## Opinion

## Anti-Trump ad hits home for Franklin Graham

BY ISSAC BAILEY

Franklin Graham doesn't like the way a political group advocating for Vice President Kamala Harris is using his iconic father's image and words. The Rev. Billy Graham I grew up with wouldn't like the way his son has politicized the faith to which the senior Graham dedicated his life.

No matter what happens at the ballot box this November, the damage men like Franklin Graham have done to the image of Christianity will be long lasting and not easily repaired. The irony is that the political ads that have so upset the junior Graham makes clear why.

One of the ads begins with an old clip of Billy Graham trying to spread the Gospel while standing before the large crowds he was known to routinely attract.

"But you must realize that in the last days, the times will be full of danger," he preached. "Men will become utterly selfcentered and greedy for money."

The power of the ad, though, is what comes next. It cuts to a clip of Trump.

"My whole life I've been greedy, greedy, greedy," Trump says. "I grabbed all the money I could get. I'm so greedy."

The ad shows several clips of Graham while juxtaposing them with

Trump. "They will be proud and abusive...," Graham preached in the ad.

"They will be treacherous, reckless, and arrogant... loving what gives them pleasure instead of loving God... maintain a façade of religion, but their lives deny the truth."

Each time, it cuts to Trump declaring he is "the chosen one" or replaying the infamous "Access Hollywood" tape in which he brags about casually sexually assaulting women.

In another ad, Graham preaches about the importance of forgiveness while Trump says he's never asked for God's forgive-

ness. "Beloved, do not believe Carolina. every spirit, but test the

spirits to see if they are from God," another begins before showing Trump bragging that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose

support. It's a damning indictment not only of Trump, but of Franklin Graham, a man who has fallen in line behind the type of charlatan his father warned us about.

Instead of being convicted and learning from his mistakes, Franklin Graham has condemned the producers of the ads. In August, he took to "X," formerly known as Twitter, to berate Evangelicals for Harris, a group that said this week Graham has tried to get the ads pulled.

"Maybe they don't know that my father appreciated the conservative values and policies of President Donald Trump in 2016, and if he were alive today, my father's views and opinions would not have changed," Franklin Graham wrote.

If true, Billy Graham wasn't the man I thought he was, not the man my mama made me and my siblings sit down to watch on TV like millions of others throughout the South.

If true, Billy Graham isn't worthy of the reverence many of us have long had for a man we've believed tried to lead people to God even when we disagreed with some of his teachings.

If true, Billy Graham wasn't as authentic as he presented himself for most of his life.

That's what Franklin Graham doesn't seem to understand, or doesn't care to. His embrace of Trump is denigrating his father's name, and this country's largest religion. While there are plenty

of people involved with his non-profit Samaritan's Purse performing great deeds, including in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, that can't make up for how Franklin Graham has defiled the faith he says he loves by worshiping Trump.

Issac Bailey is a McClatchy opinion writer in North Carolina and South



Orit Izilov placed photographs of Israelis kidnapped by Hamas on Oc7. 7 last year in the new Jewish Life and Resource

# Center at Sacramento State University on May 8 in Sacramento.

## What I hope to see in NC year after massacre in Israel

BY RABBI JUDY SCHINDLER

Tomorrow will mark the anniversary of the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. On Oct. 7 last year, the Jewish people experienced a pogrom in which Hamas terrorists attacked 24 communities, two cities and the Nova music festival — murdering nearly 1200 individuals, torturing and sexually assaulting others and abducting almost 250 individuals to Gaza.

As Jews, we thought pogroms, violent riots against Jews that mostly occurred in Europe, had ended by the mid-1940s. We were wrong.

As Jews in North Carolina, we were shaken to our core when we witnessed the panic and horror through videos and texts. My second cousin was murdered that day.

The violence triggered memories of intergenerational Jewish trauma of persecution and exile. As war has been waged

to uproot terrorists and prevent another attack which has been explicitly threatened and prepared for by Hamas, Hezbollah and Iranian leaders — this past year's battles have

wrought displacement, devastation and the immense loss of civilian life in Israel, Gaza and Lebanon.

I belong to three Charlotte synagogues (Reform, Conservative and Orthodox) and am past co-chair of our North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association. The war has left Jews across the state and across the denominational spectrum exhausted and emotional. Expressions of pain and

grief, the mentioning of the hostages' names and plight and prayers for peace have been constant. For many of us, the war is personal and our souls

There are 15.8 million Jews globally with 7.3 million Jews living in Israel. For the North Carolina Jewish community, this past year has been marked by sleepless nights, anxious days and interfaith relationships

are not settled.

times, broken. There has been a tsunami of antisemitism, flooding every avenue of Jewish life in schools, jobs and governments. There is intense security at every place and time Jews gather. Our Islamic neigh-

stressed, stretched and, at

encing rising Islamopho-

At the same time, this year has been marked by an empathy that has moved me. Neighbors, acquaintances, academic and interfaith colleagues have shown they deeply care.

The year has been highlighted by an enormous amount of Jewish pride even in the face of physical and emotional peril the wearing of Jewish stars and the sharing of support for Israel. We are experiencing Jewish renewal — a resurgence of Jews wanting to reconnect with their Jewish community.

The milestone marking 365 days of misery falls at come home, where the the exact midpoint of our war will end and the re-Jewish High Holidays, our ten days of intense reflection and prayer.

Wednesday, we welcomed a new Jewish year, and Friday, we will commence our 25-hour Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement, fast and earnest

self-reckoning. These days of introspection come at a time when the war is expanding. We pray for its quick

end. In 2008, at the time of an event hosting Israelis

and Palestinians in Char-

driven primarily by the

lotte, Robi Damelon of Israel taught me: "Fighting here does not create peace there."

Now, I ask the opposite - could creating partnerships for peace here advance peace there? I pray that this anni-

versary moves us to transform polarization into peace-pursuing partnerships and inspires community healing in which Jews, Muslims and people of all faiths, as well as the secular, can hear each other's pain and lift up each other's prayers.

I pray that this anniversary and new Jewish year will hasten a reality where the 101 remaining hostages in Gaza will building of the Middle East can begin with new Israeli and Palestinian leaders committed to peace.

I pray that we, as North Carolinians, will do our part in making it so.

Rabbi Judy Schindler is Rabbi Emerita of Charlotte's Temple Beth El and immediate past co-chair of the North Carolina Jewish Clergy Association.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Storms

The recent apocalyptic destruction across North Carolina has been billed as a once-in-a-lifetime event.

Sadly, it won't be. Global warming driven by atmospheric carbon levels continues to rise steadily. Scientists now agree that these storms will become more frequent and more intense, unless we address climate change immediately.

To ensure a secure future for the next generation of Carolina residents, please remember the devastation you see today when you go to the polls in November. Vote with the changing climate in mind.

Sandra O'Neill, Corneli-

### **Neighbors help out**

As tragic as Helene was in North Carolina, it provided the stage to demonstrate the better side of human nature. One example - our next-door neigh-

We are in our eighties and live in a nice neighborhood with most residents in their mid to late fifties. But not our nextdoor neighbors, who are a young couple in their mid-thirties.

Our yard contains five large, mature trees that have stood the test of the storms, but not without some loss of limb and leaves. After this storm, our front yard looked like a battle zone. Too much for me, so I planned to contact our yard service to take care of it.

Well, our younger neighbors beat me to it.

to hear a leaf blower. Our young neighbors were clearing the debris.

Albert Guy Dancy, Jr, Charlotte

brings out our best.

Tragedy sometimes

While taking a nap I woke

#### **Building codes** The author has a back-

ground in urban design. I am heartbroken about the damage in western North Carolina. Over the past 15 years,

state lawmakers have rejected limits on construction on steep slopes, which might have reduced the number of homes lost to landslides; blocked a rule requiring homes to be elevated above the height of an expected flood; weakened protections for wetlands, increasing the risk of dangerous storm water runoff; and slowed the adoption of updated building codes, making it

harder for the state to qualify for federal climateresilience grants.

bors, too, are experi-

When appropriate, an independent investigation should be conducted to see how current building codes may have contributed to the loss of homes and to determine if these codes need to be changed or modified.

We need to take politics out of building codes when it impacts the safety of our community.

### Trump for inflation

It is remarkable that Trump consistently polls better as to who would be more trusted with the economy. Of course people felt better five years ago. Everything was

cheaper. ding to is inflation and corresponding high interest rates which were

pandemic, not the eco-

Stephen Berg, Chapel Hill

What people are respon-

nomic policies of the Biden administration. The entire world saw inflation spike. Our present economy is the envy of the world. Trump's plan is to cut taxes for the wealthy and corporations and to impose tariffs across the board. Most economists agree that this will increase inflation, increase spending deficits and hurt everyday Americans.

Willard Osburn, Corneli-

### Clemson game

Why would Clemson

University hold its homecoming football the day after Hurricane Helene hit the town of Clemson? Eighty thousand fans descended on the town using up scant resources. The stadium lights blazed while many in the town

were without power. Its

Clemson University has just told the people in the area a football game is more important than your survival. Compare this response

power lines are buried.

to Appalachian State University.

It canceled its football game and offered free food to people in the area. Also the university donated as many additional supplies as possible and many of its students volunteered to deliver food to Helene victims and served free food at various loca-

tions. I wonder which experience is more meaningful? Having a homecoming football game or serving the community? Augie Beasley, Charlotte

Correction: A headline in Friday's print edition misidentified the author of former Gov. Jim Martin's column on the filibuster.

We apologize for the error.

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