



Gary Wadding

GOD'S HIGHWAY

We just finished with the greatest time of the entire year: Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, the visit by the Wise Men, the gathering of the family, the gifts, etc. Now that we have left all that and headed into 2009, what have you done so far with your new year? (I'm writing this in the first week of January) Although many of us bikers braved the elements and rode our motorcycle in the frosty winter air as an act of bravery, this month finds a huge number of homes filled with another exciting activity, football.

Even though I don't watch football games during the rest of the year, I do give some attention to the finals, the bowls and the championships. The pros are great athletes and can make moves that no amateur can duplicate; but for my viewing pleasure, I prefer the excitement and enthusiasm of the many college games. Most of these young heroes are realistic enough to know they will never get a call from the NFL, so this is their last shot at fame and glory. This silly bowl game is going to get everything they have, and that makes for excitement.

The quarterbacks are the prima donnas and get the most attention. The wide receiver and tight ends get to snatch the game-winning pass on their fingertips as they hurl their bodies through the air into the end zone. The linemen are where the game is won or lost though. Watch them and you can tell which team is pushing the other one around the field. Which player do I want to think about today? None of them. It's the mascot.

I've seen a veritable barnyard of animals marched around the field in an attempt to get the crowds cheering and screaming. The object of this affection or animosity might be the war eagle of Auburn or the bulldog from Athens, Georgia. I even remember an afternoon in Colorado when I saw a real live buffalo being run all around the field by a team of handlers. The list goes on and on.

One thing I noticed about the mascots though. They never actually get involved in the game. You'll never see officials let the Florida gator chomp into the South Carolina gamecock. The mascots are only used as figureheads, not as anything actually on the team. They're really exciting. They get their images plastered on coffee

cups, T-shirts and baseball caps. They get the teams and the fans all revved up, but that's the extent of what they can do.

When I started this article I mentioned that we just finished the most exciting time of the year, the birth of Jesus Christ. The Babe of Bethlehem was seen on television, in store windows and on cards sent to friends. His image was plastered everywhere. People got very inspired and excited about the Savior. But then what about the everyday lives of those people as they move on into the new year? Do they consider Jesus as their source of wisdom and strength for their every day? Do they read His words in the Bible to guide their decisions about money, marriage and motorcycles? Is He really the Lord of their lives, or merely their mascot? Do they pull Him out when they need an emotional boost, or do they put Him into the game of their life?

I would rather play a football game with a real live buffalo running through the opponents on my behalf than just have one on the sidelines. I have a real live Jesus who goes into my battles with me. He rides with me and goes down the High Way of my life. Christmas isn't over for me. Jesus isn't my mascot. He's my Lord. Is He yours? Are you on God's High Way, or just riding on your way with a mascot? Food for thought.

