group of college students today? A great deal, as it happens. The Horizons Bible Study and Reflection group meets at the Bonhoeffer House on Fridays to read from the works of Augustine and his sources in the Bible. In our times of conversation and prayer, we are continually blessed by the rich depths of truth we find together. *Theology matters*—and it never gets old!

Sharing a Witness

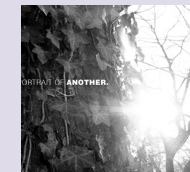


What an honor it was to welcome **Mrs. Victoria Gray Adams** for an afternoon university seminar at the Bonhoeffer House. Mrs. Adams’s theological reflections on the roots of the civil rights movement were rich in wisdom, integrity and challenge.

Truth Set to Music

Who’s our favorite band? **Portrait of Another**. With their blend of irresistible acoustic tunes and vibrant lyrics, the musicians in *Portrait of Another* bring truth alive. They’ve played at the Bonhoeffer House and alongside Charles Marsh and Rydell Payne at the Virginia Festival of the Book—and now they have a terrific new CD. We love to support these guys, so we’ll send you a copy, too.

Just ask for a CD by contacting us at info@theologicalhorizons.org



Charles Marsh at the Miller Center for Public Affairs

Theological Horizons director Charles Marsh will speak on *The Beloved Community* at the Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia on May 10th at 5:30 pm EST. Miller Center Forums link the University of Virginia and the broader community to the people who are writing about and shaping the future of our nation, drawing nationally and internationally recognized experts in public affairs, American politics, and foreign policy. The forum with Charles Marsh will be webcast live and then be available as archived video at <http://millercenter.virginia.edu/>.

“One of the most original books I’ve read in a long time...just as he did with God’s Long Summer Mr. Marsh has reminded us of what is required to keep America moving toward social justice...quite a powerful book.”
– Bill Moyers, TV journalist and author of *A World of Ideas: Conversations With Thoughtful Men and Women About American Life Today and the Ideas Shaping Our Future*

THEOLOGY in the Wilderness

“The Grace To Go Nowhere” will be the theme of Charles Marsh’s seminar at Ring Lake Ranch from July 3-15. Come explore the Christian disciplines of holy silence and stillness; disciplines which are often neglected but which bring balance and perspective to the active life...and be refreshed and renewed in one of the most beautiful settings on earth: the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming. Days are spent on hikes, horseback rides, fly-fishing expeditions or leisurely naps. Evenings are the time for thoughtful discussions, seminars and informal fellowship. Please join us!

Contact us at info@theologicalhorizons.org or contact Ring Lake Ranch: 307-455-2663 or at www.ringlake.org/



Springtime has arrived at the Bonhoeffer House