

EOC SAFETY UPDATE - January 2011

For God has not given us a spirit of fear & timidity, but a spirit of POWER, of LOVE and of SELF-DISCIPLINE. *Written by the Apostle Paul in his second letter to Timothy*

Greetings and Blessings from Ensenada, Baja California Mexico. We have had a remarkable start to the year in Ensenada, with some great teams visiting from Virginia, Alberta Canada, Santa Clarita & Mission Viejo California. One of the teams is an annual partner, however the other three teams were either first timers or first time in five years. Two of the teams were made up almost entirely of families with many young children.

I report this, to encourage you, that although there continues to be a fair amount of negative media coverage about Mexico, which stokes a spirit of fear & trepidation, the state of Baja California continues to be a safe, secure & strategic place to engage in missions activity. 2011 will be a great year of Ministry in Mexico!

Most conversations I have with concerned parents regarding Baja, tell me they aren't as concerned with Ensenada as they are with Tijuana. Which is an understandable question since every news story that talks about the "Border Violence" lists all the Mexican border states. There is no question that there continues to be a concerning crisis in the states bordering Texas, however Baja California & the City of Tijuana remain safe. Tijuana, like San Diego, is a large city with millions of inhabitants, with it's share of normal violence.

I regularly pass through Tijuana four times a week. I have for the past eight years. At all times of the day & night. I have never seen nor heard of a single instance of the "drug war" violence occurring anywhere remotely close to where I (or teams) drive. We travel on heavily used "freeway" style roads through Tijuana, that are used by thousands & thousands of Mexicans & Americans daily. Additionally these roads are within a few feet of the US border (the most closely watched part of the city). A team would have to purposely drive 40-45 minutes East toward the desert in order to approach the area of Tijuana that saw violence in 2008.

A few of our teams have had the occasion to make a wrong turn and get lost in Tijuana, and to their surprise they have received not only friendly help from locals & police, but even an escort back to the highway.

Two months ago, my wife & I rejoiced in the birth of our second daughter, and I can assure you that I take the safety of my wife & daughters very seriously. I consider myself a protective parent. And I would be the first to respond accordingly & notify teams if the state of security in Baja & Tijuana was to change.

With all this being said, I would submit that we are in a fierce battle here in Ensenada, but not a battle of flesh & blood, but against the powers of a dark world. Every one who comes to serve with us in Mexico, comes as a beacon of light into a dark world, and this is not without its enemies.

In the past 15 years, more than 25,000 people have served with the EOC on the mission field, participating in the transformation of thousands of lives. Yes the enemy wants you to stay home!

The Enemy would like nothing more than to paralyze the Body of Believers with a spirit of fear, to the point of inaction. I encourage and even exhort you to stand firm with a spirit of Power, Love & Self-Discipline; as we know that God is calling us, and Jesus is with us to the end. There is no place safer than where God is calling you to go with his son Jesus!

I look forward to serving with you in Mexico in 2011, and keep praying for all who will come together as the Body of Christ in Ensenada this year.

Peace & Blessings in Jesus' name,

Scott Wester
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