

Chapter 25

Chickens, Rabbits, and Pigs

On another *occasion* in India we stayed in a no-star hotel, with a big picture of Cai' Babba looking down at us. I asked who it was and the manager said it was God.

"Who?"

"God, my friend. But do not believe his brother, as he is a liar."

"Who is his brother?"

"Ali Babba. He claim's he is God, but as I said, he is a deceiver and a liar."

"Oh? Well, thanks for the warning." I could see the gospel could have a great effect here.

We were at a table waiting to be served. In front of the door of the kitchen was one of the workers with a white shirt on. He was so dirty that in America the place would have been shut down on account of him alone. But that wasn't the worst of it. We all sat there and observed him as he dug around in his behind with great enthusiasm. His face contorted as he tried so hard to get at the apparent itch. After a while relief calmed his face, as he seemed to have gotten at whatever was tormenting him.

My worst fear was realized when he came to our table with six glasses of water, carrying them with his fingers inside the glasses, touching the water of every one of them! I hadn't had any water for hours, in one hundred-degree heat, but my thirst immediately disappeared.

Then a cow walked through the front door, and passed each table, slobbering all over, as he ate pieces of paper that had been dropped. Now my appetite was beginning to disappear. I was told the cow was God too. All I could say was the cow looked a lot better than the old guy in the picture.

I ordered curried chicken. I don't know if it was simply that I was so hungry, but it tasted good. It was a ball of spice, and you couldn't really tell the form of the actual chicken. But somehow I thought colonel Sanders couldn't have done a better job. As I finished, all that was left were bones that I had cleaned nearly white. But then I realized something, and had a question; "are these chicken bones?" They seemed too skinny, and the joints were too large for the size of the bones. I looked at the Indian brother beside me and said, "I think I have been ripped off! This isn't a chicken, it's a rabbit!" His reply was "What's a rabbit? We don't have them around here."

I didn't press the subject any further, as I didn't want to know any more.

"Just bring me a glass of water and some worm medicine." In such moments, praying for Jesus' blessing on what you eat is important for your very life.

Long Haired Pig

On this particular Sunday I was ready to love everybody I met, no matter what they looked like. I didn't know it, but God had another shaking for my spiritual man.

I arrived early at the fellowship, but no one else had arrived. It was a small building. A yellow brown color as it was covered in cow dung and white-wash. They do that to keep the flies out... and it works. I was praying about what to preach and felt moved to preach from Luke on discipleship... to forsake all for Jesus. No, I thought, I can't preach on that here. Then a large pig approached me.

Now these pigs are rather unique. They look more like wild boars, with long skinny noses, and hair that's as thick as their noses are long. And they have two big teeth protruding from their mouths. But, though they look so strange, they have an important job. There aren't any toilets to be found, so you just do your business on the ground, and they come and clean up after you. They are everywhere, and very diligent. Sometimes as you are relieving yourself they would just wait close by for you to finish. One time I was a little constipated, and a group of them got impatient, and came after me! That's why I never ate ham and eggs there. It sure is good to be assured of your salvation in those moments. I felt a word on my heart... "Your sin is like that pig to me." I couldn't shake the message. I was really disoriented.

The brethren started arriving. They were a beautiful bunch but seemed malnourished. Their cloths were rags but very clean and white. I never could figure out how they could take dirty cloths to a dirty river and beat them on dirty rocks and have such clean white clothes... if the Tide company could figure out that secret they could make a fortune.

My mind was blank. I kept thinking about the pig. Here I was... this big white guy with over a hundred dollars in my pocket, feeling in my heart to preach out of Luke about forsaking all. But looking out at these destitute brethren made my mouth stop. That is not easy, believe me.

At that moment it would have been great to be in a Full Gospel Business Man's meeting at a Holiday Inn somewhere. But then again, forsaking all would probably have been just as strange for them to hear as for these brethren here. My interpreter said go for it, and I did. As my message came to an end, I understood what the word on the pig was all about. A little old man came to the altar crying loudly asking for forgiveness as he had sinned against God. I asked the interpreter what he was praying. He had two days of rice, and his Hindu neighbor had none. He had not shared it, and felt

very convicted of his sin. I wanted to run out of that place. I thought, If he is convicted about that, then I am the most wretched of sinners. I felt like I didn't know anything about true spirituality.

It wasn't over. An old sister came forward and reached into her ragged sari (an Indian shawl-like dress) with an arthritic hand and pulled out a rupee (Indian money). At that time if a women could find work it would take twelve hours of hard work to make three rupees. I had seen them with metal pans on their heads, carrying hot asphalt and spreading it manually to make roads.

"Take this for the kingdom of God," she said. I couldn't take it any more. I reached into my pocket to empty them into her hands. She started weeping, and my interpreter asked me what I was doing.

"I am giving her an offering."

"You do not understand Clark. This sister is not giving to you, but to Jesus. And if you do not take it, she will be very hurt. She does not want anything you have, as she wants to give. You see Clark, she is one of our real believers."

My covetous and selfish acts passed before my mind. And the pig! Now I understood. I took the rupee from her hand, and she smiled. It was the closest thing I have ever seen to looking into the face of Jesus. That rupee was to stay with me to remind myself of true generosity. In that moment I was captured by true sincerity, and feeling the presence of the Lord. I walked out of there feeling I had just been through four years of Bible College. Such experiences helped form me for what lay ahead.

Chapter 25

Real Tomato Soup

We were conducting an open-air meeting in a small Indian village where we had been invited by a small local church. Our portable generator wasn't working so, by faith, we approached a nearby Hindu temple close to where we were having the meeting, and asked if we could hook up to their electricity. They were more than happy to give us the hook up.

After a good time singing and preaching I was invited to the home of a brother and his family. It was nothing but a hut with a stick fence. A goat was in the back, and there were no plants, but every thing was swept clean. It was the typical rural home with the painted cow dung walls inside and out. We squatted on the floor, and the one room seemed small, but I could see a simple wood and straw bed tied to the ceiling. There was a nice mat on the floor. The wife greeted me but slipped into a small room

that was just big enough for a person. That was the kitchen. Every thing was done in a squatting position. At first it is uncomfortable but after a while you get used to it. Especially when you go to the toilet. It is usually just a hole, if there is one; and if not, then beside any road, or in any field. And don't worry about finding toilet paper, as the manner of cleaning up is the left hand and a cup of water. It may sound strange, but it is really very refreshing. I felt like I got to know a part of my body that I had formerly never known!

The wife came out only to serve. We prayed and she brought soup and an Indian pancake in a tin bowl. It was a yellow substance with what looked like a fig in it. The brother encouraged me to start eating. I was hungry and started sipping the broth. It was delicious, and to this day I don't feel I have ever had such tasty soup. When I asked what it was, I was told it was tomato soup. "Was that a tomato?" I said. It was the poorest looking tomato I had ever seen, but it was very good.

I noticed in my enjoying this soup that the wife didn't bring any thing to the husband. He just watched me eat with a big smile. I realized that the reason they didn't bring out any more was that they simply didn't have any. Once again, this big white guy, who didn't need it, was eating these dear brethren's only food. When it hit me I felt bad, but didn't know how to react. "No Brother! Why?" What do you say in such a situation? He responded that they were honored by my visit, and they were so happy that I had enjoyed their hospitality, and begged that I return to spend more time with them. I realized that this was true and sincere generosity, and what Jesus was talking about in demonstrating a true Christian attribute. It is one thing to share a piece of your bread with a brother... but quite another thing to give the only piece you have and deny yourself. This and many other experiences the Lord permitted me to have changed the way I looked at everything. I never would sit at a table and not be thankful. There would never be an offering too small that I couldn't be truly thankful to receive. IN such times these faces pass through my mind, and when I hold up my head to God, I can say thank you for anything.

Sky King Over India

On rare occasions when the team couldn't pick me up I had to fly to some of the crusades. On one instance Brother Jared and myself were in New Deli. We were staying with an Indian family who rented us a room. Daily we would go to the airport and try to get a ticket, but the plane was always full. I couldn't imagine how this could be, as most people were so poor. Finally the man of the house asked why we were not leaving.

“There are no places left on the planes,” I said.

“You do not understand India do you my friends! Give me ten dollars for a bribe, and two dollars to my boy, and you will have your tickets.”

Sure enough the boy came back in no time at all with the tickets, and the next day we found ourselves seated in a half-empty plane. I felt bad about paying the money, but I would have felt much worse going third class on the train which, in India is like riding seventy to eighty miles an hour on top of a smoke belching train, ducking at all tunnels, and holding on for dear life. What would you have done?

In one town where we were having a crusade I noticed many people walking around blind with small children leading them. I asked why this was so, and a brother explained that it was from a river-related disease borne by the mosquitoes. I immediately reacted to that news, but he said not to worry, as only the mosquitoes that had white wings carried the sickness. Later I wondered why he had to tell me that... as every time heard a mosquito, or was being bit, my first reaction was to investigate the wings. I never inspected so many mosquitoes in my life. One morning, to my utter horror, the mosquito net over my bed was chock full of white winged mosquitoes! I could just see myself walking around with a little Indian kid leading me by the hand. You must really believe God for a clear mind in such situations.

One time I was on my way to Ahmenabad from Bombay. I walked out to the tarmac and saw this airplane they called a tail-dragger. I had seen these only on old black and white war films. And now one of these was my plane. I got excited and pulled out my camera, but a policeman came running up and threatened to arrest me if I took any pictures. When I asked why, he said I could be a spy trying to steal Indian technology. I tried not to laugh as I thought this plane was probably developed alongside the Messersmidt dive- bomber.

The police were a funny bunch with their woolen leggings, sandals and shorts. As hot as it is there, I had to ask one why wool leggings?

“Well, when the British ran everything, the leggings were for their high leather boots. They wore them to protect their legs from the leather irritating their skin. After they left India, the Indians really liked the wool leggings, but didn't like the leather boots. So the leggings became a part of their uniform.” Then of course there was the long bamboo stick for fighting crime. I thought the LAPD ought to look into those.

Upon entering this high-tech plane, I noticed there were no doors to the cockpit. The props were loud and the whole plane vibrated violently. The pilot climbed in and sat with this big control stick between his legs. He was

a tall skinny fellow, and when he put on these huge headphones he looked like Mickey Mouse. We lifted off, and I must say it was a real rush. We climbed fast, and after a few minutes, descended. Then we climbed again. At times it seemed we were going to try and see how close we could get to the upcoming mountain, and then as if we were going into an attack the earth mode. The pilot was holding on to the control stick with all his might, and it seemed it was controlling him more than he was it. As we came in for a landing, it seemed we were going to miss the strip of red dirt and asphalt ahead of us. The hostess stumbled by as she had shortly before and served liquorice seeds and hard candy as a relaxant. The plane was so ugly, but the hostess, in her sari and black eye of Sheva (painted between her eyes) was beautiful. She seemed so out of place here. We hit the runway and all went well at the beginning, but then the plane swerved and turned at a sharp angle, almost leaving the runway area entirely. I got out a little dazed, thinking maybe a third class train ride wouldn't be so dangerous after all. Douglas was waiting for me with a big hug. When I shared about the landing he smiled and informed me I was lucky. Just the day before the same flight had missed the runway altogether and every one disembarked out in the middle of the field. But little to worry about he said, since "those planes can land almost anywhere." Maybe they had higher technology than I had thought?

Chapter 26 Kung Fu to the Face

The crusade went great as multitudes of Indian people prayed for salvation. I felt like Billy Graham. The team was doing a great job. Not just evangelizing, but feeding the poor too. Up to ten thousand people on some weeks. For the food and ministry clinics the team would appeal from the platform each night to anyone who had excess food with Biblical examples, pressing home the responsibility in Christ to help others. The response was incredible; tons of rice would be brought out for the weekly feeding by new converts and local believers. With little to no outside help the teams were feeding multitudes by faith.

One day Brother Mike took a young boy in off the streets that had a wound on his leg that was full of maggots. With just alcohol, cotton, and a bandage, he literally saved that boy's life. From this simple act a ministry was birthed and developed that has saved hundreds of lives and established free clinics in many parts of India.

I shared the gospel before some of the biggest crowds I had ever seen. My adrenaline ran high. I felt like I was arriving at the peak in my life of faith. The prayer lines went on for hours. Bill laid his hands on a man that had leprosy very badly on one side of his head. Being on the opposite side, he couldn't even see the worst of the infection. But from my position I saw clearly, and also observed Bill's fingers literally penetrate the side of the man's head. I almost fainted. These people live on the streets and, because of the rotting of their flesh, and loss of feeling, rats devour their fingers and toes. They don't feel a thing.

One woman was helped up on the stage. She was completely blind. I prayed, and this was the first real miracle I had ever seen personally. I am not talking about a headache, a backache, or a short leg scenario. This woman was healed of total blindness right before my eyes, and started dancing and screaming frantically. I was taken aback! It really happened! She got healed! She can see! I was more surprised than she was. What a miracle evangelist I was.

Then a pastor came to me and asked if I would help him in prayer for a demon possessed girl. This child looked like she had just stepped out of a new Exorcist movie or a Chick Tract. She had this wild afro hair-do, black circles around her eyes, a bloated stomach, and even her mouth was swollen as she expelled foam and spit all over. Her eyes were wild and she was screaming violently as they brought her.

"Brethren lets get those demons!" I'm on a role tonight, I thought. My spiritual adrenaline is up! Hallelujah! When I laid my hands on this little girl's head, she jumped into the air like Jackie Chan and kicked me right up side my head. All I saw were stars. I went down like a wooden plank, and hit the ground so hard it stirred up a dust cloud all around us. The pastors picked me up and dusted me off apologizing for putting her on me. I was a little bit back to earth now... once again, just a mortal man. I felt like the demons had said, "Jesus I know, and Douglas I know, but who are you?" I apologized to the pastors and admitted that perhaps I had bitten off more than I should have. (At that moment I couldn't bite anything, as my jaw was so stiff and swollen.)

The next day at about midday I was walking the crusade grounds. Many people would walk for three days to be in the meetings, and some would camp out in front of the stage. There would be hundreds of people just squatting with their little aluminum buckets of rice, waiting for the meeting at night. We would try to help them out as much as possible.

A young girl approached me on a bike with the cutest little smile and said, "I'm sorry about last night."

“What happened last night?”

“I kicked you in the face.”

“What?”

“I was the one you prayed for. At two O’clock this morning Jesus delivered me from all my demons.”

I did not even recognize her! She was slender, and her face seemed much slimmer then before. Her eyes were clear, and she looked like any twelve-year-old girl should. My heart jumped with joy as I realized we are all just vessels (even bad ones at times) and that all glory and power are in Jesus, not us.

Indian Yogurt

I had a wonderful time at the home of a dear Indian brother. Most of the team was there and we were enjoying homemade yogurt. It was served on a big banana leaf, and was quite good. I even licked the leaves clean!

“Would you like another serving, Clark?”

“Oh yes! This stuff is great. How do you make it? I must take this recipe back to Europe.” I was going through my second serving as the brother explained how it was made.

“First of all you take fresh buffalo milk.”

“Oh? That sounds good.”

“Then you just put it in a large bottle, add a little camel urine, set it in the window for about twelve hours and, behold... Yogurt!”

My stomach clinched, and I started feeling a little queasy. But then I thought, Hey... What to say? I have got to learn one of these days to turn my stomach over to a greater walk of faith.

Chapter 27

The Holy Ganga

We set our sights on the city of Vinaris, or Binaris. I never knew why they spelled it in two different ways; they just did. It is the holiest of the Hindu cities. The headwaters of the river Ganges passes through this city that seems to suffer from total demon possession.

The first thing that grieves your spirit is such a heavy oppression wherever you go. We approached the river Ganges and the stench was incredible.

We could see funeral fires in abundance. To a Hindu, having your ashes thrown into the Holy Ganges River is equivalent to salvation. Your position in the hereafter depends on how much money you have or even what kind

of wood they burn you up with. Sandalwood was the highest fuel form for cremation, and only the rich could afford it.

The priests were everywhere selling their trade, and body burners were competing for the next client. It was surreal, as the smoke and fog hung heavy in the air. You could not help but notice that some burners were trying to save on wood as a pair of feet would be left unconsumed by the flames and just tossed into the river.

The dogs were everywhere, and they were bloated from an ever-present diet of unconsumed body parts. They looked as if they had crawled out of hell and were just visiting this place for supper. You could observe them fight at the edge of the river for an extremity that had just floated to shore. My heart said this would be the last place on earth I would ever call holy, but multiplied millions of souls in this remote continent embrace this place as their only hope of salvation.

For many families too poor to buy wood, the final end of their loved one was much worse. The body would simply be bound and tossed into the river. You could see the floating bodies from the shore. I took a small boat with my wife and some other brethren that were with me to observe this nightmare. Why? Simply because it is so mentally unbelievable, and what you are seeing just doesn't compute.

As we floated out our boatman explained that the river was the purest water on the earth as it had its source from the Gods. To prove his point he reached into the water and drank a handful. He went on to share that washing in the river washed all sins away. Just a few feet from our boat was a partly decomposed body floating toward us with the biggest and ugliest vulgure I had ever seen picking at the entrails, and squawking out warnings to any that would compete for his meal.

You can only sit there and stare, spell bound, wondering if this could be real? Could men be so deceived by the devil? How wonderful it is to know a loving God as our own Jesus. Oh what freedom from fear and the filth that follows such demon worship.

Multitudes of people were bathing in the waters, a short distance from the shore. Men, women and children in the midst of these dead and decaying bodies! All of them believing this act would save their souls. At that moment the truth of Jesus being the only hope comes through loud and clear.

Our team did an exceptional work in the area, and many souls were saved from this deception, and still are being reached by the power of the preaching of the gospel.

Our time was up, and we were off again, traveling Christ is the Answer style... second class express train. The seats were two rows of four

wooden planks. It was a boxcar with steel bars at the front that seemed more like a prison than a coach train. Later I found out why.

Uncomfortable was not the word. But the train was fast and, as we would arrive at a station, they would hit the brakes and you had to hold on for dear life. This did not seem so bad when you watched the shadows of people in third class. They were on top of the cars holding on for dear life! Many never made it to their destination. Life was cheap in these parts. At the stations mobs of people would attack the train trying to sell snacks in the few minutes the train was stopped. Upon seeing white people they would all scream "bacshesh!" Hundreds of little hands and arms would thrust their way in begging for a coin. Such beautiful kids... in such despair. You just wanted to grab some and take them home. It is the feeling Jesus has to take us home one day from this filthy world.

After a few hours I started feeling my old friend returning. My stomach was getting sick, and my head was pounding. I started vomiting and developed terrible diarrhea, and headed for the toilet. I should say the toilet hole, as that's all it was. I emptied myself of all fluids from both ends. I was so thirsty, and suffering from a terrible fever. The heat in this cattle car was almost unbearable, even if you were well.

The only water was from a small boy who would pass by about every half-hour with a big clay jug. The outside was black with slime, and I was told that it would kill any white man... and if not, the amoebas would make you wish you were dead. I was getting delirious, and couldn't take it any more. The train would stop, and everything would start spinning around. Groaning became a burden. I wanted to die right there.

The little boy came by our cabin with his slippery jug. I gave him a few rupees and grabbed the jug. Gary and Bill cried, "No! Don't do it! You will die!" In that moment I had the strength of Rambo, as they pulled the two-gallon jug away from me, I pulled it back saying, "Let me die! At least I will die without this thirst!" That was one of the best drinks I ever had. I drank and drank. I didn't care how many had mouthed that spout, or what was in the water. I emptied it into my mouth and onto my chest.

We finally arrived in Agra where they laid me in a rickshaw. I was peddled to what was an Indian imitation Holiday Inn... I think they just liked to call it a Holiday. But it was air-conditioned, and had a bed, and that is all that mattered. I made it to the elevator, but started vomiting. After putting my hand to my mouth a spray shot out and covered the wall and floor. I couldn't stop it. It just kept coming. As the door opened the people waiting looked really shocked, but I didn't care about anything.

I made it to the bed and told the boy to just bring me water, and lots of it. I hit the bed and was out. Each day seemed a daze and I lived off water and mango juice. The boy entered with a syringe and asked if I still needed heroine. I was still out of it but wasn't out of my mind yet. I thanked him for his concern, but said my problem wasn't the lack of drugs. As he left I remember thinking that's really room service.

After my third day I was starting to feel better, and also very lonely. Where was everybody? Not a word, or a visit. I felt stronger, so I washed, got dressed, and went to the restaurant. There they were, Bill, Gary and Sue, laughing and eating, acting as if I didn't even exist.

"Gee. Thanks a lot for all the sympathy and concern gang."

It only brought out some laughs, and disbelief that the water hadn't done me in.

It only took them a minute to hustle me out of the room. They hit a trail to the rickshaws and, as I passed by the checkout counter, I was flagged down and told to pay up for all my friends. I was wondering, what friends? And what a bill! Even for India it was steep!

I called Bill back and asked what was up?

"Well, it wasn't our fault you got sick."

"Oh? Thanks for all the compassion brother."

"Hey, just because you are sick doesn't mean that we can't enjoy ourselves does it?"

I paid half the bill and thought Lord, are all missionaries like us?

But I was thanking the Lord just for not being sick anymore. The birds were singing, and life was nice as we made our way to the crusade. My wife was feeling so good she drove the rickshaw and let the driver ride.

Chapter 28

Mongoose Cobra Fighting

One of the more amusing aspects of India is that every day is as if everybody is putting on a great spectacle. I walked by a man who's head was stuck in the ground, the rest of his body sticking straight into the air, held up only by the muscles in his neck. I asked, "How does he breathe, and for what reason is he doing that?" I was told that he was meditating, that he breathed through his skin, and that this was a part of his religion. Now that is what I call trying to be saved by works. I am sure glad I know Christ as, for sure, I would have been a failure in his religion.

I once saw a ten-foot python around this little guy on the street. I thought, man, this guy is brave. Then, with no hesitation, he stood up and walked

over to me putting it around my neck. I tried to act as if this was no big deal... like something I do everyday. But I wasn't very convincing, and neither was the snake.

We saw this fellow approach us with a big basket and a sack that was wiggling violently.

"Oh sir, do you want to see cobra and mongoose fight? Just sixty rupees!"

"No thank you. I have had my fill of snakes for today."

"Oh sir! Mongoose and blacksnake fight only forty rupees."

"No thanks old buddy."

"Oh sir! Please! Mongoose and bull snake fight... only twenty rupees."

"No way, please leave me alone. We need to preserve the wildlife of India, and conserve the snakes. The country needs them."

But he wouldn't budge. Finally he insisted at least a mongoose and little green snake fight, for only five rupees. What can you say? The show must go on in India.

Then there was a fellow who would swallow snakes, and you could see them wiggling in his stomach. He would then drink a cup of water and vomit them back out. If only the Tennessee snake-handlers could have seen this guy!

The country is bound by dark demons that only Jesus can deliver them from, and that reality comes forth the more you are there. The joy of seeing people getting saved from such darkness is even greater when you know these realities.

If I could have taken some of these people, and the things they did, and start a circus in Italy, it would truly be the greatest show on earth. And most of them wouldn't be acting... they would just be being themselves. If we followed it up with a preaching I think it would put tent evangelism back in the mainstream again!