

A Decade of Verbiage

Over ten years ago, I was invited to write a story for Free Riders Press that would somehow merge the worlds of motorcycling and religion. Through the years, I have written about true life, personal experiences I have had while riding motorcycles, and doing other fun stuff. I have also written about my friend, "Jaysee" and other real characters that I have known. The very first articles that I wrote were, in fact, about the religious principle that resides in all of us. By that I mean, not that all are church-goin', prayer sayin', hymn singin' critters, but that deep down in all human beings is a built-in need to be passionately devoted to something, like the worship of God! Or, partaking of good food and drink! Or riding motorcycles. My point, back then, was that many people are enthusiastic about the bikers' manner of life, in the same way that others are devoted to Jesus Christ. Through the years, having gotten to know the lifestyle, my view has not changed; bikers are religious about the lives they live. I hope that many have been able to become as devoted to Christ as they are to riding, because of what they have read in these columns.

My life has certainly changed considerably since those first tentative articles about religion. I have learned much about myself, as I tried to relate to all bikers, no matter what they rode, or where, or with whom. I have not limited my riding to just Christian friends, or even "clean and sober" ride groups, but have ridden with pretty much whoever gave me an invite. I have also visited many communities and businesses in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest on runs of one sort or another, that I would never have found in my normal course of life. I can remember riding my old Yamaha XS11 with some folks that were less than thrilled with riding in close proximity to a "rice burner." But I held the "Old Gray Nag" down and kept her from running off from the bunch. I've had the privilege of riding with many of the Motorcycle Clubs in the upper Midwest, and have really learned a lot from you all. And most every one of you is "religious," at least about riding motorcycles.

Now that I am older, and wiser(?), I have come to the conclusion that I don't have to try to prove myself to anyone anymore, especially not to myself. At one time, it was important to me that others would see me as a bonafide Biker. I'll never forget that first ride to Tomahawk to do "The Wedding" at the Speedway. There were those who wanted to know if I was really a biker, or just a pretender. There weren't that many bike riding pastors around, and I was put through a few tests. I remember a ride I went on out past Eau Claire to a Federation meeting a few years back. It was pretty late when we got ready to get home, and we rode over a hundred miles in freezing rain. I had to keep clearing my beard of ice so I could breathe. There was the ride back from Arkansas that year when Rose went down in Des Moines, and Art and I rode home in snow and ice. Then there was the trip Beverly and I made to southern Utah back in '08, on Ol'Blue, pulling a trailer. That trip covered over 6000 miles in three weeks, including stops in Sturgis, and Central Michigan before landing back in Adams County. I have ridden beyond endurance, with any and all variety of riders, in every change of weather, over every sort of road condition, under all kinds of pressure, to prove to myself and others that I was a REAL Biker! After all these years, I still don't know if I qualify to be one. But I have concluded that I am what I am, and that's really all I need to be. The bottom line is that I have tried to glorify Jesus Christ in my riding, as well as my writing here, and that is the real goal of my life.

I have been slowing down some lately, as I approach 70 years on this earth. These old bones have seen many miles, and Ol' Blue is getting long in the tooth. I have been called to a nice pastorate down here in White Creek, Adams County. I've been chaplain at the PETRO Truck Stop for over eight years now, and I've pastored the White Creek Church for almost four. When I went to the Church here, I had to tell them that I had never been in their Church, but I had been in both the bars in the White Creek neighborhood during past years. Some of the rides we were enjoying stopped for refreshment from time to time in White Creek, so we got to visit among our future parishioners without knowing it. That little tidbit is to tell you that the Lord may have an ironic sense of humor. I plan to keep writing in FRP as long as Preacher lets me, and I appreciate the fact that you keep on reading. Who knows but what, some day, Pastor Sam might be called to a neighborhood near you.

Pastor Sam

White Creek Church

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