

TAKING CRIME HEAD-ON

Juarez Preachers Seek Change

Hernandez, Movaro Lead Charge To Make Jesus Focus In 'Murder Capital Of The World'

By PATRICK S. BUTLER
Religion Editor

He came to Tyler last week from what has been called "The Murder Capital of the World." But the Rev. Nicholas Hernandez, 42, of Eben-ezer Baptist Church of Juarez, Mexico, did not ask about 350 adults at Tyler's First Baptist Church on Sunday for money, or offer excuses for the out-of-control violence directly across the border of El Paso. He placed the blame squarely on the church. And himself.

"We have forgotten to talk about Jesus in Juarez," he said to the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* through his interpreter elder, Mario Novaro, on March 6. "In a city of more than 3 million people there are just 46 Baptist churches in the hundred years Baptists have been there. In most denominations in Juarez, people are nominally Christian. It's our fault that violence has escalated to this level."

And the violence has shocked the world, the Associated Press reported in December. In 2009, Ciudad Juarez had

about 2,250 killings, a rate of 173 per 100,000 residents. That compares with 37 per 100,000 in Baltimore, the deadliest U.S. city with a population of more than 500,000.

Juarez used to be a safe tourist destination a stone's throw from El Paso, Hernandez said. But now "the city is dying," Daniel Murguia, president of the Juarez chapter of the Nation Chamber of Commerce, told the AP.

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— Courtesy Photo
ONE OF FEW: Eben-ezer Baptist Church is one of 46 Baptist Churches in Juarez, Mexico, a city of 3 million.

ALL AROUND THE WORLD

PROJECT EARTH 344



— Courtesy Photo
REACHING OUT: The Rev. John Hunter demonstrates his pottery-making skills to children at Christian Hope School in Namibia, Africa. Hunter and his wife, Suzanne, helped open the school for the orphans.

"God took what looked like a horrible situation and turned into a tremendous blessing. I know it's God, because things like this just don't happen. It has to be God."

THE REV. JOHN HUNTER

Hunters Overcome Obstacles To Educate African Orphans

By PATRICK S. BUTLER
Religion Editor

When the Rev. John Hunter of Tyler's Christian Heritage School was diagnosed with a pernicious cancer about a year ago, he admitted he was worried.

After years of working on a dream with his wife, Suzanne, of creating a comprehensive educational facility for AIDS orphans and other destitute children in Windhoek, Namibia, Africa, the situation appeared "pretty bleak," he said.

"We knew something was seriously wrong by the end of 2008," Mrs. Hunter said. "John was losing energy like a car running out of petrol. He coughed all the time. The doctor's report was dim. We had no choice but to begin treatments in early January 2009" at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

It had been a long, strenuous, but satisfying road in Africa for the Hunters, who are

members of Tyler's Bethel Bible Church. Relocating from Tyler to the northwestern edge of the Kalahari Desert, at 5,000 feet above sea level, in 2002, they worked hard to start Christian Hope School, line upon line, precept upon precept and almost literally brick by brick to serve nine students in a single grade level.

Mrs. Hunter, who is also an artist, described the situations of Katatura's impoverished children raising children because one or both of their parents had AIDS, as "heart-breaking." Historically, the area had been reserved for the least liked and outcast tribe of poor and rejected people, she said.

"In the olden days, the other tribes in the region would make the members of this tribe crawl on the ground and bark like dogs," she said. "We're ministering to some of the descendants of that tribe."

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SAVE THE DATE

WHAT: Listen to the Rev. John Hunter of Bethel Bible Church and Tyler Morning Telegraph Religion Editor Patrick Butler speak at a free event to raise funds for Christian Hope School in Katatura, Namibia, Africa.
WHEN: 6 p.m. Thursday.
WHERE: Christian Heritage School, 961 County Road 1143.

Hunter's Dispatch Speaks Of Hard Times, Hope, Redemption

By SUZANNE HUNTER
Special to the Tyler Morning Telegraph

Last year was, in some ways, the best and worst year of my life.

My husband, John, went through cancer treatment, we uprooted our lives and at the same time, three grandchildren were born. So, yes, we have been doing this work in Namibia for 12 years, but never before have I known the deep poverty of my own heart until the last few years.

In the earlier phases, I struggled to face the poor on a personal level, even though I longed to understand how to help them. Now, I have more of

a human identity with all people as I've identified our common problem: we are all impoverished. We are all on the same level, there are no platforms and everyone needs a savior.

Rock climbing provides a good analogy. Standing at the bottom of a cliff, one doesn't recognize how far it is to get to the top. Sometimes John and I rock climb with our boys, though I really hate the feeling of being halfway up, all beat up, broken nails, bleeding hands and exhausted.

Why would I ever want to do this to myself?

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another look with patrick s. butler

Playground Of Idle Mind Filled My Mailbox



It happened again. I got sick. I was bored. I went on "A-Bay" — Auction Bay — that online auction action Web page designed to hook hapless bidders into a frenzy of tomfoolery, forgetting the few dollars they have in the bank account.

What is it about bargains that drive people like me wild? Do we develop into crazy people or are we born that way? For centuries, theologians have ruined their brains trying to answer that question. Few of them

had the benefit of observing the phenomenon of the online onslaught for ownership.

Trust me, it's brutal out there in cyberspace.

Let me just say that the bidding for used music CDs at the 99 cents to \$5 level — plus shipping — is ferocious and far beyond reasonable expectations. Reason, in fact, is a far-distant finisher in the rat-race on "A-Bay." People who have far too much time on their hands must be hunkered over their expensive laptops and

Internet connections, haggling for a few dollars more, ready to do battle in the final seconds for the obscure item they must have now.

After observing the tactics and strategies of otherwise intelligent people bidding for a rare copy of, say, "The Purple Haze Rug Mats" (it's rare for a reason folks), or the oxymoronic "The Moose Jaw Philharmonic Trio perform the Tender Love Songs of the Rolling Stones," I had a revelation.

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INFLUX OF CDS: I took another look at the aftermath of online bidding after five flu-filled sick days — and learned.

— Staff Photo
Illustration By Jaime R. Carrero and Christopher Vinn