

Dysfunctional Evangelism

Assemblies of God missionary and former pastor Scott Bush ☒ travels on his Harley-Davidson Ultra Classic ministering to hundreds of bikers at festivals throughout the country. His way of telling people how much Jesus loves them: help them find out how truly dysfunctional they are. Read on ...

CHARISMA: What drew you to the biker crowd?

Scott Bush: I've ridden a motorcycle since I was 18 years old; I'm now 48 years old. In 1991 I started working with bikers, going to motorcycle rallies and sharing the gospel with people. It was incredible. They showed up at my house and wanted to start a Bible study. So my wife and I ended up starting one. I had no desire to be a pastor or to be an evangelist. But more and more people came, and we ended up starting a church. My wife and I pastored a biker church for seven years in Orlando, Fla., and as I was pastoring I realized how dysfunctional these people were. I went to college and got my undergraduate in behavioral science so that I could better understand who I was ministering to.

CHARISMA: You've got to admit, calling a biker dysfunctional is an interesting way to start a conversation about Christ.

Bush: Currently we've been using a wheel of dysfunction [to draw people]. It's a game that we play with the bikers. They walk by our booth and we ask them if they'd like to take a personality test or check for dysfunctions they may have. They laugh, but they'll also usually walk over and spin the wheel.

On the wheel there are many dysfunctions. One is a funny one—it's "Goofball." Another one is "Histrionic," which means

a person is a drama queen, and another one is “Borderline Psychotic.” The bikers are interested in getting the worst diagnosis the wheel can produce. There’s only a 1-in-13 chance that they’ll land on “Normal.”

CHARISMA: No Pat Sajak or Vanna White, huh? So what happens after the bikers spin the wheel of dysfunction?

Bush: From there everyone gets a big laugh, their friends will point and laugh, and then their friends may spin the wheel. After that we’ll invite them to come into the booth to get their free prize.

We’ll then go through the salvation message in a couple minutes telling them about heaven, telling them about sin, telling them about the blood of Jesus and talking to them about salvation.

CHARISMA: Your team visits both small and large bike festivals—sometimes with up to 1,500 people. What type of response do you typically get from bikers at these festivals?

Bush: Most of the response is very good. We usually get 1 out of 4 people [to say the prayer of salvation]. If a biker says, “I don’t want to pray that prayer,” I say, “That’s great—let me tell you about God’s plan for our lives.” If they respond yes, then we pray the prayer of salvation. From there we’ll hand them a pocket Bible. We give them another card which explains what they just heard and all the Scriptures so that they can be reminded of them.

CHARISMA: What’s your biggest challenge when ministering at bike festivals?

Bush: One of our biggest challenges is not having enough people to work the booth. By the time you've spun the wheel, gone through the plan of salvation, prayed with the person and had them fill out a follow-up card, it can be timely.

CHARISMA: Sharing the gospel with a tough crowd is right up your alley, isn't it?

Bush: Yes. My hobby was riding motorcycles, and God used my hobby to minister to those that I would come in contact with in that arena.