

7 Killed in Pentecostal Church Van Crash on the Way to Disney World

Seven people, including five children, died in a fiery crash in Florida on Thursday.

The multi-vehicle crash involved two tractor-trailers, the church van and another sedan. The crash sparked a massive fire after 50 gallons of diesel gushed onto the highway, according to *USA Today*.

Spectrum My News 13 reports one of the semitrucks and a passenger vehicle collided in the northbound lanes. After that collision, both of those vehicles traveled through the guardrail, crossed over the median and into southbound I-75. The van overturned and ejected some of the passengers.

A representative of the Avoyelles House of Mercy, a Pentecostal church in Louisiana, confirmed to *Charisma* via Facebook that it was their van, but offered no other information.

The Florida Highway Patrol has not released the names of the victims.

In addition to the seven fatalities, eight others were injured. The van was heading to Disney World.

"There are accidents on I-75 all the time, (and) we've had more deaths here on I-75 on this stretch than you could imagine," said Roger Stephens, an Alachua County resident.

Alachua County Fire Rescue posted photos of the accident to its Facebook page.

One person commented, "I was there right after it happened.

The fire and smoke was horrible. Being retired law enforcement I just had to help any way I could. Was in the main scene with a deputy [sic] from Alachua co. He was attempting to assess the injuries as I followed him with the defibrillator. It was the most horrific thing I have ever seen. So many lost so much. I later helped with traffic control. I had forgotten what [expletives] some people can be with their phones out trying to get pictures instead of moving out of the way. The South bound lane was closed and after about an hour or so the North bound lane was closed off. With so many deaths it will be closed for several hours. Lori Windham and I agree the first responders today we're awesome. They truly have a tough job, AC deputies, Gainesville P.D., the fire Department, EMT's, FHP, and others worked tirelessly and professionally. They all deserve our respect. When I left the scene, I knew some of those folks would be out there all night. So incredibly sad."

Several people offered prayers on the Facebook post.

One person wrote: "May the God of Peace strengthen all lives involved in this tragedy. I am praying for and with you."

Another posted: "LORD, cover the families with YOUR peace!!"