

Christian Coalition of Washington

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

Pastor-Advisory Board

March 2019

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
Camano Island

Jim Robinson
Spokane

Ray Wing
Olympia

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

Staff

George Gauntlett
Data Administration

Beth Davis
Accounting

Julie Gallagher
Prayer Coordinator

Carl Walker
Lead Intercessor

Rusty Howell
Field Director

Steve Matthews
Field Director

A Bothell Area Church Stands Firm

Churches are generally careful not to discuss abhorrent public practices, save for one

...but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action! --Dan 11:32b

Some years ago, a weekend feature writer for *The Olympian*, a south Puget Sound daily newspaper, stumbled into an entirely foreign culture (for him)—that of local weekend “religious” services. For approximately the next fifty-two-or-more weekends, the veteran journalist experienced and chronicled many diverse expressions of devotion to our loving Creator. Although occasionally naïve, his reports were, shall we say, upbeat, and certainly entertaining.

Whether our reporter ever concluded that our heavenly Father desires a personal relationship with each and every one of us and is calling out a people for His name, we can’t say. We just got the impression that he was on a maiden voyage and was enjoying the scenery.

What comes foremost to mind, is that this same chronicler was astounded to discover just how many people in his community faithfully attended weekend services. In fact, while on his extended fact-finding “crusade,” he reported that weekend worship attendance across America was far greater than a casual demographer might assume. His research revealed that more Americans were in church on any given weekend than were sports worshippers on the pine for every collegiate and every major league sports event for an entire year!

Where did the reporter come across data like that? Most likely from pollster George Gallup who began tracking church attendance in the early 1950s when faithful church-goers represented about 49% of the U.S. population.

In recent decades other polling firms including the Barna Group and the Pew Research Center, have also reported religious trends—each noting a general decline in weekly religious observances across America—down to approximately 38% of the general population. Another reports 31%.

Following a little fact-checking of our own, we discovered that weekend religious services still outpoll major sporting events. According to the 2018 annual sports records for the NFL, NBA, and MLB, their combined seven-day-a-week attendance for the entire year was approximately 107 million fans—perhaps still 10-million seats shy of church turnout every single weekend of the year.

Although at the startup of the *Christian Coalition* we were not aware of such statistics, we certainly speculated that getting church-goers registered to vote and providing them with timely candidate and ballot issue information would be a good thing. And, so it was.

Many churches in our region were very cooperative—even appreciative of efforts to encourage weekend audiences to engage our culture—to be “salt and light.” Born-again elected officials were frequently invited to share both personal salvation testimonies and America’s Judeo-Christian roots—something no longer taught in public schools and seldom referred to in many churches.

Why this discussion? Because almost daily we hear that only AMERICA stands in the way of an imminent and final man-centered one-world political, economic, and religious system. We don't buy into that. We believe that task was long ago assigned to the CHURCH, which will understand triumph when JESUS returns.

We are instead drawn to a *Statement of Faith* known as the **Lausanne Covenant** that was crafted and signed by 2,300 representatives from 150 countries gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association was a leading organizer of the conference and a key architect of the final document. Consisting of ten articles of faith and purpose, Article 5 (**CHRISTIAN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**) is the most extensive. It states:

"We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and Man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ.

The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, **and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist.** (*Our emphasis*). When people receive Christ, they are born again into His Kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead." ¹ (James 2:20)

So, what does a church that refuses to bow to "**evil and injustice**" look like? We suggest it looks like Cedar Park Church, "a family of churches...with 185 employees. Under its umbrella are Christian schools, which include five campuses and a preschool program. The Bothell campus has over 1,000 students from prekindergarten to 12th grade." ²

Last year, a new state law was enacted requiring any group health plan that includes maternity coverage, as Cedar Park's does for its employees, must also include abortion coverage even though the church resolutely believes and teaches that abortion violates the Bible's command against the intentional destruction of innocent human life. More so, Cedar Park Church has a "history of prolife activism, including hosting an annual camp for children in foster care, partnering with a local pregnancy care center, ministering to couples struggling with infertility, and facilitating 1,000 embryo adoptions." ^{ibid}

Although penalties for noncompliance include fines and imprisonment, Cedar Park believes life begins at conception, and has retained the legal assistance of *Alliance Defending Freedom*. Is this a right thing to do?

Long ago, Moses met with leaders to relay the method of atonement for Israel's defilement of the marriage bed. The Lord's people were unwittingly "joining" themselves to Baal, the god of Peor, through their harlotry with the women of Moab, and were under a curse. But even as they were discussing the matter, a young man from a prominent family brought a Midianite woman to his tent—in plain sight of the whole congregation. Without hesitation, Phinehas grabbed a javelin and took off after the pair—thrusting it through them both. He didn't wait to see what others would do.

Evidently, his zeal in light of the apathy of others around him was so refreshing, it pleased the Lord to spare Israel from further wrath. A psalmist later wrote: *But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked. This was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come.* (Ps 106:30, 31)

Rick Forcier

¹ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lausanne_Committee_for_World_Evangelization

² news.ag.org/News/Church-Sues-State