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September 6, 1990

90-117

NOTE TO EDITORS: Erich Bridges, Foreign Mission Board news editor, wrote this analysis of missions in the Post-Cold War era before leaving with photographer Don Rutledge to cover the Middle East crisis.

Post-Cold War world:
more dangerous, not less

By Erich Bridges

N. FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--So much for peace in our time.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait touched off world economic shock waves and created, in the view of certain defense analysts, possibly the most dangerous military stand-off since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

It also rudely awakened people who dreamed of a peaceful world after the 45-year Cold War ended between the Western alliance and the Soviet bloc. And it signals a more dangerous world for the practice of Christian missions.

Some call Iraq's invasion the first shot fired in the post-Cold War era. True, plenty of shots have been fired during the disintegration of the Soviet Union's empire and the union itself. But like that disintegration, the Kuwait crisis portends the kind of world now being born, according to many observers.

What will that world be like, and how will it affect the Christian global mission? Several world watchers at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board offered these predictions and recommendations:

1. Expect wars and rumors of wars, just as the Bible says, they warned.

War is nothing new in human affairs, of course, and 83 major armed conflicts have been fought since 1960, according to researchers. More than 20 wars were raging last year alone.

But the end of the Cold War and superpower dominance -- and the so-called "balance of terror," the fearful but stabilizing threat of world nuclear conflict -- will produce even more small- or medium-scale wars.

"I personally think the world is going to be more dangerous than ever," said R. Keith Parks, Foreign Mission Board president. "In a way we've lost some worldwide stability with such a decline of control by the Soviet Union over its satellites and such a two-power kind of world. There would have been a time, theoretically, when the Soviet Union might have clamped down on Iraq and said, 'No, you can't do that.' But that's no longer the role of the Soviet Union. The world has moved beyond that stage."

Therefore, Hussein may have felt he could invade Kuwait with relative impunity. If so he was wrong, but his appeal to Arab nationalism and Islamic pride for support against the West has gained support among many Arabs.

If more dictators, or terrorists, gain nuclear, chemical or biological warfare capability, they may hold whole cities or countries hostage, not just unfortunate Westerners, said Clark Scanlon, director of research and planning.

2. With decreasing fear of U.S. or Soviet interference, fragmentation along ethnic, tribal, religious and nationalistic lines will speed up.

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"With the volatility and ethnic hatreds that are resident in so many countries -- because these countries were not drawn up along ethno-linguistic lines -- you have tinderboxes of ethnic conflict. I don't see us moving toward a calmer, more peaceful world at all," Parks said.

Unrest, whether caused by ethnic hatreds, regional bullies, nationalism or tribalism, "now has a more modest arena to take place -- it doesn't all have to be cast in the world power arena," added Lewis Myers, vice president for Cooperative Services International.

Mission strategist David Garrison sees history repeating itself, with the colonial breakdown and internecine warfare, seen in Africa during the '60s and '70s, extending to Eastern Europe and Asia.

"You're going to see it in the Soviet Union in the '90s and in the 21st century," he said. "The central Soviet government may retain power in one sense, but as strict social and political controls are lifted, Tadjiks will fight Uzbeks and Romanians will fight against Hungarians and so forth."

One political scientist calls this scenario "Back to the Future" -- a return to the hatreds that tore continents apart before the Cold War.

"We're going to see global tragedies," Garrison continued. "All the predictions are that black Africa will continue to get worse before it gets better. That's scary; that's going to cause more deaths than in any other place in history in the decades to come. The images of pestilence, hunger and war already exist: such as AIDS in Uganda and malaria in West Africa; famine in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sudan; and intertribal violence in Sudan, Uganda, Liberia, Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa. The list goes on and on."

Running beneath the national, ethnic and religious hatreds now resurfacing is another old theme: poverty. Some 2.4 billion people are poor, and 1.8 billion of them are undernourished.

The desperately poor will "hold on to anything," said Jim Maroney, assistant director of the board's Global Desk. "If today it's called Islam and it's going to help me, fine. If tomorrow it's called something else and it will help me, fine. What we'll have are little islands of prosperity that will have to arm themselves to the teeth to protect what they now have. The ones who are going to have the best deal in all this are the arms dealers."

3. Christian missionaries and other workers won't escape the turmoil.

"To people who say we shouldn't send missionaries to dangerous places, I would ask them to tell me where the dangerous places are and where they'll be next week," Parks said. "I think more missionaries will face dangerous places in the future than they have in the past. But this is a risk Christians have to take. It was true in New Testament times and has been throughout Christian history. We need to accept that as a part of the price of sharing the gospel. There's no way of knowing where the next conflict is going to break out."

And instability will make predicting events and planning mission work even more difficult, Parks said.

Added Myers: "We're going to get some fingers burned. We're going to get some people asked to leave some places. We'll get some people detained against their will for periods of time. I hope everybody is ready for that."

On the other hand, Maroney sees a brighter day for missionaries, at least in the access they gain to places once off-limits. "There will be pockets that you stay out of, but it won't be that massive monolith that the Soviet Union and its allies represented before," he said.

4. Instability creates new opportunity for Christians, both to meet human need and to spread the gospel.

"Chaos is a great time to do missions," Garrison said. "When there's war, when things are unraveling, people are thinking about eternity."

Cultures and populations in turmoil always migrate -- physically or psychologically -- toward stability, Myers added. "The hope for the gospel," he said, "is that during this period of confusion, when all sorts of changes are in order, that somehow there's a valid communication and people begin to grasp that Christianity can be a stabilizing factor. That would be working against the tendency to hold the status quo and move back to that which was, but I think that's the hope for the gospel in those situations. And it's just a narrow little window" that must be entered quickly when it opens.

A contending force in many of the most unstable -- and most unevangelized -- areas is Islam, which is rapidly replacing communism as Christianity's primary ideological opponent with nearly 1 billion believers.

"Islam is an extremely stable force in the world," Garrison claimed. "And it's very conservative. So in the one sense it runs counter to a dynamic global economy and the idea of a progressive, free flow of ideas. But it will always be popular because it's a stabilizing force in a changing world.

"It's possible that the whole Muslim world will be left in the dust if it doesn't open up," he said. "They're going to find that this economy will leave them behind. That's why the Soviet Union had to open up. They couldn't control every aspect of life and still have a free market environment that would allow them to advance past the industrial age into the information age. The Muslim world is far behind that, and it won't change as long as it has a repressive system in place."

5. To be effective, world Christians must work in coalitions.

If Korean Christians, for example, are more welcome in a given country than Westerners, they should go there, strategists urge. American Christians can help them go and work behind the scenes to help make them successful.

"I think there's a consensus among futurists and missiologists on that point," Myers said. "Our role is going to change dramatically. We'll be much more catalytic and enabling, behind-the-scenes kinds of people than we've ever been before, and that may be a hard lesson for us to learn."

Concluded Garrison: "Americans are engineers by nature. We're into how do you do it, how do you make it work? And maybe that's our big contribution to missions -- not always doing it ourselves, but analyzing problems and seeing how we can make it work, and then finding the resources to pull it off."

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Home missionary encourages
Security Council chairman

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
9/6/90

ATLANTA (BP)--Last fall Aurel Dragos Munteanu was under house arrest in Romania. Last month he was chairman of the U.N. Security Council which dealt with the Persian Gulf crisis.

Ted Mall, home missionary serving at the United Nations, explained that before last year's revolution in Romania, Munteanu was under house arrest for his Christian convictions. After the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime, Munteanu was freed and chosen to be Romania's representative to the United Nations.

Munteanu currently serves on the U.N. Security Council as one of seven rotating members in addition to the five permanent members. The council's chairmanship changes each month.

Munteanu began his turn as Security Council chairman Aug. 1, one day before Iraq invaded Kuwait.

As director of Christian Ministries to the United Nations Community, Mall said he has "constantly conveyed to him (Munteanu) my concern and prayer support." Mall described Munteanu as a "Christian who makes no bones about it. He is a student of the Bible who believes God comes first in his life.

In addition to encouraging Munteanu, Mall has worked with ambassadors from countries whose residents are trapped in Kuwait.

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"I can identify with them because we also have foreign missionaries there," Mall said.

Mall has met with and prayed with the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations, but has not seen the Iraqi diplomats since the Kuwait invasion.

In previous years, Iraqi representatives have participated in Mall's Thanksgiving program to place ambassadors in homes of Baptist families for the holiday.

Mall said his prayer is that those contacts with Americans outside the professional diplomatic setting will positively influence the negotiations of the Persian Gulf crisis.

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Causeys answer God's call,
head toward mission field

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
9/6/90

HUMBOLDT, Tenn. (BP)--New Southern Baptist missionaries Guy and Tammy Causey never gave up their desire to answer God's call.

As a sophomore at Columbia (Tenn.) State Community College and president of the Baptist Student Union, Causey attended a Christian Career Conference in 1980 sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

It was during that conference that Causey made a "commitment to serve Christ in whatever career it might be."

In 1982 Causey went on a volunteer mission trip to Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) during Tennessee Baptists' partnership with that country that reconfirmed God's calling to mission service.

Eight years later, that calling became a reality when Causey and his wife, Tammy, were appointed as career missionaries during a special commissioning service at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Ironically, Causey will be returning to Burkina Faso to the same village (San Wabo) and the same house he lived in as a volunteer working with missionary agriculturist Larry Cox.

In fact, he is filling the position left vacant since 1986 when Cox and his wife returned to the United States.

Causey recalled that when he first went to Burkina Faso it was for a 30-day mission trip. Those 30 days ended up being two years as Causey decided to remain in the country as a Mission Service Corps volunteer. He was sponsored by Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church, where he was a member at the time.

Upon returning to Brentwood, Causey wanted to become a career missionary but Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials advised him to wait and get a job in agriculture.

Causey obtained a position teaching agriculture in the Humboldt city school system in 1984. He joined First Baptist Church of Humboldt, where he met his future wife, Tammy Graves, a Memphis native who had lived in Humboldt since 1976.

She recalled that "Guy was still keyed up" about missions even then. She also had a keen interest in missions from her involvement in Acteens and had been a summer missionary in 1984 in Lawrence County Association.

Also that summer, Mrs. Causey attended student week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center where the emphasis was missions.

"After hearing stories about how the love of God is needed across the seas, I made a commitment to sharing Christ with them," she said.

Mrs. Causey laughs now that "Guy wouldn't even have wanted to date me if I had not been interested in missions."

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The two dated and were married in November 1987. They immediately wanted to apply as career missionaries but were told to wait at least one year.

In 1988 they had a candidate conference with FMB officials, but were told to wait one more year.

Finally, after filling out what seemed like reams of paperwork, the Causeys were told in November 1989 they were approved and that Guy needed to attend seminary.

The Causeys "sold everything they didn't think would fit" in their seminary house and moved to Louisville, Ky., last January so Guy could begin classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He needed 20 credit hours before he could be appointed.

It was tough making the transition from teacher to student, Causey admitted, noting it had been 12 years since he had been in school.

Plus, he laughed, as an agricultural major he didn't have that many books to read or term papers to write.

But he persevered and obtained the 20 credit hours after attending one semester and two J-terms.

On July 9, the Causeys returned to Humboldt and began making preparations for a much longer journey -- to Burkina Faso by way of Rockville, Va., and France.

The Causeys will go through a seven-week orientation in Rockville beginning Aug. 29 and then leave Dec. 1 to go to France for one year of intensive language study before going to Burkina Faso.

Once they reach Burkina Faso Causey will work in various projects such as water resources, gardening, cultivation techniques, livestock breeding, and health care. He also will work in direct evangelism and church planting at least 50 percent of the time.

"I'm glad we're going to be part of a ministry that will seek to meet physical needs alongside spiritual needs," he said.

Mrs. Causey will have primary responsibilities for her home and family but also will have opportunities to use her skills in working with church groups, women's groups, literacy classes and other forms of ministry and outreach.

"God has laid a special need on my heart to help in the area of literacy," Tammy said. She plans to work hard to learn the language so she can show the ladies in the village "that Christ loves them."

The Causeys are at peace with their decision to leave their family and friends and venture thousands of miles from Tennessee to a place where they will be 155 miles from "town" and six hours away from American doctors.

"We are excited about completing the appointment process and the next leg of our journey in reaching the people to whom God has called us to carry the Gospel," Causey said.

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Problem of sin 'universal,'
Leavell tells seminarians

By Breena Kent Paine

Baptist Press
9/6/90

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The problem of sin is universal, Landrum P. Leavell II told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during the first chapel service of the academic year. The difference is how one handles the problem.

"One of the ways people handle the sin problem is to be blinded by it," said the seminary president. "They believe they can live a life (morally) comparable to an alley cat and it won't affect their relationship with Jesus Christ."

"They live in the stygian darkness of their own arrogance and self-will. They're the ones who basically say to other Christians, 'Do as I say, not as I do. Don't pay any attention to my lifestyle, just pay attention to teachings as I speak them with my lips.'"

However, "the gospel requires of every follower of Christ an open, candid, honest admission of every known sin in his life on a daily basis," he continued. "Not only must we confess that sin; our confession must be accompanied by an honest, personal effort to avoid that sin."

Second, some people respond to sin by burying it, or "placing sin so deeply in their subconscious that they just don't think about it," Leavell said.

"That leads to inverting the gospel of Jesus Christ. You see, the gospel was designed to transform the life of a sinner," he explained. Instead, "we change our theology to conform to our lifestyle."

Third, some people blame their sin on other people. "The glaring character flaws of our day are negligible commitment and an evasion of responsibility," Leavell said. "A lot of us go through life looking for scapegoats," rather than taking responsibility for personal sins.

"Others around you may influence you, but you alone are responsible for your sin."

The best way for a Christian to deal with sin, however, is to "bare your soul. ... That's the way to gain access to the most high God -- a confession of sin. When we come as needy people confessing our needs, God hears and God heeds.

"You're not responsible for feeling a certain way; you're responsible for honestly confessing the sin in your life. ... Sin is real and Satan is real. He's going to do everything he can to keep us from being like Jesus.

"No Christian can be sinless, but all Christians can sin less daily," Leavell concluded. "Every one of us can take a step upward in our likeness of Jesus Christ day by day."