



**CHILLING TALE OF PRISON LIFE**

Film 'A Prophet' slices through gangster clichés. **6E**

**Good stuff inside:** Chihuly chandelier stars in Phuzzle; ethics guy talks about pirating; Lynne Hinton admires a gardener's faith.

The Charlotte Observer

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Exploring our variety of faiths

FAITH & VALUES



TIM FUNK

Buddhism in Billy Graham's hometown?

A few branches, in fact. Islam, too. And thriving congregations of Latino Catholics and Pentecostals.

After taking a break for Easter, the most compelling lecture series in Charlotte will return this Sunday with a panel discussion about the Queen City's diverse religious landscape.

"New to Charlotte: Asian, Islamic and Hispanic Religions" is the official title for this free 3 p.m. presentation at the Main Library, 300 N. Tryon St.

Sunday's panelists: **Kathryn Johnson**, director of the Islamic Studies Interdisciplinary Program at UNC Charlotte; **Edgardo Colón-Emeric**, leader of the Hispanic House of Studies at Duke University's divinity school; and **Jeffrey Meyer**, a former head of the UNC Charlotte religious studies department whose recent research has explored Charlotte's Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian faith groups.

The lecture series - "Divining America: Religion in American History" - started back in February and will end late this month with a must-hear scholarly consideration of the impact of Charlotte's most famous son, the aforementioned Rev. Graham.

The remaining schedule:

■ April 18: "Too Jewish? Imagining the Ultra-Orthodox and America."

UNC Chapel Hill grad **Nora Rubel** will address the rising influence of Orthodox Judaism in the United States. The brochure also promises that Rubel, now a professor at the University of Rochester, N.Y., will answer this question: Is a culture war brewing between liberal Jews and those whose faith is more traditionalist? Her lecture will start at 3 p.m. at the Levine Museum of the New South (note new location), also uptown at 200 E. Seventh St.

■ April 25: "Billy Graham and American Protestantism."

Duke University professor **Grant Wacker**, author of a forthcoming cultural biography of Graham, will talk about how the once-globetrotting evangelist emerged from the evangelical traditions of rural North Carolina. And he'll explain Graham's rise, longevity and eminence on the American and international religious scene. He'll also start at 3 p.m. at the Levine Museum of the New South.

The museum and the library are the main sponsors of this lecture series, which in past weeks addressed everything from Mormons to the African-American church.

Details: www.cmlibrary.org.

**Very funny, Pastor Nancy**

Knock-knock ... Who's there? ... Lettuce ... Lettuce who? ... Lettuce pray.

Yes, ladies and germs, it's time again for Holy Humor Sunday. At least it will be this Sunday at Charlotte's Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1900 The Plaza.

Pastor **Nancy Kraft** told me that many American churches are resurrecting a custom begun in the



KRAFT

first centuries of Christianity. She said this post-Easter focus on joy and laughter dates to early theologians who mused that God had played a practical joke on the devil by raising Jesus from the dead.

So, at Holy Trinity's 11 a.m. Sunday service, there will be knock-knock jokes and some pews roped off for those who nap in church, complete with pillows and blankets.

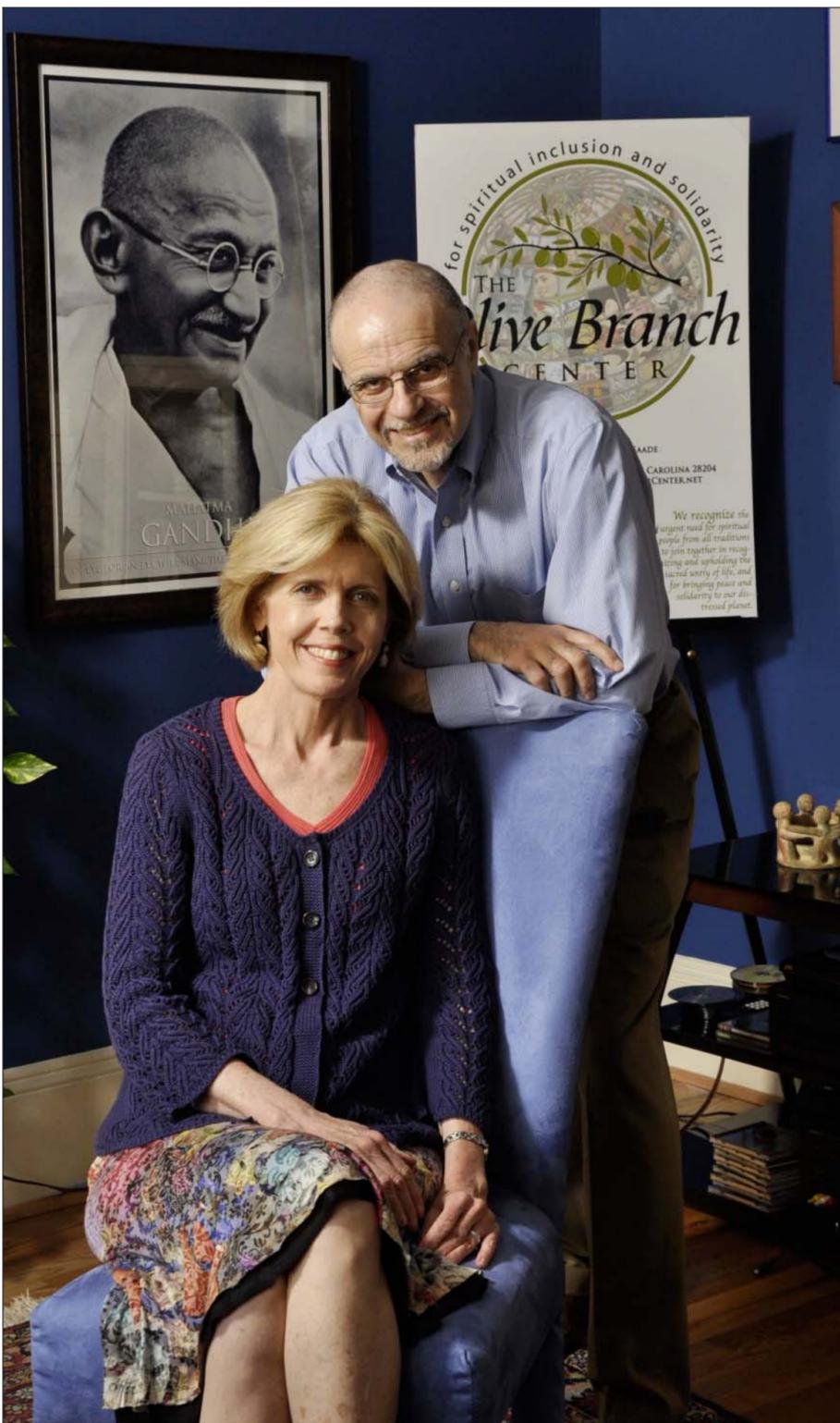
The music? "Easter carols" - Christmas tunes with new lyrics. As in: "Hark the Herald Angel Said/He is risen from the dead."

Details: www.htlcharlotte.org.

Tim Funk: 704-358-5703; tfunk@charlotteobserver.com

Olive Branch Center makes room for all

IDEA OF SPIRITUAL, RELIGIOUS INCLUSIVENESS ESPOUSED



Jessie Thompson, seated, and Chris Saade are co-directors of the Olive Branch Center. They've been married a year and opened The Olive Branch Center in August 2009.

"In God's eyes we are all beloved, and in those terms, we have no choice than to take care of the oppressed."

JESSIE THOMPSON

BY LYNN TRENNING  
Special to the Observer

Charlotte's new Olive Branch Center was born "to promote the ideas of spiritual and religious inclusion, as well as global solidarity." It is the brainchild of Jessie Thompson, 54, and Chris Saade, 59, who through the center will host speakers, produce educational materials, and offer classes and retreats that spur conversation about spiritual inclusion.

Saade was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and raised as a Christian. When he was 17, he joined a Christian peace

movement, where he worked with Jews and Muslims for 13 years before and during the Lebanese Civil War.

He refused to take arms, but instead sought peace among religiously diverse people.

He visited Christian and Muslim hospitals teeming with maimed children. "Maimed in the name of what?" he asks.

"The irony is that 16 years later, when the war ended, they went back to working together," said Saade "Why couldn't they have started on a level of cooperation?"

Thompson grew up in Tennessee and lived in Charlotte for 27 years, where she raised three sons. Her faith tradition was Presbyterian, but she hungered for a spirituality that was not introduced to her in church. As an adult she studied spiritual formation and theology, and developed a passion for discovering her own way, rather than the way she'd been raised. Through her studies she learned how many uncivil conflicts were driven by religious divisiveness.

When the two met, they discovered a mutual longing for theology that was not based on dogma or creed, as well as a desire to give something back to the city of

SEE CENTER, 3E

**Olive Branch Center**

**WHERE:** 1321 Berkeley Ave., 704-332-8933  
**DETAILS:** www.theolivebranchcenter.net. Open for specific events.

Byrum, Shafer ponder life after sudden exit from 'Lite'

After finishing their shift at WLYT-FM ("Lite" 102.9) on Good Friday, **Jen Byrum** and **Jim Shafer** got the news: The station would be moving in a "new direction" and they were out on the morning show.

"This is something that neither of us saw coming," says Shafer, who started in Charlotte radio in 1991 at the old WTDR-FM.

Beginning Tuesday, they will be replaced by "Valentine in the Morning," a syndicated show from "Lite" parent Clear Channel Radio. It's based in Los Angeles with host **Sean Valentine**.

Shafer, with children and grandchildren living here, says he hopes to find another job in Charlotte. Before moving to "Lite" in 2004, he was part

TV/RADIO



MARK WASHBURN

of the morning team of "Shafer and the Eggman" on the old "Magic."

Shafer started in radio at age 18 in Syracuse and has been in love with the business ever since. "This is all I've ever done - I've been blessed that I've never had a real job all my life."

No hard feelings, he says. That's just the radio business.

"I'm not just saying this - Clear Channel was very good to me for the entire time I worked with them. They kept me when they blew up 'Magic.' I have no animosity toward them whatsoever."

For Byrum, a Charlotte Catholic High School alum who went to "Lite" in promotions at age 24 after graduat-



Jen Byrum and Jim Shafer.

ing from Western Carolina University, it's like leaving her second family.

She moved to the morning show in 1999, teamed with **Tony Hayes**. "They came to me and said, 'We need a perky partner on the morning show and you're the perkiest one we know,'" she says.

"It's so weird not to go there. It was my first job out of college. I basically grew up there. ... I don't even have any

clothes - I've only worn T-shirts and jeans for the last 15 years."

Byrum says she's not sure what the next chapter is in her life, but doesn't think it will be in radio, where openings are scarce. She's going to co-host "Charlotte Today" on WCNC (Channel 36) with **Colleen Odegaard** the weeks of May 3 and May 31 and is volunteering with the Humane Society.

There's a positive side to the change, she says: She'll have more time to spend with her two children and keep regular hours. "Now I don't have to get up at 4 in the morning any more. It's the best."

"Lite" is advertising for a local host who will do cut-ins with Valentine and handle the 8-9 a.m. commercial-free hour that kicks off the workplace-listening format each day.

SEE WASHBURN, 6E

# Faith Notes

■ SARDIS BAPTIST

**Taize prayer service:** Worship follows style of Taize monastic community in France, with candles, choruses, chants, silence. 6 p.m. April 11, 5811 Sardis Road. www.sardisbaptistcharlotte.org.

■ FRIENDSHIP MISSIONARY BAPTIST

**Wedding extravaganza:** Gifts, prizes, information. Free; registration required. 8 a.m.-4 p.m. April 10.

**Spring prayer vigil:** Prayer, praise and worship, drive-through prayer, prayer labyrinth, homilies, more. 7 a.m.-9 p.m. April 17. Breakfast 7 a.m. Free. 3400 Beatties Ford Road. 704-392-0392; www.friendshipcharlotte.org.

■ ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST

**Study:** Eight-week study of "The Shack," 9:15 a.m. Sundays April 11-May 30. 2830 Dorchester Place. 704-523-0077.

■ TRINITY BAPTIST

**Yard sale:** Proceeds go to missions. 8 a.m. April 10.

**Concert:** Lumber River Quartet to perform 6 p.m. April 11. Free. 2009 W. Arrowood Road. 704-527-2248.

■ LEVINE-SKLUT JUDAIC LIBRARY

**Program:** "Waves of Freedom," film of American volunteers who risked freedom to deliver 1,500 Holocaust victims to their homeland. Guest speaker Augustine Labaczewski, one of the volunteers. Co-sponsored by Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. 7 p.m. Sam Lerner Hall for Cultural Art, 5007 Providence Road. 704-944-6783; www.levine-sklutjudaiclibrary.org.

■ COALITION FOR PEACE WITH JUSTICE

**Presentations:** Author Anna Baltzer to discuss how peace is possible in Israel and Palestine, giving eyewitness reports on the conflict and the nonviolent movement for peace. First session noon-2 p.m. April 16, Providence Baptist, 4921 Randolph Road. Light lunch provided. Second session 6:45 p.m. April 16, Muslim American Society Community Center, 4301 Shamrock Road. Light Palestinian food provided. 704-806-8334; 704-537-9007.

■ SOUTH MECKLENBURG PRESBYTERIAN

**Concert:** Minor Variation, women's a cappella group from Wake Forest University, to perform concert of contemporary Christian music, classic hymns, secular selections. Free. 7:30 p.m. April 10. 8601 Bryant Farms Road. 704-544-0404; www.smpchome.org.

■ FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

**Workshop:** Children's author and parenting columnist Fran Hawk to share strategies for teaching reading and suggestions for quality books for children to age 12. Presented by Weekday School. Free. 7 p.m. April 14. 200 W. Trade St. 704-376-8683; jrikard@firstpres-charlotte.org.

■ THE SHEPHERD'S CENTER

**SHIIP counseling:** Appointments available for N.C. Medicare recipients affected by termination of Fox's Medicare Part D contract. 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. April 14, Trinity Presbyterian, 3115 Providence Road. Appointments also available throughout April. 704-365-1995.

**30th anniversary homecoming:** Free luncheon with raffle, exhibitors, more. Features WCNC meteorologist Larry Sprinkle. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. April 21, Pritchard Memorial Baptist, 1117 South Blvd. Reservations: 704-365-1995; plampel@shepherdscharlotte.org.

■ NORTHSIDE BAPTIST

**Program:** Men's ministry presents "An Evening with Tommy Bowden." Cookout dinner provided. \$6. 6:30 p.m. April 16. 333 Jeremiah Blvd. 704-596-4856; www.northsidebaptistchurch.net.

■ ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC

**Concert:** Sacred and classical selections featuring organ, voice, trumpet. Reception and tour of church's artworks and garden afterward. \$20 admission goes toward Presentation Initiative to restore church exterior. 7 p.m. April 17. 507 S. Tryon St. 704-332-2901.

■ BETH SHALOM OF LAKE NORMAN

**Shabbaton services:** Services conducted by Rabbi Corey Helfand. 6:30 p.m. April 16. Catered dinner afterward. RSVP for dinner only (\$12). Adults' and children's services followed by Oneg, 9:30 a.m. April 17. RSVP for lunch only.

**Holocaust memorial event:** Guest speaker Dr. Susan Spatz, professor emeritus at UNC Charlotte. Original art display by Aron Lebedinsky. Free. 3 p.m. April 18. All events at St. Alban's Episcopal, 301 Caldwell Lane, Davidson. 704-896-6556; www.bslkn.org. — ERICA BATTEN

Send faith notes to ebattenobserver@gmail.com.



ROBERT LAHSER - rlahser@charlotteobserver.com

Chris Saade, rear, and Jessie Thompson believe we're in the midst of a paradigm shift of the role religion plays in our lives. "What is very promising in this global shift of spirituality is that it isn't asking anyone to leave their church, or their temple," he says.

## CENTER

■ from IE

Charlotte. They've been married a year and opened the Olive Branch Center in August 2009. In addition to co-directing the center with Thompson, Saade is the director of the Institute for Life-Leadership and Coaching.

The couple believe we are in the midst of a paradigm shift of the role religion plays in people's lives. "People are starting to sense that there is a connection between all groups," says Saade. "They are looking for spirituality that doesn't exclude others. And what is very promising in this global shift of spirituality is that it isn't asking anyone to leave their church, or their temple."

Saade is unabashedly Christian, and his studies have led him to a deeper connection to Jesus. "People are afraid that if they open up they are going to lose their religion," he says. "We want to provide information about people like Desmond Tutu and Mother Teresa, people who were inclusive as well as passionate about their faith. These things do not contradict each other. Some people feel like if you read about Ghandi you will lose your religion. I've found the opposite to be true."

The Olive Branch opened in a renovated house couched between Dilworth and downtown. The glassed-in porch is a sun-splashed space with a sky blue ceiling. In the common area, deep blue walls are a backdrop to embroidered Leb-

anese floor pillows and a fireplace. Saade's office walls are rich yellow and sumptuous orange. Sculptures, vibrant paintings and warm fabrics accentuate each room. Books are everywhere, with authors that include Elaine Pagels, Rumi and Carl Jung.

Through their studies, Thompson and Saade have come to believe in the "oneness" of all people. "We are one with the people of Haiti, we are one with the Israelis and the Palestinians," says Saade. "This is a transformation of the way people think, and it leads to action."

Thompson agrees. "In God's eyes we are all beloved, and in those terms, we have no choice than to take care of the oppressed," she says.

Their first big event brings

mystic scholar Andrew Harvey to Charlotte. They will host spiritual teacher Matthew Fox later this year. The Center also will hold a series of classes, including "Engaged Spirituality & Mysticism." They are producing a "Cultures of Inclusion Series," which will include presentations of DVDs and educational materials about historic episodes in which diverse religious people lived in peace.

What Saade realized during the Lebanese Civil War was a rigidity of thinking. "Underneath the economic and political ideology there was the idea that my group has the right answer. That leads us, when things are difficult, to take up arms," he says. The Olive Branch Center offers a more hopeful alternative.

# OK to download a pirated book?

ON ETHICS  
RANDY COHEN



**Q.** I bought an e-reader for travel and was eager to begin "Under the Dome," the new Stephen King novel. Unfortunately, the electronic version was not yet available. The publisher apparently withheld it to encourage people to buy the more expensive hardcover. So I did, all 1,074 pages. Then I found a pirated version online and downloaded it. I generally disapprove of illegal downloads, but wasn't this OK?

An illegal download is – to use an ugly word – illegal. But in this case, it is not unethical. Author and publisher are entitled to be paid for their work, and by purchasing the hardcover, you did so. Your subsequent downloading is akin to buying a CD, then copying it to your iPod.

Buying a book or a piece of music should be regarded as a license to enjoy it on any platform. The anachronistic conventions of bookselling and copyright law lag the technology. Thus you've violated the publishing company's legal right to control the distribution of its intellectual property, but you've done no harm or so lit-

tle as to meet my threshold of acceptability.

Unsurprisingly, many in the book business take a harder line. My friend Jamie Raab, the publisher of Grand Central Publishing and an executive vice president of the Hachette Book Group, says:

"Anyone who downloads a pirated e-book has, in effect, stolen the intellectual property of an author and publisher. To condone this is to condone theft."

Yet it is a curious sort of theft that involves actually paying for a book. Publishers do delay the release of e-books to encourage hardcover sales – a process called "windowing" – so it is difficult to see you as piratical for actually buying the book (\$35 list price, \$20 from Amazon) rather than waiting for the \$9.99 Kindle edition.

Your action is not pristine. Downloading a bootleg copy could be said to encourage piracy, although only in the abstract: no potential pirate will actually realize you've done it. It's true that you might have thwarted the publisher's intent – perhaps he or she has a violent antipathy to trees, maybe a wish to slaughter acres of them and grind them into Stephen King novels. Or to clog the highways with trucks crammed with Stephen King novels. Or perhaps King himself wishes to improve Ameri-

ca's physique by having readers lug massive volumes.

So be it. Your paying for the hardcover put you in the clear as a matter of ethics, forestry and fitness training.

**Must business travelers work during the trip?**

**Q.** My salaried job requires much travel. When a trip extends into the evening, I turn off my laptop and read or have a drink. But during business hours I typically work, although I've seen many travelers in business apparel watching videos at 10 a.m. Am I overly conscientious, or are they taking advantage? Am I doing my job simply by being in motion?

It depends on your job. If it involves smelting, you ought not attempt it in a taxi. It also depends on your mode of transportation. If you are driving yourself to a satellite office, do not use your laptop. (Especially if you are driving a mo-

torcycle.) That is, where circumstances make it onerous or perilous to work in transit, don't do it.

Air travel, for example, is generally so vile (at least outside first class) that the trip itself is work, as you suggest. You should be given bonus pay. Or a powerful sedative. But where conditions are conducive to work, do some – at one of those nice tables in the quiet car on Amtrak's Acela or in your stateroom during a leisurely Atlantic crossing by ocean liner in 1927.

There are other considerations. Sometimes it is important that a business traveler arrive rested and alert, ready to meet with clients or colleagues. That can be a factor in deciding if the most effective way to do your job is simply to turn off the computer and relax. This is necessarily a judgment call. In making it, you may want to consult your supervisor.

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