

Seattle was fun but where were the Christian churches?

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by [Randy Bright](#)



Randy Bright

Vacations are a great time to get your mind off of the day-to-day routines that get priority from minute to minute and sometimes makes you lose touch with what is going on outside your immediate sphere of attention. No matter how much you read about other places, nothing beats seeing them first hand.

My wife and I have lived in the Tulsa area for over thirty-two years. You would think that by now we would be used to Oklahoma summer heat, but we always schedule a vacation to escape it, typically going farther north, up to the mountains or both. Typically we go to Colorado, but this year we chose to go to the Seattle area.

Seattle is a beautiful city, and Washington State is beautiful as well. We loved everything about Seattle except for two things – the traffic and the high costs.

When we first arrived in Seattle around noon, it took us nearly two hours to make it to our hotel in downtown Seattle. Even with five lanes for traffic on Interstate 5 plus two more express lanes (which can flow either direction based on the time of day and the direction of the heaviest traffic), traffic moved at a crawl. We missed our exit to downtown, but it wouldn't have made a difference because traffic was so thick it was nearly impossible to change lanes.

So we worked our way back to our hotel on city streets, also in beep-and-creep mode.

When we finally made it to our hotel, we were informed that we had been given a government employee hotel rate, and found ourselves paying more for a room that was less than we expected. Even at \$250 per night, it was a bargain to the other hotels that charged more than twice that rate.

We decided to drive the five blocks to the Space Needle, not because it was too far to walk, but because traffic was so heavy. Parking was hard to find and expensive.

The next day, before leaving Seattle, we went sightseeing in the city to the Pikes Market area and the Seattle Aquarium. We also took a beautiful one-hour boat tour of the bay before heading north to a less populated area.

Later in the week, we returned to the Seattle area to see two splendid air museums, the Flying Heritage Collection Museum in Everett, and the Museum of Flight Museum (Boeing's) in Seattle. We also saw a great auto museum in Tacoma, the Lemay America's Car Museum, as well as the zoo in Seattle.

But most of our time was spent in less populated areas – Burlington, Bellingham, Whidbey Island and Mount Rainer State Park. From Bellingham, we took an all-day boat tour to Friday Harbor, seeing a number of orca whales on the way. We thought seriously about going north into Canada to Vancouver, but after talking with a tour guide, decided that there was too much to see there to do it with the limited time we had.

By the time we made it back to Tulsa, we were worn out from walking so much and from the long day making our way through what has to be one of the most crowded airports (people wall-to-wall) of any we had seen. Overall, it was a very rewarding trip and I would certainly recommend that others do the same.

The point of my rather boring vacation review goes back to my original statement, that you need to get out of your sphere of attention from time to time and observe what is going on elsewhere.

What I observed in Seattle was I did not see – I ran across very few churches and most of the ones I did see were not in Seattle. That is not to say that there aren't churches in Seattle, there definitely are, but it was in contrast to what I am accustomed to seeing in the Tulsa area where churches are abundant in visible locations.

What I came away with is this. Even though almost everyone we came into personal contact with – waiters, ticket takers, guides, and hotel clerks (one of which included a very nice young Muslim lady) – all were very polite, gracious, helpful and kind. What it made me think was that we are a nation of good people and it was our Christian heritage that created that culture.

However, what I saw little of was a passive visibility of Christianity – people who wore crosses or prayed over their meals, for example – that made me wonder how many generations would pass without Christianity before DeTocqueville's warning that "if America ever cease to be good, America will cease to be great" (a direct reference to the churches he had seen in America), it would result in a negative change in our culture?

That is only one reason why it is so important for Christianity and the church to survive in America.

Randy W. Bright, AIA, NCARB, is an architect who specializes in church and church-related projects. You may contact him at 918-582-3972, rwbrightchurcharch@sbcglobal.net or www.churcharchitect.net.

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