

Richmond Hill

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BOOK REVIEW

TRUSTBUILDING

By Rob Corcoran

(Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010)

Rob Corcoran is the head of the international Initiatives of Change organization, and the founder of Hope in the Cities, Richmond's remarkable source of inter-racial dialogue and community building. For the past two decades, Rob and his wife Susan, together with many of the same persons involved in the formation of Richmond Hill and many other concerned Richmonders, have been doing the patient work of "honest conversation" to build a community across metropolitan Richmond's great chasms of relationship. It is a courageous, difficult, and often invisible and thankless task.

Rob's new book, *Trustbuilding: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility* was released in March by University of Virginia Press. Former Governor Tim Kaine will present it formally to the public at the Library of Virginia at 5:30 on March 15.

The book is a detailed and compelling account of Hope in the Cities' work from the beginning to the present. Corcoran details stories of many people and many dialogues through the years, and quotes many persons well-known to Richmonders who have worked for the healing of the metropolitan city. He himself is honest about both successes and failures.

Unknown to many will be the extensive work which the Hope in the Cities team has conducted in a number of other American cities, and in a number of other nations. The issues are often similar, and often instructive.

Corcoran is a good story teller. His book gives a powerful sense of the value of long-term, persistent, consistent work to bring about change. There is a lot of commit-

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ment, a lot of hope.

Corcoran is a humble man. He tells the story of others. But those others know just how much a part of the story he himself is. It is amazing what you can accomplish if you know who is in charge and if you do not need to take credit.

Richmond Hill and Hope in the Cities got going at about the same time. In 1993, we collaborated on the Richmond Unity Walk, which began to make public the hidden history of Richmond, and is one of the predecessor events which has led to Richmond's Slave Trail, Reconciliation Statue, Lumpkin's Jail excavation, and Slave Museum proposal. These things have happened, and many have had a part. But Rob and Hope in the Cities have been consistently present.

The book is encouraging, well-written, and enlightening to all who believe, or would like to believe, in God's plan for the healing of this metropolitan city.