

Outlaws and Rebels

There are many motorcycle clubs in Australia but some are known as bikie gangs. A gang is defined as *“a group of criminals or hoodlums who band together for mutual protection and profit”*.

According to the Australian Crime Commission, bikie gangs or Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMCGs) are among the most identifiable components of Australia’s criminal landscape. Australia has an estimated 6000-plus bikies belonging to more than 100 chapters of around 45 outlaw gangs, stretching from Darwin to Tasmania. This number is growing both nationally and internationally and has police concerned. Among the OMCGs of interest to them, many have links with notorious overseas gangs.

The Rebels are the only major home-grown gang and were formed in Brisbane several decades ago. They boast by far the biggest membership of around 2000 and have been tied to various execution-style killings. What is behind this lawless and rebellious lifestyle?

Misdirected Manhood

Bikie gangs are almost entirely a male phenomenon. It seems that everything about bikies is screaming for attention – their gang names and mottos, the colourful club patches on black jackets, tattoos on face and body, long hair, pony tails and beards, hordes of roaring motorcycles.

John Eldredge, writing about the masculine journey, (a motorcyclist himself), maintains that *“the warrior is hardwired into every man. This is true because he is made in the image of God, who is the Great Warrior. Like Father, like son. It is also true because it constitutes a great part of man’s mission here on earth – to join the Great Warrior in his battle against evil”*. But in his books he alerts us to the sad reality that Western society is full of ‘unfinished men’. Many men carry what he calls a ‘father wound’ due

to having an absent or abusive father. The big question to their human fathers, vital to their manhood, ‘Do I have what it takes?’ has not yet been answered.

Instead of fighting against evil, bikie gangs are its perpetrators. Their criminal activities include the production and supply of illicit drugs, car and motorcycle theft, firearms trafficking, stand-over and drive-by shootings, extortion, arson, money laundering, prostitution ... the list goes on.

Wounded Warriors

Bikie gangs can trace their origins to the period after World War II when returning American veterans began to organize themselves into clubs. Right from the start in 1945 the first clubs had offensive and self-deprecating names. This seems to indicate that some vets returned from the horrors of war as disenfranchised, disillusioned, damaged and wounded men. Vietnam and other war vets continued to swell their numbers.

Sons of Who?

Almost all names of bikie gangs are intimidating. There are anti-social names like Finks; criminal names like Bandidos; warrior names like Mongols but perhaps the most telling are the names like Hell’s Angels, Red Devils, Diablos, Satan’s Riders and Devil’s Henchmen. Tattoos, which are also synonymous with bikies, permanently mar their faces and bodies with skulls, demons and other vile and satanic images. Knowingly or unknowingly many bikies have shown that their true allegiance is to Satan. Jesus revealed this shocking reality to those who wanted to kill him, *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him”* (John 8:44).

The rivalries and alliances between bikie gangs result in bikie wars, like the Father’s Day Massacre of 1984 in Sydney between two bikie gangs resulting in seven deaths. The murderous lifestyle of bikies bears out the truth spoken by God that *“whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind”* (Genesis 9:6).

God’s Squad

However, in Australia there are also several Christian Motorcycle Clubs known as CMCs. One of these, God’s Squad, is thought to be the oldest Christian backpatch club in the world. It was founded by John 'Bullfrog' Smith, former Baptist minister, teacher, author and anthropologist with a PhD.



God’s Squad began during the counter culture Jesus Movement days of the late 60’s. John Smith felt called to work in the bikie scene after passing a group of riders tinkering with a bike on the roadside. He thought *“I wonder if anyone ever gets to talk to these guys about faith, the meaning of life, about what love really is”*. Since then John Smith has had an amazing chaplaincy to bikies recognizing that *“riding in convoy had a magic that was hard to explain to outsiders”* and that *“clubs gave men a sense of identity”*.

Today John Smith’s message is more powerful than his Harley Davidson at full throttle. On the God’s Squad website we read what John Smith calls *“the*

bottom line". This is the powerful statement that "the Bible tells us that we are made in God's image. Because God made us, He knows just what we need. Just like a manufacturer's service requires the right oils, filters, plugs and grease, so too we have certain needs and an ultimate purpose and reason for living."

Father in Heaven, We thank You that You created humanity in Your own image so that humankind could have a right relationship with you for all eternity. We pray for Aussie bikies that they will become your Beloved Sons knowing You as their true Father and Jesus as their true Brother. We pray that they will reject lawlessness and rebellion and that they will shed the club names, mottos, colours and tattoos inspired by Satan. Open their eyes to see that Satan is a murderer and a liar and all his ways lead to death. By your amazing grace restore the damaged image in them and make them complete and finished men in Jesus. In the Name of Jesus. Amen

About 'Image of God' Leaflets

In the Bible we read that God "*created man in His own image*" (Genesis 1:27). Many maintain that all human history revolves around this truth. The Judeo-Christian belief in the unique dignity of human beings is at the very foundation of Western civilisation.

The 2010 Canberra Declaration therefore states:

"We believe that all human life, being made in the image of God, has intrinsic and equal value from conception to life's natural end."

'Image of God' leaflets relate the doctrine of man as created in the image of God to various issues we face in Australia today.

The 21 leaflets in SERIES ONE are dedicated to Sophie Scholl who was martyred at the age of 21 in World War II for writing and distributing leaflets.

You can download other 'Image of God' leaflets at the Canberra Declaration website.

Please:

READ & SIGN

**The Canberra Declaration
to Protect**

- *Religious Freedom*
- *Marriage and Family and*
- *Human Life*
in Australia

Website: www.canberradeclaration.org.au

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and the
**Image of
God**