

## Chapter 5

### Lessons from God

God had another lesson for me before leaving India. On our last full day we went to the fifth day of a major revival meeting in Mizoram. There were healings, teaching and worship. During worship many would participate in liturgical dance in a large circle. Mostly this was moving to the music with hands in the air. However several would suddenly fall down and move in a very erratic fashion. This seemed very out of character with the rest of the participants and I was uncomfortable. "Were they being controlled by the Holy Spirit or another spirit?" This was the only thing on my first visit to Mizoram that made me uneasy.

On the way into Mizoram four of us had landed at a short runway, in a STOL plane. The rest had landed at a larger airport about five hours north of Aizawl. The three of us who had stayed on in Aizawl now made that drive and I got my first real experience on Mizo roads. They are something else, narrow, steep and continuously turning. I tease the Mizos and say I believe the reason they are all Christians is that they are never more than three feet from death. The drive took a good portion of the night and believe me I didn't sleep a wink.

When we arrived at a hotel, about 4:00 am, there were mosquitoes in our room. Fearing malaria I stayed awake the rest of the night making sure they didn't bite me. We spent the next day exploring Calcutta, so when our plane left for the four hour flight to Delhi I was looking forward to a four hour sleep. As I sat down the young Indian sitting next to me asked me where I was from. When I told him Canada he asked me, "Where in Canada". When I said Vancouver his answer was that he had a cousin in Vancouver. I thought, now he is going to want to talk and I just want to sleep.

He asked me where had I visited in India, I told him Mizoram and he said, "How did you get there, I have seen pictures and would like to go, but it is a restricted area." I explained that this was changing and that I was part of the first tour allowed in in 25 years. He asked, "How did you find it?" I told him of how I had heard of it years ago in Vancouver and how there was no homeless, starvation or beggars and I had wanted to experience this for myself.

Him: "This can't be, not in India."

Me: "I found this more than true".

Him "What is the reason for this?"

Me: "Because they are all Christian".

His reply, "what difference would that make".

Me: "They look after each others needs "

Him "Oh just like us Hindus"

I ask him if he got on the plane in Calcutta and he said he did. My reply was that I had too and had a good look at how Hindus looked after each other. He abruptly turned away and I went to sleep.

I woke up with him leaning over me. He said, "I have been doing a lot of thinking. I was serious when I said Hindu look after each other, but only within caste. You Christians seem to help everyone regardless of religion. You will help Christian, Sikh, Moslem, Hindu or anything else." He went on to mention several Christian ministries involved in charity work. These including the Buntain hospital in Calcutta, where his mother had received life saving open heart surgery.

I assumed he was high caste and asked him what caste he was. He told me, "Brahman". Then remembering my conversation with the young engineer on the flight to India I asked him about his beliefs on reincarnation. He told me that in this life he was a Brahman and if he lived an exemplary life, within his caste, he could become part of the godhead. If not he would be reborn as a lower caste or even an animal. I asked him if he remembered his past lives. His answer was no.

I said that doesn't make sense and I couldn't believe a God who engineered all life could design such a plan. If you remembered you past victories and mistakes it would make sense. You could look back at your previous lives and concentrate of what gave you good karma and not do things that brought you bad karma. But without this memory the whole idea seemed silly. Surely as an engineer he could see this was ridiculous.

He again abruptly turned away and I went back to sleep.

I awoke again as we were nearing Delhi and he said, "How do I become a Christian?"

My first thought was reciting the four spiritual laws, but, as I opened my mouth I found myself asking what he knew about Jesus. His reply was almost nothing but you have made me realize that Christians are the kind of people I have always wanted to be. I then suggested he get a Bible and start with the Gospel of John and find a bible believing church.

As I was waiting for my luggage he came up to me with a New Testament in his hand and showed me that he had already found the Gospel of John. A car was waiting to take us to Udaipur to catch up with the rest of the group. We hugged and I left. I hope to meet him again in Heaven.

I will never forget that trip, we passed a multitude of accidents, most of which involved cars with camels, which were heavily loaded with cotton bails. We also passed one bus completely being consumed by fire. It was daylight by the time we arrived in Udaipur and a short, but much needed, sleep.

The reason for our stop in Udaipur was a remarkable revival with the Bhil people. We were told that the Bhils were a group of untouchables from Bombay who had rebelled and were driven into the desert area about 200 years ago. There they grew into a community of close to 2 million people. Several mission groups had tried to evangelize them to no avail. Then God gave a layman an incredible gift of healing. Whenever he

laid his hands on ailing Bhils they were instantly healed. We were told this included several who had already died.

He went to the Theological College, in nearby Jaipur, looking for help. He told the Principal what was happening and that he had no teaching or theological training and people were starting to consider him a god. Several students went back with him and a revival was underway. We visited a new church designed to hold 125 people. About 1000 turned up. The church was packed and others crowded around every door and window.

As worship started I was reminded of the revival I had experienced in Mizoram. There was no room to dance but most people were swaying with the music, however, once again, several had jerky, almost violent motions. One was a woman right in front of me and she hit me several times as she flayed around. Anand Choudhary, who was leading the meeting, stated that there were “familiar spirits” which must be dealt with. The students went and prayed with those affected and it all settled down. For the rest of the service the lady in front of me was completely calm. I felt this was a lesson for me. When the Holy Spirit was at work Satan also had his demons at work, ever trying to destroy the work of God. Discernment is always needed.

When the service ended we walked to a nearby lake and baptized 126 new believers, one more than the church was built to hold and we were told that they were having these mass baptisms every other week.

We then went to spend a couple days in Jaipur and experienced the tremendous gap between the rich and poor and the evils of the caste system. We were in a luxury hotel surrounded by a slum. I found the contrast devastating.

Our tour was organized by a tour company whose whole plan was to get us to shops where they would get a kickback, on every purchase. They wanted to take us to an isolated Gold Emporium to shop but as we were going through a shopping area we insisted we stop there.

The tour guide was annoyed but stopped and pointed out three shops which he said had the best deals. Obviously ones where he would get his kickback. Then he pointed to a gate and warned us not to go through it because it was not in the tourist area and suggested that it would be dangerous!

I immediately went through that gate and found the real India. Just inside the gate I ran into two lepers, one with no feet being pushed in a cart by one with only stubs for hands. I went to them and gave them a big hug and then a good number of rupees. This started one of the best hours of my life. Businesses were right on the street and in front of me was an old printing press, just like the one my father ran at the Birch Hills Gazette, when I was a child. I told the owner this and that my father had taught me to set print on this press. I spent the next 15 minutes setting type with him. Then he introduced me to several other very interesting businesses. I had a ball videoing them and then gave the

footage to the Theological College who planned to take it back, to the district, as a tool for evangelism. God is the ultimate organizer. All we have to do is to follow His leadings.

My next trip to Mizoram was a year and a half later. This time I went via Rwanda, which was quite an adventure, however this will be covered in another chapter.

On route I was met at the Calcutta airport by members of the Mizo choir who were in Calcutta for a recording session. They had instructions to deliver me to Nagaland House, where I was to stay for one night. VanLalNghka had asked me to come the Nagaland to join him in a crusade before we went on the Mizoram. However when I got to Nagaland House it seemed the telephone connection from Nagaland to Calcutta was down and no arrangements had been made here. I ended up in a small nearby hotel, I thought for one night. However the phones stayed down and the stay became five nights. This is when I found that I could cope with developing world travel.

For the next five days the only white faces I saw were at the Buntain Hospital which I found on the third day. When the phones finally worked I was told to catch a plane the next morning and that I would be met at the airport in Nagaland. When I got to the airport at first they wouldn't sell me a ticket as I had no permit to visit Nagaland. After a long discussion they agree to let me fly but with a warning that if I was not met. at the airport, by someone with a permit, I would be returned on the same plane.

When we landed in Nagaland a very enthusiastic young soldier met me the tarmac, with an automatic weapon, demanding my permit. I was pleased to see a man rushing towards us. It was Mr. Zelaing who had arranged the crusade with VanLal. They escorted me to the security office at the airport, where it turned out the government official Zelaing had expected to arrange the permit, was out of town, so no permit. We spent the next half hour in the airport while Zelaing pleaded my case. I cringed when he told them I was an expert on wind power. (I had sent VanLal some info on a wind farm in California) that I was a Canadian and through CIDA Nagaland had received much help.

I heard the plane leave so I knew it wasn't going to take me back to Calcutta. Then I really got worried when the security office said to take me to the main police station, as he had no place to lock me up at the airport. Off we went with two armed guards. When we got there Zelaing went inside while I was left in the car with the guards. Almost three very long hours later Zelaing came out and informed me that I had been released into his custody and we could go. I must say that was a relief.

The crusade was in a remote valley which was just being developed. The Zelaing family had a contract with a Swedish firm to supply them with teak. The Swedish company was paying enough for each farm family to live until the teak could be harvested, at which time the farmers should be well off.

The crusade was held under a large canopy and each night about 15.000 attended. I was told some walked up to 20km to get there. VanLal, an evangelist from Nepal and I spoke

in English and then waited while it was translated into three different languages. I am told there are over 60 languages and dialects in Nagaland alone. We spoke in English and then waited for the triple translation.

I got scare the next day. Zelaings lived on a farm and had a lake in front of their house. I had gone for a walk around the lake and when I was on the far side I saw three truck loads of soldiers arrive at the house. My first thought was they have checked Zelaing's story and had come to get me. I crouched down so they wouldn't see me. I stayed there until they left, then rushed back. I was asked where I had been and told that the soldiers had heard both VanLal and I speak. The crusade was near the barracks and the sound system carried it over and they simply wanted to meet VanLal and me

Nagaland was in the middle of an uprising between the Kooki tribe and the Naga's. The second day we were on a sight seeing tour when the leader of the Kooki rebel army suddenly stepped in front of our car. It was a very tense moment until the Kooki leader asked if his men could come to the crusade if he declared a truce. It was agreed and the rest of the crusade was interpreted in four languages. I was told later that fighting resumed after the crusade.

During this year and a half television had come to Mizoram and already I saw the evil that came with it. I have now visited Mizoram a total of thirteen times and each time I see the erosion of the simple and lovely Christianity I had experienced in 1996. Also in 1996 I was very intrigued with the very innovated, handmade toys the kids were playing with. I can't remember seeing any store bought toys. By 1997 that had changed dramatically. China had flooded Mizoram with toy plastic guns. They were everywhere and many fired pellets or darts. When I discussed this with VanlalNghka he introduced me to an Ophthalmologist who told me that he was treating many injured eyes because of these guns. VanLal then had me talk to many churches condemning the guns. It seems to have worked because next trip I saw few toy guns.

On my stop in Calcutta on the way to Nagaland people tried to pick pocket me three times. I developed what I call the Calcutta pat. I would pat my wallet pocket every step to make sure there were no other hands present. The last time was a little girl, not more than 4 or 5. I caught her by the wrist and she was terrified. I reached in my other pocket and found a couple small coins. I put these in her hand and let her go. She ran back to her mother, who was watching the whole thing.

After my visit to both Nagaland and Mizoram I stayed one night in the same hotel. As I came out in the morning I heard someone call out. I looked up and there was the same little girl and her mother, greeting me like a long lost friend.

My next flight was from Calcutta and Delhi. Remembering my last trip I prayed for a chance to witness. I was disappointed to find my seat mates had no English. However as we landed in Delhi God answered my prayers in a dramatic way. Just as the plane touched down a man in the seat ahead of me suddenly jumped up and yelled, "My

wife is dead!” I looked over the seat and his wife’s head was slumped over and her eyes were rolled back. I took her arm and felt for a pulse, there was none. I began to pray, asking Jesus to bring her back.

A fellow across the aisle came over and said that he was a doctor and began to examine her. He said that she was not dead but having a seizure. I told him she had no pulse. Without saying another thing he went back to his seat. An attendant came and used the PA system to ask if there was a doctor on board. Just before two doctors arrived the man started pushing on his wife’s chest and I felt a couple uneven, very weak pulses.

My two seat mates had deplaned in Delhi and the attendant had me and the couple’s 8 year old boy move further back so the doctors had room to work. Two local doctors also arrived. They all worked on the lady for almost a half hour then brought a stretcher and deplaned the family. New passengers got on and now I had a young Hindu lady on one side of me and an elderly Sikh gentleman on the other side. Just as the last passengers were getting on the husband of the “dead” woman came running down the aisle and virtually lifted me out of my seat, kissed me on both cheeks and said, “Your Jesus has given me my wife back.” Then he had to leave as the plane was now late.

The two next to me asked what that was all about and I explained what happened and within ten minutes I was sitting between two brand new Christians. It was a great flight back to London explaining their new faith to my seat mates. What a God we serve!