

The Last Ride

Yesterday, someone said to me, "Are you going to get a Trike?" We weren't talking about three-wheelers or my health at the time - I don't remember exactly what we were talking about, but my immediate response was, "No!" The conversation didn't register with me until sometime this morning when I questioned the source of that immediate answer. Sure, I have thought of the time when this old body couldn't handle that big old hog anymore, but I have dismissed the idea of a trike purely on economic terms - I can't see the day I could ever afford it. The same way I felt about ever owning a Harley at all. All along, I have said that Ol' Blue is the last motorcycle I'd ever own. We've put a lot of miles on together, and I can't more than imagine going down the road on anything else. She's always been able to handle me and Pinky two-up, and she'll go as fast as I'll ever want to go again. She's long in the tooth, and loses a little oil now and again, but . . . so do I. I think she is my "Last Ride."



You ask, "But, what about a trike conversion?" That would be a possibility, I suppose, but it is pretty expensive - like a hip replacement. If you went in for a new hip, the Doctor would want to make sure the heart and lungs and liver were all in pretty good shape before you spent all that money on a hip. You wouldn't put a new joint in a body that was about to expire, so you would want to make sure that the rest of Ol' Blue was up to it, wouldn't you? There'd be more money to spend on innards, before a conversion makes sense. There is the real possibility that if I don't "trike" Ol'Blue I may need a hip or a knee for myself, so I could be looking at the "Last Ride" in reference to an event, rather than a bike. There could possibly be a time when I can't physically ride anymore, but that is, hopefully, way down the road.

The reality is that everyone of us will someday come face to face with our "Last Ride," and we need to prepare for it. I may one day not be able to ride a two-wheeled motorcycle, and if I want to continue to ride, I have to prepare to "Trike it," or go get that little red convertible down at the corner car lot. The cost may be about the same, I just need to determine where and how I want to go from now on. For some of us who "Ride to Live and Live to Ride," the choice may be very difficult. Long after my dad was told he shouldn't drive any longer, he drove many miles using the "cruise control," along with his wooden cane for the gas and the brake. His "Last Ride" came before any innocent bystanders were injured or killed; may it be so for me as well. May God prepare me to take my "Last Ride" before I injure myself or others, thinking that I can still do whatever I used to be able to do when I was younger and stronger.

God has blessed us with life on this earth that is filled with wonder, experience, and feeling. We don't want to consider that it will ever end, but we know that it will. Machines will break down, and we grow old. Hopes may fade and dreams die, unfulfilled. Best intentions often are unrealized, and we fail to meet our own expectations. We all will, someday, look down that long road of our earthly "Last Ride." We may not want to speak of it, nor do we desire to face it, but, ". . . just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him." (Hebrews 9:27-28) The Bible clearly sets out a definite law of nature, which we all accept as truth. No one lives this life forever, but will, one day, take that long "Last Ride" in death's coach. If we are prepared for this "Last Ride," by faith in Jesus Christ and His death FOR us on the cross, we will find a place with Him forever in Heaven, at the end of the ride. It is then that the "Real Ride" will begin, and that's what we've been waiting for. Repent of your sin, and trust Jesus today.

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Christian and Veteran Bikers Sue Over Being Thrown Out of Fair

Motorcyclists who were thrown out of the Florida State Fair for displaying their love of America and Christianity on their vests must amend their lawsuit, a federal judge has ruled.

According to Courthouse News, Mark Denico, Thomas Griswold Jr., Timothy Newberry and Dennis Walsted had arrived at the Florida State Fair on Feb. 7, 2010. Denico and Griswold are members of the U.S. Military Vets Motorcycle Club, while Newberry and Walsted belong to the Spirit Riders Motorcycle Ministry. Walsted said he was planning to "lead all the motorcyclists in prayer once inside the fair," but he and the others were escorted out once they paid for admission. Fair rules ban gang colors or signs, and members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office told the quartet that they could not enter the fair while wearing vests with the patches indicating motorcycle club membership.

Tampa Bay Times reported that approximately 50 bikers from numerous clubs were turned away that day. In their subsequent lawsuit, the four accused law enforcement and fair officials of violating their First Amendment rights to freedom of association and religion.

U.S. District Judge Virginia Hernandez Covington nevertheless dismissed the complaint without prejudice because it failed to specifically indicate claims under the federal civil right law Section 1983, which creates a private right of action for civil damages. The fair demonstrated that the "plaintiffs' naked reference to § 1983 is insufficient for defendants or this court to assume that they intended to bring [counts one through nine] under its rubric," according to the ruling. "Plaintiffs may have identified constitutional rights alleged to have been violated, but have failed to allege causes of action associated with those violations," Covington added.

The judge also declined to give the plaintiffs an injunction restraining the defendants from "ordering, compelling, bullying, requesting, coercing, or threatening a member of a motorcycle club or motorcycle ministry to remove their vests with 'patches' on them signifying membership within a particular organization." Injunctions are appropriate only if plaintiffs can show they will continue to be harmed during the course of litigation, according to the ruling. "Conspicuously absent from the operative complaint is any allegation that the plaintiffs intend to return to the Florida State Fair wearing their prohibited patches or that the plaintiffs face specific future harm at the hands of the defendants," Covington wrote. Vaguely alleging that "the Florida State Fair Authority will continue to selectively exclude certain motorcyclists from the fair" is not sufficient to reach the standard for an injunction, the court ruled, and so the club members must amend their complaint before moving forward with the lawsuit. www.ON-A-BIKE.com

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