

Christian Coalition of Washington

Educating and Activating Christians for Social, Political, and Spiritual Action

August 2018

Pastor-Advisory Board

Rev. Bill Bates
Inspire Church, Sedro Wooley

Rev. Earl Bradley
Capital Region Ministries, Olympia

Rev. Randy Burtis
Luis Palau Crusades

Rev. Kevin Earls
Gateway Christian Fellowship, Shelton

Rev. Mike Fogaras
Gateway Christian Center, Olympia

Rev. Ted Hanson
Abundant Life Fellowship, Bellingham

Rev. Scott Manley
Flood The Sound, Olympia

Rev. Scott Montagne
Calvary Christian Assembly, Seattle

Rev. Jon Oletske
Stone Church, Yakima

Rev. Ken Parsley
Church on the Move, Yakima

Rev. Jim Ripley
Neighborhood Christian Cntr, Tumwater

Rev. Reuben Sapien
The Sanctuary Church, Lynnwood

Rev. Dan Secrist
Faith Assembly of Lacey

Rev. Tim Taylor
Watchman Ministries International

Rev. Dwain Wolfe
New Horizons Christian Center, Fife

Board of Directors

Paul Middleton
Chairman, Olympia

Jim Winterstein
Secretary/Treas., Olympia

Scott Blanton
Vancouver

Bob Higley
Olympia

Dorsey Holt
Shelton

Jere Irwin
Yakima

Michael Odell
Blaine

Dick Raport
Carnamo Island

Jim Robinson
Spokane

Ray Wing
Olympia

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

Staff

George Gauntlett
Data Administration

Beth Davis
Accounting

Carl Walker
Lead Intercessor

Rusty Howell
Field Director

Steve Matthews
Field Director

Needed: Fewer Fans, More Fanatics!

To what degree should we appease the culture in order to share the Gospel?

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. --Acts 5:42

According to feedback received from the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA)*, their recent two-week “good-news” excursion into the Pacific Northwest was definitely praiseworthy. The seven-venue gospel outreach commencing in Medford and concluding in Monroe, drew a combined estimated crowd of 68,950 interested and enthusiastic souls.

We are particularly pleased to report that Franklin Graham’s team absolutely loved the spirit and enthusiasm of the crowds in each of the seven communities they visited. They are praising God!

Receiving particular mention from several team members we spoke with was the outreach in the tri-cities of Richland, Kennewick and Pasco. The Graham team was super-blessed by the surprising number of people who accepted the invitation to come forward to *confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in their hearts that God raised Him from the dead* (Romans 10:9).

Another highlight during the tour, was the city of Monroe just to the north of Seattle, that turned out nearly half its local population for the crusade event, compared with average turnouts of two-to-six percent of local population in the other venues. GO MONROE!

Concerning turnout for all seven of the special events, however, we are somewhat perplexed.

Yes, 68,950 persons in the very “blue” states of Oregon and Washington attended a *Decision America Pacific Northwest Tour* local rally from August 1-13. But, 68,740 fans also attended last night’s Seattle Seahawks home game—pretty much the average attendance for every home game.

The University of Washington Huskies also make room for closer to 70,000 fans at each home game with upper level seats starting at \$65. Admittance to Seahawks events, varies from \$143 for a nosebleed seat to \$800 for more pleasant accommodations which include food and beverage.

Hmmm, a onetime local event held in easy-access venues with no outrageous traffic impediments (save for Tacoma!!); including free parking and admission and guaranteed **good news** for any unsaved friend or relative with ears to hear. Yet, the per-venue average of approximately 9,850 attendees fell some 60,000 people short of ANY and EVERY weekly Husky or Seahawks football game. How can this be?

Judging from a handful of large venue churches we have visited the past several years in our Puget Sound Region, Seahawks football is prominently supported. On home game Sundays, first time guests are greeted by staff wearing Seattle Seahawks apparel offering a free *Starbucks* drink. Do we have a problem with making visitors feel comfortable and welcome? Absolutely not.

We just wonder if staff has noticed a slightly lagging attendance on home game Sundays considering their generous and enthusiastic gridiron promotions.

After checking with trusted sources who were local on-the-ground *BGEA* volunteers in this region for more than a year ahead of the early August events, we found that they, like the Franklin Graham folks, are still praising the Lord for all that took place. But, when pressed further about turnout, several reluctantly admitted they had anticipated larger crowds, especially in Tacoma where only 7,800 were in attendance.

It turns out that a number of the larger evangelical churches in the region were either minimally involved, or not involved at all. Several even declined *BGEA* display materials citing in-house general policies.

But there were other reasons cited for non-participation as well. One pastor said, "Well, we're not going to push the events because August is already a very busy time for our members." And, before Franklin's visit to our state capitol in 2016, another pastor of a large Pentecostal church is noted for saying, "he's just too political for my taste."

While we are not going to survey the flock further on this topic, we admit we are surprised, embarrassed, and disappointed that an unfortunate number of well-attended churches essentially opted out of the *Decision America Pacific Northwest Tour* altogether. Maybe next time, we can all do a little better.

So why bring this subject up in the first place?

Daily, we hear many fears expressed concerning the rising and overwhelming turmoil in America. It's not hard to empathize with many church leaders who do not want to attract undue attention or criticism from leading liberal, leftist, and anarchist organizations that are effectively shuttering free-speech whenever and wherever they can. (Can you say Conversion Therapy Ban? —our state's new law prohibiting licensed counselors from doing other than affirming "gay" minors in their homosexual inclinations).

But pulling the flocks in from the fields and drawing the shades is antithetical to the entirety of the gospel message, including final instructions Jesus gave to the Church through his disciples (Mk 16:15).

If the Church desires and expects comfort and the approval of men, it wants what never was. To wit: The Book of *Acts*, chronicles the startup of the CHURCH, profiling men and woman who were determined to bring GOOD NEWS to cultures that were generally hostile and more than likely to arrest them, torture them, and worse. But to the Apostles, being maligned for the sake of Christ was an honor. Luke reports:

and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴² And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. —Acts 5:40-42

Some years ago, Rev. Bill Bates, one of our advisory pastors who presides at *Inspire Church* in Sedro Woolley, sent us a timely encouragement we have never forgotten. It was during a very stressful statewide referendum we were spearheading that Pastor Bates wrote:

"In my reading this morning (1Sam 11:1-12), I had a thought about our R-71 dilemma. The people were told that to be spared by a treaty, they must have their right eye gouged out so as to bring disgrace upon Israel. Interestingly, the leaders said, "let us pray about this for seven days." Uh, pray about having my eye gouged out? Shouldn't it be a 'no-brainer?' The opposition is attempting to limit our vision. Will the cost of not entering be greater than entering with the possibility of losing?"

Thanks, Pastor. Be assured that we're still about the work of teaching and preaching that Christ is Jesus!

Rick Forcier