



# URBAN CURRENT

## Donde mora Satanás

**M**aria described how at the age of 16 she was lured off the streets by a young man who promised the world, but delivered nothing but pain. She was raped, drugged, and sold for sex. “They took a gallon of gasoline and started pouring it over a girl,” Maria said. “One of the men told me, ‘If you don’t do as I say, I will do the same thing to you.’ I wanted to look away, but they didn’t let me. Even though the girl was on fire, they kept hitting her and they were laughing as if they were enjoying what they were doing.” (CNN.com 1/15/10)

The first car bomb used by drug cartel enforcers was detonated in this volatile city on July 15, killing four including a federal police officer. La Linea claimed that the strike was payback for the arrest of one of its commanders. Three days later, another suspected gang murdered 17 people not far from here. (TIME 9/2/10)

Some 100 native or foreign pastors who live here have had to abandon the city because of the threats and demands for money. Many pastors and their families have been victims of extortion, threats, kidnapping, and homicide. (Compass Direct News 4/15/11)

“*Dónde?*” you ask, is this horrible place? Civilians ran a greater risk of being killed in the border city of Juárez, Mexico, last year than in Baghdad, Iraq. (CNSNews.com 1/15/10)

Word on the street is that since the violence began to spike in 2008, murders are closing in on almost 9,000. Over 200,000 people have left this city that just a few years ago was 1.2 million. Of those, 100,000 have moved across the border to El Paso. Daniel Borunda of the El Paso Times argues, in a special report dated June 7, 2010, Juárez deserves the title of the most dangerous city in the world.

Jose Reyes Ferriz, the mayor of the sprawling industrial city, got a message affixed to the head of a pig left in a trash bag on the street. The gruesome message left little to the imagination: “Reyes Ferriz has two weeks to live.” The prediction of an early death was hardly a first for the outspoken mayor, a trade attorney who speaks fluent English and teaches law at a university in Juárez. He is still alive and has much to do. (AOLnews.com 3/25/10)

Arturo Farela, Director of the National Fraternity of Evangelical Churches, has asserted that organized crime syndicates and drug cartels have been targeting Christians because they see churches as revenue centers and because churches support rehabilitation programs for drug addicts and alcoholics. “The majority of rehabilitation centers that have been attacked by organized crime in Ciudad Juárez ... belong to the evangelical community.” (Compass Direct News 4/15/11)

We know the growth of Christianity in the first-century Roman world was watered by the blood of martyrs. What does it mean for present-day believers to deliberately venture into dangerous places to live, serve, preach, teach?

One of the striking things about Juárez is its proximity to the U.S. Might Juárez be one of our Samaritans? Close but so different, close but undesirable, close but challenging, close but dangerous? Where are the Christian school teachers who will teach in the schools of Juárez, public or Christian? Who are the women who will marry the men who will charge into this war zone where Satan lives, lifting the blood-stained banner? Who among us believes God’s power is greater than that of depraved cartels?

John wrote to the angel of the church in Pergamum. “The one who has the sharp two-edged sword says, ‘I know where you dwell, where

Satan’s throne is; ... you hold fast my name ... *donde mora Satanás*, where Satan dwells”

Robert and Sandra Frazier have been soldiers of the cross in Juarez for 32 years. These Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries have been as hard at work for the last three years, with violence making worldwide headlines, as they have in years previous. With 14 churches started, revived, and built up, these folks are agents of light in the Juárez darkness. Their days are filled with pastoral visitation, door-to-door work, tract distribution, children and youth ministries, studying, and preparing for Bible studies and services. They helped start a Bible college that is now under the leadership of a national. The churches they have started and worked with have been turned over to national leadership. In the last few years, they assisted a group that was nothing more than a Bible study meeting in a widow’s house. Last April, the church was organized with pastoral leadership in place. Lighthouse Baptist Church shines brightly where Satan dwells. Come on now, is that awesome or what?

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. A baby is born where the devil reigns. The devil’s son sends his cohorts slashing, hacking into the quiet village. Babies’ cries are choked off. Screams and wails rend the night. These are the very works Jesus came to destroy.

The devil may rule in Juárez, but Jesus lives there. He is at work. Christmas means the devil’s days are numbered.

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