



A 4,000-Mile Prayer Odyssey

By Charli Hamaker

When I arrived at the 2007 LWML national convention, I was dressed in black leather, and I was giving thanks to God for a safe 4,000-mile motorcycle odyssey from Olympia, Washington, to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, with my husband, Bill.

“Rest Area Ahead,” Judy Knebel’s pre-convention devotion, helped calm my nerves before our odyssey began. Her simple words: *Trust in God for safe travel* touched me deeply. Trust in God. Let go of fears. Rest on Christ the King. The words gave me comfort and set the tone for my 4,000-mile-long prayer odyssey on a fully loaded motorcycle.

I prayed for protection from obstacles on the road: pieces of blown-out tires

or bales of hay, potholes, animals, ruts, objects flying off vehicles, and — not the least of these — the unthinking actions of other drivers.

I prayed that God would help drivers see us on the road.

I prayed that God would help me relax and lean into the curves. I admit, I don’t love the leaning. I’m always concerned that I’ll jerk and upset the centrifugal force that keeps the bike moving through a curve rather than conforming to the law of gravity. Many times I thank God for my husband’s years of riding experience and seeming fearlessness. He loves the ebb and flow of leaning into the curves of a winding road. The first day of a trip, I’m uptight but by the end, I’m like a wet noodle in the curves, flowing and dreaming.

I prayed through nasty weather, and I choose to believe that God had opened tunnels of dry road or sent the rain down before or after us. On our first day into Idaho, we expected a snowy pass. My prayer life kicked into high gear. He answered my prayers, and we hit the top of the pass — no snow on the road, but it had fallen on the slopes about 50 feet above us.

I prayed hard as we traveled through construction zones in Wyoming, thanking Him profusely for the skill and diligence He gave my chauffeur. More thanksgiving and praise followed as we drove through spectacular rock formations that looked like castles-in-the-air. I marveled at the fantastic artistry of God’s creation.

I prayed for safety as we passed through low, dark grey clouds where reports of tornadoes and grapefruit-sized hail surrounded us. The wind blew over 60 miles an hour, and as Bill battled the sway of the bike, I gripped my helmet with both hands because it was threatening to rip my head off. I am speechless with awe that God has kept us safe through such fierce weather.

Sometimes we get funny looks. Bikers in leather? On our way home from Sioux Falls, we stopped in a small town to eat and chatted with a local about the road condition. Just by coincidence, she was a member of LWML who couldn’t make it to the convention. It’s good to feel accepted because of that connection, instead of looked on with a certain amount of trepidation as bikers often are.

I gave thanks for the good people living in the country as we passed acres and acres of corn and wheat, and tiny towns spread out among the quarter sections first settled by pioneering families. In one small town we passed a house where windows and doors, bushes and trees were wrapped with yellow ribbons. I thanked God for the men and women serving in the military and the families who are waiting for their loved ones to return.

Closer to home, we rode small winding roads and saw the vast empty spaces of this country. I thanked God for the beautiful, vast, empty spaces.

From our biking experience to the Oklahoma convention, a first for LWML, to this latest 4,000-mile odyssey to Sioux Falls, we’ve had many opportunities to praise God for the care and protection He’s given us on the road. I thank God for the kind folks whose lives we’ve glimpsed and the beautiful corners of His creation we’ve been able to enjoy.

I pray that many of you will be inspired to come visit your LWML sisters and enjoy our Northwest corner of God’s creation at the next national convention in Portland in 2009.

You don’t even have to come by motorcycle!

Charli Hamaker, past Washington-Alaska LWML district president, has been riding on motorcycles with her husband, Bill, for over 23 years.

