



GOD'S HIGHWAY

Gary Wadding

Riding motorcycles should involve learning a little more every year that we ride. My first rides were total chaos, and there was no end to the things I needed to learn. I didn't know what all those gadgets were; levers, handles, etc. I didn't know how to coordinate them when I did figure out what they were. And I had nobody to help me learn! My backside met up with way too many sandspurs during those first days as I literally found myself flying off the bike at times. I knew I could learn how to ride this thing, if only I could live long enough to do it.

That first bike was a Bennelli 350, single cylinder street bike. I bought it for three main reasons. It was bright red. It had a lot of chrome (fenders and spokes used to be chrome, remember?). And it was only \$250 used, just what I could afford. But why was I so alone in my attempts to master the art of two-wheeled travel? Pride. I was too embarrassed to tell anybody that I had never ridden a bike, so they never got the chance to help me learn. Because I did eventually learn, my pride stayed intact, but it was stupid of me.

One day I found myself sitting on the hood of a car and listening to a man teach me just one more interesting facet of truth about motorcycling. It appears that in the state of Florida it is a requirement for all motorcycles to have at least one mirror. I didn't know. The bike didn't come from a dealer, just a friend. I never had any lessons. How was I to know? That Highway Patrolman gave me another opportunity to learn. He was real nice and just gave me a warning, requiring me to get the mirror within one week. Lessons learned like that are easy to remember.

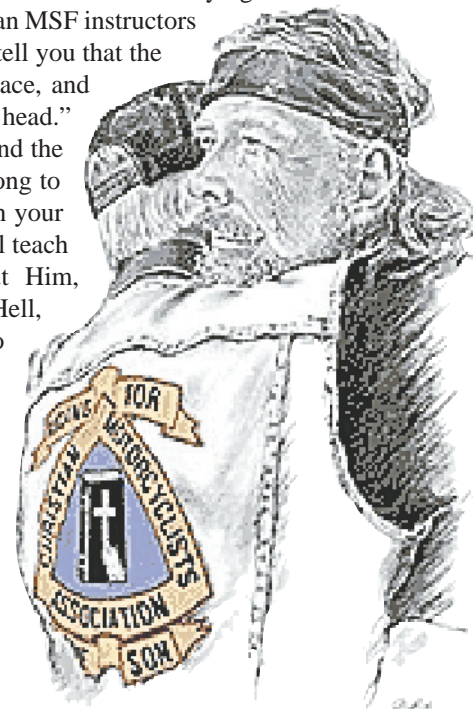
Later in life I taught my wife, Sweetie Pie, to ride. She was a quick learner, and made a lot less mistakes than I did in the beginning. The main reason was that she was humble enough to admit that she needed help. After she decided to get serious about all this and start riding on the highway with me, I figured I would take her to the MSF course to get professional learning for that added bit of safety. I went along, just to give her moral support. What could they possibly teach me? I have told many people that I learned more than I could ever have imagined in that simple little basic beginners course with her. I had to unlearn a lot of bad habits, and had to begin developing a lot of new habits to take their place. Learning was starting to catch up with me.

One of the best lessons I learned in that course was the simple "Head Check". Never trust your mirror because there is always

an area called the Blind Spot. The only way to be really safe was to activate the rotational apparatus on top of your neck, and turn your head to see if the area was clear. Just turn the neck and make a Head Check. That little lesson has saved my life many times. I'm grateful to MSF for teaching my wife (while I happened to be listening too).

I performed a memorial service last week in Miami for Vinnie Margotta. He was a well respected shop owner, drill team rider and just plain nice guy. There were about 500 in attendance at Phil Peterson's H-D dealership for the event. We thought back over Vinnie's life and recalled many great memories about this man. Quite a few remembered his clear instruction to them, "Turn your head!" He pounded that lesson into his friends.

I thought about how many people are spiritually riding through life just the way I was when I got my first bike. How many figure they can make it just as well as anybody else, so why look for help? I steer as many people as possible to the MSF courses where they can learn little things like "Turn your head." I also steer as many people as possible to Jesus Christ where they can learn in that realm of life too. Turn your head and see how many of your friends aren't with you anymore. Turn your head and see how many people you have hurt in your ride through life. Turn your head and see that God is seeking after you, to save your soul. Turn your head and see how the years are flying by, and see that a memorial service for each of us is coming up sooner than we think. I'm not trying to be morbid any more than MSF instructors are morbid when they tell you that the road is a dangerous place, and you should "Turn your head." The lesson I learned, and the lesson I am passing along to each of you is to "Turn your head to Jesus." He will teach you about you, about Him, about Heaven, and Hell, and how He died to save your soul. You're not too old to learn. And this lesson is too important to skip. Turn Your Head... to Jesus.



STILL LEARNING