



A Bike Week Tragedy

URNS INTO A BLESSING

STORY BY ANDREA BEARDEN KUHN

It's a fact, bad things happen to good people. The outcome is never predictable, and often the aftermath is a mixed bag of both pain and blessings. No one knows this better than Pastor Fred Z, the Harley riding Revvvvvvvvverend, founder of Bikers for Christ International and Senior Pastor of Rushing Wind Ministries in Oceanside, California.

After riding for several days of "street ministry", sharing their faith and love for Jesus with thousands of Bike Week attendees, one night the riders were stopped at a red light at the intersection of Highway 44, and Highway 415. The light turned green, and there was a loud crash, and Pastor Z was hit and sent flying 20-25 feet in the air. All he could think of was, "Lord Jesus, please hold me in Your Hands, and please let me make it home to see my precious wife, Esther". Thankfully the Lord answered both his prayers that night. As he picked himself up off the ground he realized that Dave Catalano (Pastor G's seventy-four year old father-in-law who was also a BFC member) had been rear-ended by a car, then the car had spun and hit Pastor Z. His pain was incredible, but he managed to limp over to Dave, trying to block traffic with Pastor G. and others who stopped to help. It was a horrific scene.

Dave Catalano was on the ground, and was conscious but seriously injured. The young woman that hit him knocked him off his bike, and Dave's HD V-Rod got stuck under her left fender. Her car swerved and the right side of her 2006 Mustang took Pastor Z. out and sent him airborne. His back left a huge dent in the right side quarter panel. The police estimate that they had been rear-ended at about 65-70 mph (there were no skid marks), and after the driver hit the men - her car continued dragging the 700 lb. V-Rod about 80 feet up the highway.

The paramedics did what they could on the scene, then the ambulances took the men away and the tow trucks took the bikes and car. Dave was taken to a nearby hospital. Thankfully, Pastor Z. had on a carbon-fiber DOT helmet, and full leathers. Southern California folks get cold easily, so he had on his arctic gear. Five hours later, and numerous ex-rays, the verdict was in, nothing broken. Al-

though he was in excruciating pain and questioned the report, he was assured he would be sore, but that was about all. He left the hospital with pain medication and nothing more.

The next day was the BFC Rally at Daytona Bike Week. Pastor Z. was really sore and sat (hiding) behind the "BFC support gear" table (with a large BFC bro at each end of the table) so that nobody would hug him. That was a good thing as later in the afternoon, he had a call from the x-ray department; someone made an error and fractures were discovered. It was undetermined if they were "new or old" fractures. As he was flying home soon, he said that would follow up with his own doctor.

Later that afternoon - Pastor G. Dave's daughter Phyllis, and Pastor Z. went to visit Dave at the hospital and met with his wife Annette, and the family. Dave was really in a great deal of pain, but alive and conscious. Pastor Z. and the others were able to pray and talk with him. A few hours after the visit, Dave Catalano mysteriously passed away. We all miss him terribly, but know that he is at peace in Heaven. The BFC family made numerous donations to David's wife (from different BFC chapters) in His memory, and we pray for the family and love them as our own.

Even as a pastor, Pastor Z. admits that he doesn't always understand what the Lord is doing. What he does know is that God loves us unconditionally, that His ways are higher than our ways. Many times he has reminded people that God's Word tells them that heaven is beautiful, and that the death of God's saints is precious to the Lord. The message of trusting in the Lord, regardless of the circumstances, is something he truly believes in. In the good times or bad, He is always faithful.

The day before Pastor Z. got on the plane, he put a sling on his left arm and went with a BFC brother to downtown Daytona. They were going to look up an outlaw club leader. He shared the testimony of what happened. It touched the club leader's heart to know, that despite the pain Fred Z. was in, he went back to seek him out to tell him that Jesus loved him, and that they did too. He accepted a tract about Pastor Z's life and ministry. His club brothers told Pastor Z. later that the



leader didn't like Christians and usually would not give them the time of day, much less take a gospel tract from a pastor. This time he listened, and took the tract.

The plane ride home the next day was very painful, (agonizing might be a better description), about six hours, two planes and nearly 3,000 miles. There were tears of joy and relief when Pastor Z. arrived home to his wife, Esther. They now cherish, even more, every moment they have together, knowing that their relationship here on earth together could have ended that weekend.



After some extensive x-rays, the reason for the continuing pain came to light. There were seven broken bones in his ribs and his back, four new breaks plus compression fractures of thoracic vertebrae.

Pastor Z. is happy to be alive and at home healing up with his beautiful Esther and his little church family at Rushing Wind Ministries, and Bikers for Christ HQ. He and his wife determined that he needed to "press on" sharing the gospel, as the Lord spared his life so that he could continue to do so. They also decided that now, with so much extensive damage that has been done to the thoracic area of his back, it would no longer be possible to hold up an 800 lb. Harley-Davidson touring motorcycle. They started weighing the options, and he put his big, comfortable, black HD Street Glide up for sale.

A trike offers comfort and stability giving the rider confidence that is unattainable on two wheels (especially for handicapped riders like Pastor Z.). An added blessing to what had been a tragedy for Pastor Z, was that his Vivid Black 2007 Harley-Davidson Street Glide was recently transformed into an incredible custom one of a kind trike, all paid for by a very close friend, a BFC brother who wishes to remain anonymous, as it is a gift to the Lord, for his friend and pastor. His friend's comments, "Pastor Z. tries to minister to, and help everybody - I felt like the Lord wanted to bless him this time."



Pastor Z. studied all the trike literature on the market, and talked to many vendors. He met Tracy (an awesome sales lady) and Craig (the owner) from Harley-Davidson of Westminster (the So. Cal. Champion dealer) in Laughlin, and called them back. He also spoke with Kenny and Jim at Champion trikes a few times, and then went out to their plant in Westminster, CA.

He chose a new Champion Independent Suspension kit, to compliment his Street Glide for a number of reasons: Their independent suspension kit is state of the art, it is very comfortable, and it has the long, sweeping fender lines that give his trike the classy, custom look that he was searching for.

Tracy & Craig, the Westminster HD service dept., and Champion were a great team to work with. Assembly was done by HD's Wes and Steve - who did a amazing job. They even fabricated Pastor Z's Vance and Hines fishtails to fit the rear (which was a first for Champion and H-D of Westminster). Now it totally has the Bat-mobile/cycle thing going on. A reverse gear was added - as well as the EZ steer (powersteering kit), and just for fun, Pastor Z. added a set of Paul Yaffee "Wild Monkey" apehanger bars. The trike has beautiful chrome laced wheels, and the bike has a Mustang seat with a rider backrest (which another BFC Pastor and his wife donated). The BFC Las Vegas crew blessed Pastor Z. with a chrome primary cover with the BFC logo lasered in color. Finally, an H-D Ultra tour pack was added for Pastor Z's wife Esther's comfort, (who doesn't like to travel light), and for added visibility - it has lights all around it. Now they've got all the room and a great trike to take them on their many ministry trips and adventures. The bike handles and runs great, and people always stop to take a 2nd look, every time. Pastor Z. tells them that it is his "Handicapped Adult Big Wheel!" Blessings out of a tragedy. God is good!

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