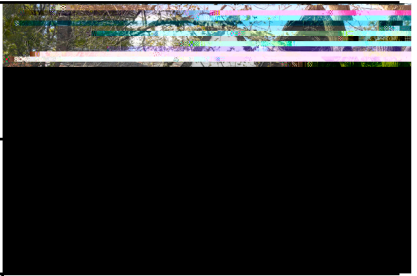


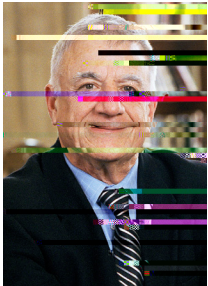
the

boisi center report



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FROM THE DIRECTOR



A successful university-wide conference

on the implications of Pope Francis' encyclical, *La da. S.*. The conference, "Our Common Home: An Ethical Sum

The major event of our fall semester was our participation in a university-wide conference

huge success it was. May the inter-disciplinary cooperation of our university for this conference be a microcosm of the human effort to address the needs of the environment.

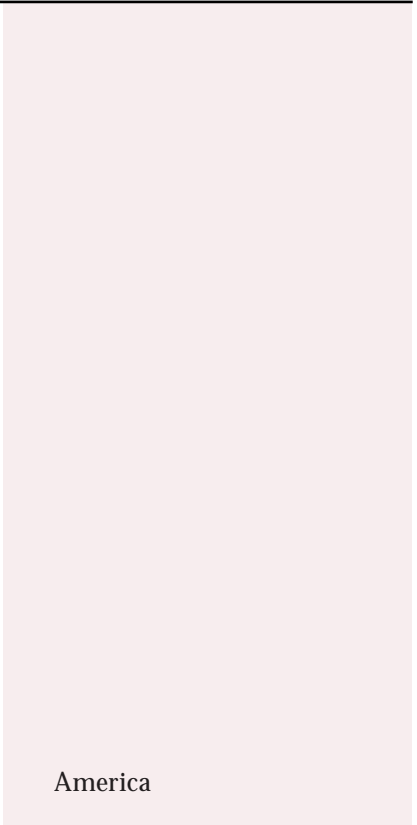
Our other events proceeded apace. Charles Marsh's talk on Bonhoeffer, canceled by a snowstorm last year, drew a crowd and continued our commitment to furthering religion's prophetic voice.

was established to address. No one at this point can know whether Trump is tapping into a sentiment that will change the way Americans have long addressed questions of religious tolerance and inclusion. But it is clear that demons have been unleashed and that all those who admire the United States for the way it has dealt with the problem of religious conflict face new challenges.

For better or worse, depending on your perspective, the work we do here at the Boisi Center seems to have continued relevance for America's future.

A few of the particularly notable speakers from a really amazing line-up included BC alumnus Sen. Edward Markey (Democrat, Massachusetts), John Holdren (Assistant to the President of the United States for Science and Technology), Graciela Chichilnisky (professor of economics and of mathematical statistics, Columbia University) and Edouard Tétreau (French essayist, columnist and political and economic consultant). Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, one of the architects behind *La da. S.*, delivered a keynote to a packed Robsham Theater. Turkson called on Catholics to find resources in scripture and tradition for addressing climate change and emphasized that social justice demands that change occur.

A big thank you to all the departments at Boston College who worked together to make "Our Common Home" the



America

Charles Marsh, Commonwealth Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, delivered the Boisi Center's 14th Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture on October 8 to the Boston College community. Marsh is also the director of the Project on Lived Theology, which has the mission to connect theology with lived experience.

Marsh began his lecture with passionate remarks about the relevance of theology in a time of social crisis. Marsh spoke of his own childhood in the segregated South and the thinkers who inspired him to make sense of theological questions related to his experience. German Lutheran pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one such thinker.

Marsh began his discussion of the life of Bonhoeffer by describing a 1944 letter he wrote to his friend Eberhard Bethge from Tegel prison in Germany, where he was imprisoned for his role in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler. Bonhoeffer wrote that there had been two times in his life when he observed his own personal growth and transformation. The first was under the strong personality of his father. The second was during his first journeys abroad, specifically his time in America. Marsh emphasized that before this trip, Bonhoeffer's writing was more technical

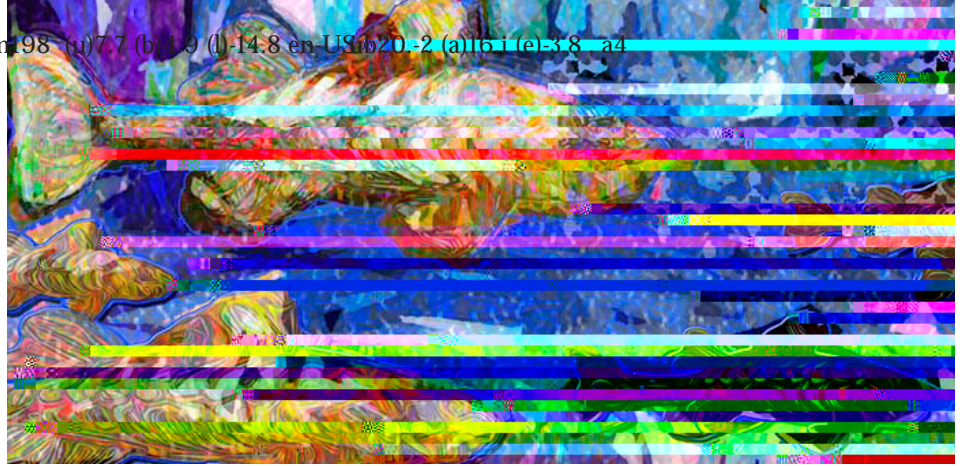
and abstract, while after the trip his writing became much more concrete.

Marsh maintained that when the young Bonhoeffer first arrived in New York in 1930 to serve as a visiting student and post doctoral fellow at Union Theological Seminary, he was not impressed by what he saw as the state of American theology. Marsh noted that Bonhoeffer thought American Christianity was pragmatic and unsophisticated. However, through three prophetic encounters during this year, his preconception of American Christianity was challenged and transformed, as was Bonhoeffer himself.

First, he encountered American social theology in the classroom. Reinhold Niebuhr pushed Bonhoeffer to recognize the need for a concrete ethical component in his abstract theological thinking. Second, he engaged with the African-American church and black culture. Bonhoeffer first experienced a true sense of prophetic religion in the United States while visiting Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem with a young black seminarian named Franklin

Fisher. Marsh also noted that Bonhoeffer loved the spirituals he heard at the church. Bonhoeffer took both sheet music and recordings of spirituals with him when he returned to Germany. There he played and sang them with the other members of the Confessing Church. The third and final prophetic encounter was with the American organizing tradition. Marsh said that Bonhoeffer took a class with Charles Webber, a Methodist minister and radical socialist, who took the students out into New York.

Pope Francis's encyclical *La da. S.*,
published last May, addressed h0 0 cm0 0 m



RELIGION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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50TH ANNIVERSARY OF *NOSTRA AETATE*

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Boisi Center event photos by
Christopher Soldt.

University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics

James Keenan, SJ, Boston College
Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 12:00-1:15 pm
Boisi Center, 24 Quincy Road
RSVP required.

The Social Function of Philanthropic Foundations

Ray Madoff, Boston College
Thursday, February 18, 2016, 12:00-1:15 pm
Boisi Center, 24 Quincy Road
RSVP required.

What the Islamic Veil Reveals

Pierre de Charentenay, SJ, Gasson Chair, Boston College
Thursday, February 25, 2016, 12:00-1:15 pm
Boisi Center, 24 Quincy Road
RSVP required.