



Blessings, Bibles and Bikes

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT
BY NOELLE HARO-GOMEZ

Never mind the motorcycles and the leather vests. The men and women so outfitted who recently gathered at the Roper Lake State Park in Safford on Memorial Day weekend are not a gang or a motorcycle club.

They are the Cruising Christians — teachers, business owners, maintenance workers and others dedicated to evangelistic outreach to the motorcycle community. The Tucson chapter is part of the Christian Motorcyclists Association, an international ministry active in 27 countries.

The chapter defies stereotypes found in popular culture by focusing its organization on Christian fellowship. Members do blessings at motorcycle stores and attend biker rallies, like Arizona Bike Week, where they hand out water — and the Bible. Members also do service-oriented work, such as feeding the homeless and volunteering at youth centers.

And they do it all on motorcycles.

“Everyone thinks we’re a club or a gang because of our colors, which is a back patch,” said Doc Madden, the vice president of the chapter. The patch, which takes up most of his back, is a large yellow triangle with a hand in prayer holding the Bible with a cross on it.

“We do not go out and start thumping the Bible and say, ‘You’re going to hell if you don’t believe in Jesus,’ ” he said. “We wait for people to approach us, and then we share our own stories.”

The chapter fell apart at one point and was disbanded by the umbrella organization because it did not have enough members. Church visits and volunteer work brought membership back up.

“We don’t really focus on trying to go out and recruit,” Mr. Madden said. “We go out and get our colors seen at churches, so anybody who is there may say: ‘Hey, I ride a motorcycle. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, my lord and savior. I want to come join you.’ ”



SOUL TO SOUL Above, Steve Eddington, left, and Mike Reich, members of Cruising Christians, gave spiritual guidance to a man at the Gospel Rescue Mission Shelter in Tucson on May 26.



WEEKEND GETAWAY Members of Cruising Christians, far left, at a potluck dinner for a fellowship retreat at Roper Lake State Park in Safford on Memorial Day weekend. It was one of a few weekends they were all able to ride together.

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DOC MADDEN | Cruising Christians



PRIDE OF INSIGNIA Clifford Jennerjohn wears the patch of the group, which is the Tucson chapter of the international Christian Motorcyclists Association.

REVVED UP Members bond and meet new riders at the fellowship retreat. Without retreats, they would see one another only during volunteer work.