



**December 2009**  
**Message # 12**  
**From the desk of Rick Hagans**

## **ON THE ROAD WITH PASTOR RICK:**

This message makes 12 I've included in our Harvest Evangelism Newsletters. One full year of letting you know what's on my heart, what I'm doing and where I'm at. If it weren't for you, my friends, there wouldn't be any Harvest Evangelism. It's an honor to report to you what the Lord is doing in our lives and then as an outgrowth, through our lives. Serving God in the manner He's led us to can be exciting, scary, fun, draining, tiring, fulfilling and an entire spectrum of other emotions. It is as I always try to convey, ultimately a privilege and an adventure, a whole lot of great adventure. Hopefully, prayerfully these newsletter messages convey that. Our goal in providing these messages is to be accountable; to bring Praise to His Name; and to invite you to join us as we follow Him. You tell me, how can that be anything other than the grandest adventure and greatest honor? If any of these messages have helped you in any way, we'd sure like to know. Please drop us a line (PO Box 2888, Opelika, AL 36803), email us, (rickhagans@harvestevangelism.org) or call (334.332.3932). We'd love to hear from you.

I thought you might be blessed (and amused) by my latest mission trip to India (November 5-23). I saw the Lord's hand at work throughout the trip, in some ways, as I never have before. I also learned a thing or two about ministry and myself. The Lord taught me a beautiful truth on this journey that seemed so tied to Christmas I just had to share it. I hope you read this and learn...laugh...and are led ever closer to Jesus.

The following excerpts are from my journal during my recent mission trip to India. They appear as I wrote them. Hopefully, prayerfully, there is a method to my madness.

### **FLYING WITH NO VISION**

I finally made it to India with my son, R.C. Hagans, Richard Cecil Hagans II. I have loved India and her people for years, and now, 20 years after my first trip there, I'm set to introduce my son to my Macedonian Call.

We flew from Newark to Frankfurt and then on to Ahmadabad, India. 15 hours in a seat designed by sadists. 9,000 miles of forest, glade, sea, desert and every imaginable sight, streaking by below me, and all I got to see is a poor quality picture of the Taj Mahal in a monitor stuck in the back of the seat in front of me. Every monitor in our row of cramped seats was broken. We couldn't tune to Bollywood movies or old Hawaii 5-O reruns like everyone else. No, we passed over the Atlantic Ocean, Europe, the Middle East and parts of North Africa and all we get to see was a fuzzy picture of the Taj Mahal.

It reminded me of now many of us go through life in a similar flight. Probably not flying from Newark to Ahmadabad, but rather letting life pass by your window, and never taking a peak. You zoom to and from work. Your wife is off to take the kids to school and then pick them up. Later, it's band practice, baseball practice, soccer games and on and on and on you go. We're so busy getting there and getting back and "don't forget to pick up the kids" that at times it seems we don't even know where we're going, or why? Or if we're really going anywhere at all. This, my friends is not "practice". This is life!!

We're starting to prepare for landing. I'll be in touch when I can (via Kim). Who knows what's in store. Serving Jesus is ALWAYS an adventure.

**\*ADDENDUM...Four Hours Later: YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS...I'VE JUST BEEN DEPORTED! I'LL TRY TO GET YOU AN UPDATE SOON...I'M ON MY WAY BACK TO NEW YORK THEN HOPEFULLY BACK TO INDIA...**

I said it's an adventure to follow Jesus, but this is unbelievable even by my standards. I know God is somehow in this, I'll just have to figure out where. We'll see. We'll see....

### **PASTOR RICK DEPORTED**

Yep, it's painfully, tiringly true, I've been deported from India. I'm writing this on a flight back from Ahmadabad to Frankfurt, Germany and finally back to Newark, NJ. The exact same route I've just spent 15 hours flying over, 9,000 miles now backtracked. If I weren't so tired and aggravated it would probably be funny. Next year, as a sermon illustration I'll find humor and meaning in my misfortune. Right now all I feel is a pain in my back from enough frequent flyer miles to levy me to Hawaii (and I still have another 9,000 miles, 15 hours in the air just to get back, I have to, I left RC at the airport in India). I can't believe I've left my son in India. I hope he likes curry.

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## THE BOOK OF ACTS:

Perhaps this “adventure” started with, Sunil, my Indian friend from Times Square Church, who arranged this trip praying that we would have a Book of Acts experience. I warned him about that. All he saw were miracles, blind eyes opened, the lame leaping, thousands saved. You know, the Book of Acts stuff.

It’s like the Honor Roll for the early church. It’s supposed to be like some sort of “playbook” for God’s team. Peter go long; Paul, let’s go deep; and Stephen, you do a hitch and go, you’ll have to take a hit boy, but the church, God’s team, we know we can count on you.

I wonder sometimes if God’s team can count on me? Can God count on us? I know I never made the Honor Roll in High School. I broke my back playing football in Jr. High, at a practice, not even a real game. So, I wonder...

Sunil got me thinking about this Book of Acts endeavor. He said he was praying we’d have a real Book of Acts experience and Sunil prays. So I guess I shouldn’t really be surprised.

I told you earlier how I got deported from India. I know it’s spiritual warfare, but I’ve got to admit, it sucks to get a satanic sucker punch from a pencil pushing bureaucrat. It doesn’t seem as cool as Thomas, doubting Thomas, the first missionary to India taking a spear. O, yeah, I don’t think we should call him “doubting Thomas” anymore. He finally got into the game.

I’m not sure having a snivelling bureaucrat kick you out of his country (what would Ghandi think?) counts as Book of Acts material. That was just the opening kick. I figure we’ll see what happens on the 2nd down; 2nd and LONNNGGG! We’ve got 2 1/2 more weeks in India. My money’s on the visiting team this time.

I’ve been up 2, 3 days now. I’ve lost count. I’ve even lost how to count with all the gain-losss of time zones; gain 5 hours at Frankfurt, then 6 1/2 hours to India. Now subtract 6 hours going back to Germany and don’t forget your layover. Take away another 5 going back to the U.S. Now add them all up and fly back to Ahmedabad. I can’t figure out if I’m in tomorrow or yesterday.

It all reminds me of a weird story in the Book of Acts. It’s in Acts 6:26-39 when Phillip rides an elephant (I claim it as prophetic, Rick and Auburn ride the Red Elephants), then Phillip talks to this real unusual eunuch philosopher, wealthy rock star, type of guy. The people we end up ministering to sometimes, I’ve got this segment covered. Think Mardi Gras, Think Mardi Gras. But then, the weirdest thing happens, Phillip gets “translated” Acts 6:39 says, “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing”

This is Carlos Castenada type stuff of Acts. He’s there, he ain’t there, he’s over here...(talking about Jesus the whole time. The Book of Acts is cool. Our forefathers of the faith really knew how to play the game.

I was thinking it would be neat if God would translate me back to India (past Immigration and Security). I waited and I waited, but I ended up buying another ticket (and I sure need help paying for it, it’s also an Acts thing to help preachers with their travel).

Now some time over somewhere it kinda feels like being translated, although I think we call it “jet-lag.” It isn’t exactly miraculous to ride 20,000 (+) miles in just 2,3,4, days (I told you, I lost count), but at 51 years old I think it’s gotta be close. I’ll tell you this, I left India thinking about Jesus, and I’ll return thinking about Jesus.

And besides, with my accent, everyone always tells me I’m hard to “translate”.

I guess Sunil was right. The whole mission trip is turning out to be a Book of Acts experience.

**Don’t you just love it when God has something grand in the gross?**

## DARKNESS IN INDIA VS REVELATION FROM THE FATHER:

Somehow I had this sick feeling in the pit of my stomach that reminded me there were snakes and scorpions and stones in the Book of Acts too. Sunil had the faith to hear a Cornelius’ call and arrange a huge crusade in the Dhang Forest (North West India), 10,000 people expected, miracles and new churches to be born from the Dhang. And it will come, but for now I’m stuck in a dang airplane about to go dang crazy. I feel like Paul, not when he preached in Ephesus or in Corinth, but more like when he was shipwrecked, blown off course, stuck in a little jail cell. I bet his cell was bigger than seat #35-H, but hey, I’ve got peanuts and pretzels. I guess you can’t have the glory of Acts at Pentecost in chapter 2 or Paul’s conversion in chapter 9 without the grind of Stephen’s stoning in chapter 7 or Paul’s arrest in chapter 21 or the shipwreck in chapter 27. It’s like the chorus of an old Southern gospel song, “Everybody wants to get to Heaven, but nobody wants to die.” Everybody wants the glory of Acts but no one wants the grind, or the guts and the gore. I warned Sunil about this, but hey...let’s see what glory awaits.

Anyway, back to my getting deported, let me explain; It was not for trying to smuggle Vienna Sausages, potted meat and beef jerky into a Hindu country. I got those in anyway. No, my problem, or rather one Indian immigration official’s problem was with the date on my visa. We ALWAYS check passport and visa dates when we travel. In fact,





Kim and I both check it. And the airport in Newark and Frankfurt checked all my papers as well...we ALL missed the expiration date on my Indian Visa. When I got to India, the officer in my customs line noticed the date, expired just 5 days prior, but told me I could go on into the city and get it taken care of that day. Another officer came over and told me, "You CANNOT stay here, you have to go back to America, you cannot get your Visa changed here. You are American. You have to go home!!!" All the other officials told me that was crazy and that they always let people go do that. But the guy who disagreed was the guy with the badge. Even the Indian army security guards protested for me, but to no avail. Believe it or not, I held my temper, all of it. I told Rokur, the belligerent chief, that I was a Christian and my God promised me, "all things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purposes." I explained to Mr. Rokur and about 15-20 of his security support and Army staff that my God would work this out for my good and His glory. He didn't seem to agree or think much of it, but I believe the others did. I felt like old Mr. Rokur was so certain he'd kept me out of India for good, that once on another 15 hour flight back to America there'd be no way I'd turn around and fly another 15 hours (and pay \$1,500 for another ticket) to return. Somehow I understood, I just knew (Word of Knowledge) that he knew what I was in India for, to preach a glorious gospel of Light to thousands of people living in darkness. Something dark, very dark that was in that man's heart felt it had stymied the Light. He sneered, he gloated. He was wrong!

**My Heavenly Father reminded me He too had a Son that got left all alone in a strange place.**

In fact, he was wrong twice. Don't you just love it when God does something in such a way as to leave no doubt who's really in charge. While Rokur condescendingly insisted I "go back to America", I smiled. I didn't just smile, but I chuckled. I told him I would, but like other great Americans (MacArthur and The Terminator) I assured him, "I'll be back..." In fact I plan to share a cup of tea with him as soon as I can make all these flights and get my visa updated. He doesn't believe I'll do it. The darkness inside him told him I won't be back. I hope the darkness likes tea.

Hey, and listen to this, that's not even the sneakiest, neatest, most wonderful, awesome part of this whole story. God just showed me a grander theme to this mess. Don't you just love it when God has something grand in the gross? Something of meaning in the mess? I know I do. Any battle fought and won is a victory in my books, but when God does something so absolutely, unexpectedly extraordinary, it's even more than a victory; it's a Heisman Trophy, World Series, Final Four, "coming out of nowhere, who could've seen this one coming" shut out, it's even better. I've got a feeling the Lord has something of this sort in mind. We all fight battles. We all struggle. We all play the game of life and sometimes we (the creation) suffer a setback. We strike out or drop the ball. But remember, the battle is the Lord's. He's not just ahead in this game, He's yet to be scored on. Our God wins, every time!

And somewhere over Turkey now, that's exactly what the Father just showed me. WOW! I'm so stoked I can't write. I'm going to take a few minutes and a break to collect myself (listen to some Johnny Cash on my iPod...) before I tell you what God is showing me. This one will preach! This will chase any dark shadows lurking around you away. It'll chase them at least 15,000 miles away. I know because I just felt the darkness leave me, completely! I feel like from here on into Newark (and back) I'm chasing it! So what did God show me? I told you, you've gotta wait for Johnny. I'll get Kim to post it when I can get it to her, as an addendum to today's update. (You can check out our website, [www.harvestevangelism.org](http://www.harvestevangelism.org) for regular updates on all our trips and goings on).

"I hear the train a comin, it's comin round the bend..."

### GREATER THAN MY COMFORT

Well, I'm back in New York...Wasn't I just here yesterday, or was it the day before yesterday? I've been up so long, 1, 2, 3, days and flown so far, 36,000 miles...to tell you the truth, I don't even know what day it is or how far I've flown. It's strange. I feel like I'm in the old Rod Sterling, "Twilight Zone". The strangest thing is, I'm completely at peace. I don't just preach that all things work out for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purposes, I believe it. I don't know if I've ever believed it more.

I can already see how the Lord is using this situation to accomplish a greater good than my comfort. It's the truth I mentioned before when I was still in the air. I was worried at first, worried most of all about this entire fiasco of being deported because I had to leave my son, RC, there in India. RC is 23 years old, a grown man, but he'd never been to India before and now I had left him there. I was praying for RC when the Lord reminded me how Kim and I had been praying all along that God would use this trip to touch RC's heart. The Lord assured me there at 30,000 feet that He was answering our prayers. This entire episode He began to show me had a lot to do with RC, and my prayers for him. My Heavenly Father reminded me He too had a Son that got left all alone in a strange place. I could sense God's understanding for my apprehension. Just knowing God almighty understands all my little fears and feelings brought a smile to





my face, I chuckled at the pettiness of my worrying about RC. He's 23 years old, a grown man, and an MMA professional fighter. He was probably more prepared to be in India alone than I was.

In fact, my chucklings were interrupted by another's laughter. No, it wasn't a stewardess walking by or another road weary traveller. It wasn't even the wild laughter of the crazy little man who's there inside your head when you've been up for three days. No, it was the laughter of the Lord. I hear Him laugh a lot. I know His voice. If you don't think God laughs, do your devotions looking in your early morning mirror while you shave. Go ahead, look at yourself and laugh, God does. He's still laughing at some of my faux pas.

Sitting there on the floor of the Newark terminal I heard the most warm, assuring chuckle of God. It was comforting. He wasn't laughing AT me, no, He was wanting to tell me something so exciting and amusing that it tickled Him. He was chuckling as He shared and showed me...

The Lord laughed and said, "So, the darkness in India thinks it's won. They've deported Richard Cecil Hagans. BUT, they didn't realize there are two Richard Cecil Hagans. You have a son there, Richard Cecil Hagans...II, R.C.! This trip was never really about the father. This trip was always more about the son."

It's always been about the Son.

WOW!!! Epiphany moment...it wasn't about the father (me), it was about the son (R.C.).

It's always been about the Son.

So, now it's been 2 1/2 more days. I'm back at the airport, this time it's JFK and I'm headed back to India. Sunil just called to tell me how the Lord was working miraculously without me. He was so excited to explain how the services in the poor village town of Ranipoor had turned out. "It was unspeakable," Sunil exclaimed (unspeakable is Sunil's favorite adjective of excellence). Sunil told me the most amazing thing happened at the end of the scheduled traditional service when RC joined the children of Ranipoor in an impromptu dance of praise. Sunil was still so excited he was out of breath as he gasped to describe the excitement and wonder of RC dancing with the children, then the old ladies, then everyone. "RC danced with everyone. He danced with all his might, spinning the old ladies and tossing the children high in the air. Even the old men, the village elders joined in the celebration." "It was", Sunil said, "as if the Heavens opened and God came down to dance with His creation."

Isn't that just like God I thought? The people were expecting a preacher with sermons or a teacher with lessons, but God surprises everyone by sending a son to touch people and dance with their children. I could've preached. I could've taught, but I'm no dancer. God knew that what these people needed wasn't theology, but more of a touch, a simple pure touch. So God took the father (and all his predictable thinking) out of the picture and gave them instead, the son.

That's what Christmas is all about. After thousands of years with fathers preaching the world was no better off, in fact it was worse. People didn't know who God was. Pharisees preached rules. Scribes parsed words. Rulers reinvented laws to make them king. Drunks got drunk. Whores sold their love. The world ambled on, aimlessly lost. The children tried to play but lacked the true joy necessary. No one danced.

So God sent His Son. Sent Him as a baby, born in a stable to be wrapped in a coarse blanket and laid in an animal's manger. But He came. What's important is that He came. The Son of God came as the son of man. And as a son He made Himself known. Up until then God was so big, so "spirit like", so far away we couldn't really understand Him. God as a fiery-spirit far away on a mountain was confusing. So God came down from the heavens, down from the mountain. He came down to a little village town called Bethlehem. And He came as a Baby, a Son. A baby we could all see, a son that we understand.

Until this very day we know Him. And if we know Him we can't help but love Him. And as we love Him we dance. We dance these days called life with the Son leading.

It's always been about the Son.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." Isaiah 9:6-7

Merry Christmas,

*Pastor Rick*

**The People Were Expecting A Preacher With Sermons Or A Teacher With Lessons, But God Surprises Everyone By Sending A Son To Touch People And Dance With Their Children.**

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