

Missionary Couple Killed in Mexico

Violence in Mexico has claimed the lives of a U.S. missionary couple.

John Casias, 76, and his wife, Wanda, 67, were remembered for their service to Christ in the Baptist church they founded.

The Casias' son discovered Wanda in the couple's home on Tuesday evening. He noticed their car and some electronics were missing. His father was found dead in an outbuilding on the property. Both had electrical cords tied around their necks.

Violence has escalated in Mexico, forcing many **missionaries** to rethink their deployment. John Herrin served with The Mission Society in Monterrey until recently. "When we first moved to Monterrey over three years ago, it was one of the safest cities in Latin America, not just Mexico," he explains. "And in a very brief time, the city just changed ... There's a sense of tension in the air, a sense of fear in the city."

Herrin says the increased violence forced them to make some decisions about staying in Mexico: "When driver's training began to include how to respond to a shoot out and how to drop to the floor-board of the car, we realized we weren't sure our kids should be involved in this." This stark reality helped them make their decision to leave Monterrey.

Many **American missionaries** are leaving Mexico, Herrin says, and the church has experienced a great deal of uncertainty. He explains, "A lot of funding began to drop off, and the church began saying, 'What are we going to do?' Then, the violence began to hit, again the church said, 'What are we going to do?'"

Herrin says the **Holy Spirit** is empowering people. "The church there is stepping up. They are developing their own plan," he says. "They're going out, and they're reaching out. And they're doing things that they haven't done before because they haven't had to."

Herrin says there may be the silver lining in all of this: "We're now [being reminded] that God is doing it. It's not me doing it. It's not those missionaries over there. This really is the continuation of **God's church**."

Herrin says he still goes back to Monterrey once a month for ministry. "The easy thing [to do] is to give up and walk away," he says. "The thing that God calls us to is to be faithful. If God calls us to it, we need to be about it, and God will be with us. He'll carry us through it and over it."