

News For Thought



Bikers take care of their own

As detailed during the Confederation of Clubs of Tennessee's report at the NCOM Convention earlier this year, a clinic recently opened in Springfield, TN that offers free medical treatment to its patients every Saturday, regardless of whether they have medical insurance. There's just one catch -- it's a biker clinic.

It was opened as part of Covenant Confirmers, a motorcycle ministry founded seven years ago by pastor Ron Baptiste. Since March, volunteer doctors and nurses have been treating patients, mostly bikers, with minor medical problems such as the flu, colds, high blood pressure and scrapes. Anyone with serious medical problems is referred to a hospital.

The clinic is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Because it is still fairly new, the patient turnout has varied from two to 25 patients in a day.

"It's just something that I knew was needed in the biker world," Baptiste told the Tennessean newspaper. His motorcycle ministry was featured recently on The 700 Club.

Baptiste said the ministry still supports the clinic financially but, with donations coming from medical manufacturers, bike clubs and associations, the clinic is well on its way to supporting itself. Eventually, he wants to offer dental and chiropractic care for patients and is even looking at alternative medicine. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

Holy Commute

The Vatican recently handed down another 10 Commandments; this time for drivers and motorcyclists.

The document, "Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road" extols the benefits of driving — family outings, getting the sick to the hospital, allowing people to see other cultures; but it laments a host of ills associated with automobiles: drivers use their cars to show off; driving "provides an easy opportunity to dominate others" by speeding; drivers can kill themselves and others if they don't get their cars regular tuneups, if they drink, use drugs or fall asleep at the wheel.

It also points the finger at traffic problems particular to Rome: "Danger also derives from city cars, which are driven by youngsters and adults who do not have (full) driving licenses, and the reckless use of motorbikes and motorcycles."

It calls for drivers to obey speed limits and to exercise a host of Christian virtues: charity to fellow drivers, prudence on the roads, hope of arriving safely and justice in the event of crashes. And it suggests that prayer might come in handy.

Cardinal Renato Martino told a news conference that the Vatican felt it necessary to address the pastoral needs of motorists because driving has become such a big part of contemporary life. "We know that as a consequence of transgressions and negligence, 1.2 million people die each year on the roads," Martino said. "That's a sad reality, and at the same time, a great challenge for society and the church."

The "Driver's Ten Commandments," as listed in the document, are:

1. You shall not kill.
2. The road shall be for you a means of communion between people and not of mortal harm.
3. Courtesy, uprightness and prudence will help you deal with unforeseen events.
4. Be charitable and help your neighbor in need, especially victims of accidents.
5. Cars shall not be for you an expression of power and domination, and an occasion of sin.
6. Charitably convince the young and not so young not to drive when they are not in a fitting condition to do so.
7. Support the families of accident victims.
8. Bring guilty motorists and their victims together, at the appropriate time, so that they can undergo the liberating experience of forgiveness.
9. On the road, protect the more vulnerable party.
10. Feel responsible toward others.

California ducks smog checks for motorcycles

As reported in the August 2007 issue of "Motorcycle Consumer News," there are no immediate plans to require motorcycles to submit to regular Smog Checks in California, similar to emission tests that cars and other vehicles must undergo.

Under the news item, "No Smog Checks for California Motorcycles" it was announced that "The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has decided against adding motorcycles to the list of vehicles that must undergo periodic emissions testing. Reportedly, pressure from the California Motorcycle Dealers Association, ABATE of California, and others caused the CARB to drop the proposal."

Arizona is currently the only state that requires emissions testing for motorcycles, and testing is limited to only Maricopa County, in which the city of Phoenix is located. A motorcyclists coalition led by ABATE of Arizona, the Modified Motorcycle Association (MMA) of Arizona and the Arizona Confederation of Motorcycle Clubs (ACMC) were recently successful in lobbying to end emission tests for motorcycles in Pima County. The Kentucky Motorcycle Association (KMA/KBA) successfully removed motorcycles from their state's emissions testing several years ago.

North Carolina passes red light legislation

The North Carolina legislature has voted to give frustrated bikers a break at red lights. Recognizing that some traffic signal sensors do not recognize and trip for motorcycles, the Senate voted unanimously for the measure and the House then voted 61-55 to send the bill to Governor Mike Easley's

desk. If he signs it, the law will take effect December 1st, allowing motorcycle riders to proceed through a red light if they've waited three minutes for the light to change, and if no other vehicles and pedestrians are in sight.

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commit serious traffic offenses with huge civil penalties. Exorbitant fees range from \$750 to \$3,000 and will be added to existing fines and court costs. For example, the civil penalty for going 20 mph over the speed limit will be \$1,050, plus \$61 in court costs and a fine that is typically about \$200. Virginia's new traffic penalties are expected to raise \$65 million a year and are part of an effort to improve the state's roads without raising taxes. Some other states impose extra civil penalties for traffic offenses, but the cost is usually \$100 or \$200. The civil penalties apply only to Virginia residents, not out-of-state drivers, as the state Legislature didn't think it could enforce the extra penalties in other states. AAA Mid-Atlantic supports the new penalties, claiming the law will help reduce traffic fatalities.

Australian police accuse charities of making bikers look good

The Queensland Police Minister Judy Spence has accused hospitals and charities of giving "bikie gangs" a "veneer of respectability" by accepting their donations from charity runs. "She brands all motorcycle Clubs as outlaw groups," read the article. The Australian Motorcycle Rider Association responded by commenting that not all club riders were in criminal gangs, and should not be painted with that brush

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Virginians face threat of \$3000 ticket

Virginia is for lovers, or so the state slogan has declared since 1969. Starting July 1st, Virginia also will be the home of the \$3,000 traffic ticket. In an effort to raise money for road projects, the state will start hitting residents who

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