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January 23, 1991

91-11

Annie Armstrong offering  
increases 8 percent in 1990

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

ATLANTA (BP)--National gifts to the 1990 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions totaled \$35.68 million, an increase of 8.14 percent over the previous year.

The unaudited final report shows the offering's largest percentage increase in three years and the sixth largest increase in the past 10 years.

However, the offering still fell short of the \$41 million goal. Although the annual goal has not been met since 1981, the 1990 offering came closer to its goal than the last four offerings.

The \$35.68 million received in 1990 is a \$2.69 million increase over the \$32.99 million given the previous year. That is the largest dollar-amount increase on record.

Percentage increases for the annual offering have taken a roller coaster ride in recent years after a period of consecutive double-digit increases from 1976 to 1982.

"All of us here at the Home Mission Board are elated by the strong support of Southern Baptists across the nation," HMB President Larry Lewis said of the 1990 offering.

"The increase indicates that even though Southern Baptists are divided on many issues, they are united in their concern for missions and are not going to allow controversy in the convention to deter their strong support for our missionaries and our missions cause."

Leaders of two mission support agencies concurred with Lewis.

Brotherhood Commission President James Smith said: "The 1990 Annie Armstrong offering is another sign of Southern Baptists' continuing commitment to missions. It shows that Southern Baptists are committed to winning America to Christ."

Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien said: "Because men and women, boys and girls in the missions organizations in the church have recognized the need to give priority to this offering, many will be touched by Christ. We are grateful for the vision of Southern Baptists in their support of home missions, both through prayer and gifts."

Nationwide, 34 state conventions and fellowships increased their gifts to the offering in 1990 while six conventions and fellowships decreased their gifts.

Here is a state-by-state breakdown of gifts to the 1990 offering: Alabama, \$3.02 million; Alaska, \$58,844; Arizona, \$227,254; Arkansas, \$916,122; California, \$627,008; Canada, \$23,799; Colorado, \$132,628; Dakotas, \$16,762; District of Columbia, \$51,370; Florida, \$2.05 million;

Georgia, \$3.25 million; Hawaii, \$75,822; Illinois, \$451,983; Indiana, \$137,218; Iowa, \$29,270; Kansas/Nebraska, \$163,585; Kentucky, \$1.23 million; Louisiana, \$1.17 million; Maryland/Delaware, \$280,721; Michigan, \$128,439; Minnesota/Wisconsin, \$40,423; Mississippi, \$2 million; Missouri, \$1.22 million;

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Montana, \$23,066; Nevada, \$47,893; New England, \$54,792; New Mexico, \$252,792; New York, \$89,213; North Carolina, \$4.19 million; Northwest, \$134,861; Ohio, \$186,798; Oklahoma, \$1.07 million; Pennsylvania/South Jersey, \$68,550; Puerto Rico, \$7,705; South Carolina, \$2.48 million; Tennessee, \$2.43 million; Texas, \$5.33 million; Utah/Idaho, \$30,771; Virginia, \$1.85 million; West Virginia, \$66,786; Wyoming, \$28,217; foreign countries, \$40,462.

The Annie Armstrong offering is one of two primary funding channels for the HMB. In 1991, the offering will provide 44 percent of the HMB's budget, while the Cooperative Program will provide 35 percent.

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HMB commissions  
39 missionaries

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press  
1/23/91

DULUTH, Ga. (BP)--"Take your life and abandon it completely at the feet of Jesus," Larry Lewis urged 39 missionaries commissioned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board Jan. 20.

Lewis, HMB president, delivered the charge to missionaries during a commissioning service at First Baptist Church of Duluth, Ga. The 39 missionaries commissioned will serve in 18 states in a variety of roles, from church starting to Baptist Center ministries.

Speaking from Matthew 26, Lewis charged the missionaries to be like the woman who anointed Jesus with oil. "A good work is not a big church, a big building or a big budget," he said. "A good work is when someone is willing to take his life and pour it out at the feet of Jesus."

Two missionaries gave testimonies during the service, representing the diversity of the home missions enterprise.

Steve Hughes, missionary to El Portal, Calif., told about the ministry he and his wife will have in Yosemite National Park. Hughes related how serving as a student missionary at the same location years earlier impacted his call to resort missions.

David Dean, director of missions for the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, told the suburban Atlanta congregation about the vast needs of his association, which encompasses 17 million people.

Those commissioned join a home missions force of more than 4,570 personnel serving nationwide and supported by the Cooperative Program and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

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Evangelist Bailey Smith  
receives pacemaker

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press  
1/23/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptist evangelist Bailey Smith has received a pacemaker after blacking out during a cruise in the Bahamas.

Smith, 52, reportedly collapsed Jan. 15 while the Starship Atlantic was docked in Nassau. He was taken to a hospital in Nassau, where a temporary pacemaker was installed, according to Debbie Kennedy, a staff member and spokeswoman with Bailey Smith Ministries in Atlanta.

On Friday, Jan. 18, Smith was flown by air ambulance to Emory University Hospital in Atlanta, where a permanent pacemaker was installed Jan. 20, she said. A few days later, Smith was discharged from the hospital.

Kennedy said Smith's prognosis for recovery is positive. "It was not a heart attack. They don't feel like there was any damage to his heart, but they don't know what caused it."

Smith had preached just hours before the medical emergency, Kennedy said. The Jan. 14-18 "Sailabration Bible Cruise" is an annual event featuring preaching and singing by Smith and other Southern Baptist personalities.

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Pro-Saddam mobs threaten  
Bangladesh Baptists, burn homes

By Michael Chute

W M B

HONG KONG (BP)--Pro-Saddam Hussein mobs threatened to attack Baptist buildings in Bangladesh and burned the homes of 13 Christian families as Muslim anger over the Gulf war spilled into south Asia.

Police dispersed a mob bent on destroying a Baptist church in Magura, Bangladesh, Jan. 18 after Chinese engineers constructing an adjacent building reported the impending attack to authorities. Police later stationed five armed officers outside the Magura home of Southern Baptist missionaries David and Barbie Lindsey of Oklahoma City as a precaution.

Heavily armed police reinforcements took up positions around the Lindsey house Jan. 19 to repel a mob reportedly on its way. But another group of police stopped the group before it could reach the Lindsey house.

Another angry mob converged on the Baptist Building in Dhaka but left before police arrived. The building houses Southern Baptist mission offices, a guest house and the residence of missionaries Jim and Betty McKinley of Albany, Ky., and Louisville, Ky.

Two Japanese women missionaries at the guest house apparently drew the crowd's attention. The two ran into the house after seeing them, said McKinley.

The houses of 13 Bangladeshi Christian families reportedly were looted and burned by pro-Saddam Muslims the nights of Jan. 21 and 22. The Baptist and Catholic families were forced out of their houses before attacks began.

Seven Southern Baptist missionary families work in Bangladesh -- three families in Dhaka and four in outlying areas. Missionaries are maintaining contact with each other every day during the crisis. They continue to curtail their activities, even shunning church services "so we wouldn't draw attention," explained McKinley.

He added that missionaries have remained in their homes since the outbreak of the war. McKinley and fellow missionary James Young of Thomastown, Miss., first ventured out only during the early-morning hours of Jan. 23.

McKinley and Young got a call Jan. 23 from the Development Service Center, a Baptist farm on Dhaka's outskirts, warning that another mob reportedly was on its way to attack the center. They went to a nearby police station to get an armed police escort before driving 21 miles to the farm. McKinley said local people had discouraged action against the farm and the mob did not come.

"All of us are in our own places," McKinley said. "Each one wants to remain in their home because of the neighbors. If we start moving about, that looks like it's worse than (the Bangladeshis) think it is. ... But the situation is very tense. It's just so unpredictable. "

If the situation worsens, "We'll just have to do what we're doing now," McKinley said. "We couldn't travel, especially our people out (in remote areas) unless we were able to get police escorts."

Meanwhile, the American Club in Dhaka was extensively damaged in an attack last week. And police fought off attacks by pro-Saddam Muslims on the American, Saudi Arabian and Egyptian embassies, which now are guarded heavily by Bangladesh police.

In Thailand, the International Baptist Church in Bangkok joined other international congregations in calling off services Jan. 20 as a precaution against possible terrorist strikes.

Thai officials reportedly have identified a terrorist group operating in the country and have issued a warning of possible attacks on unnamed targets over a 48-hour period. No incidents were reported, but authorities extended the alert until Jan. 28. Also, a Japanese Red Army terrorist cell reportedly is using the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai as a base for possible attacks on Western airlines or embassies.

Airports throughout Asia have tightened security and American airliners are under guard. Western embassies are guarded heavily throughout the region. U.S. embassies in many Asian countries have advised Americans to maintain a low profile and avoid public places, particularly those places frequented by Americans. However, many international schools in the region -- closed when allied bombing of Iraq and Kuwait began -- are resuming classes.

"We've not seen any evidence of missionaries or the mission office being threatened," said Tom Williams, Thailand Baptist Mission administrator. "Missionaries are going about normal schedules and routines. There's been no threat at all to our Thai Baptist churches."

A similar situation exists in the Philippines, even though an Iraqi national was killed Jan. 19 when a bomb he apparently attempted to plant exploded in front of the Thomas Jefferson Cultural Center, a U.S.-run library in Manila. Philippines missionary administrator Sam Waldron expressed surprise at the failed bomb attack, but attributed it mainly to close ties between the United States and the Philippines.

"We've not heard of any threat to a missionary or mission institution; we're not doing anything abnormal," Waldron added. "No one in Manila is changing their schedule very much. And no worship services have been disrupted."

However, a mission school in Manila only returned to classes Jan. 23 after closing its doors when the Gulf bombing started. Elementary school children will remain out until the end of January; school officials don't want to use buses displaying the school name.

Mission administrators said no missionaries in south Asia have elected to leave their posts at this time. Even though 1,800 Westerners had evacuated Pakistan by Jan. 20, Southern Baptists' three missionaries there -- Hubert and Bettie Addleton of Macon, Ga., and Linda Pegram of Dothan, W. Va. -- have decided to stay. The U.S. State Department ordered nonessential consulate staff and personnel at the Karachi International School to leave Pakistan.

"We don't feel a personal threat," said Mrs. Addleton in Karachi, although massive pro-Saddam demonstrations were staged throughout the country. "We're all keeping a very low profile, trying to redeem the time at our desks with things we sometimes have to put on hold because we're so busy." Missionaries "are selective in venturing out" although they still do chores like going to the grocery store and post office, she added.

No Baptist churches in Pakistan have canceled services, but only 30 people attended the International Baptist Church Jan. 18. The church where Addleton is pastor normally registers 100 people in the congregation.

"We have a lot of friends in Karachi -- both Christian and Muslim -- and they've inquired about our safety and needs," said Mrs. Addleton. "Actually, we're safe compared to many people in the world. There's been a lot of interruption in the lives of a lot of people and we're in our home. We don't feel the disruption like so many ... so we're thankful for a lot of blessings."

Elsewhere in Asia, about 30 youth marched on the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta in what reportedly was the first anti-American demonstration in Indonesia since the outbreak of the war. The country has the world's largest Muslim population with about 80 percent of its 180 million people professing Islam.

Anti-war protestors in Taiwan tried to burn an American flag in front of the unofficial U.S. embassy in Taipei but police halted the demonstration.

In Istanbul, Turkey, bombs damaged the offices of a U.S. mission group and a shipping company with American ties Jan. 23 after a NATO facility was bombed the day before. The Anatolia News Agency identified the mission agency as the American Board, a group that reportedly has run schools and a publishing house in Turkey since the 19th century.

In Brazil, meanwhile, the Jan. 20 bombings of a Mormon church run by American missionaries and a Jewish synagogue are related to the Gulf war, officials said. The previously unknown "Palestinian Council" claimed responsibility for the church bombing, according to the Associated Press.

Baptist workers escape  
third Scud attack on Israel

By Mike Creswell

N. F. M. B.

TEL AVIV, Israel (BP)--Southern Baptist personnel again avoided injury Jan. 22 when an Iraqi Scud missile made a direct hit on Tel Aviv, Israel.

It was the third Iraqi missile attack on Israel during the first week of the Gulf War.

Kathy Sibley of Dallas, one of several Southern Baptist representatives living in the Tel Aviv area, said the missile hit about 10 miles from her home. She and her husband, Jim, have two daughters, ages 13 and 16.

The missile struck a residential area, injuring more than 100 people and resulting in the deaths of three, including two who died of heart attacks.

"We heard the explosions pretty loudly where we were," Mrs. Sibley said, but she added that the blast sounded more muffled than earlier ones.

Tom Hocutt of Birmingham, Ala., another Southern Baptist worker living in the area, also heard the explosion. He, his wife and daughter are still following the routine of rushing into their sealed room when alarm sirens sound because of the continuing fear Iraq will attack Israel with poison gas.

The missile hit closer to their home than earlier missiles, Hocutt estimated. Two other Scuds were destroyed by Patriot defense missiles but one got through, according to Israeli press reports.

Messianic Jewish believers living north of Tel Aviv told Mrs. Sibley they heard the missiles passing overhead before the impact. Despite war conditions, "believers are standing very strong as far as we can tell," she said.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist worker Don Littlejohn in Bahrain reported he heard the missile attacks against the Saudi Arabian city of Dahrain. Although gas masks have been issued in Bahrain as a precaution, he said life is going on much as normal on the island just off the Saudi coast.

Littlejohn, of Fort Worth, Texas, is continuing his work as lab technician at a hospital. His family has left the country.

Southern Baptist workers Jack and Shawn Hodges of Hildebran and Hickory, N.C., left Gaza Jan. 22 following reports that some groups had announced plans to attack foreigners. The couple and their three children were the last Southern Baptist personnel in Israeli-occupied Gaza and virtually the only Westerners left there.

"After really praying about it and seeking the Lord's guidance, we decided it was time to leave," Hodges said. They have moved into the Nazareth area. From there they will keep in telephone contact with believers in Gaza. "We'll wait this thing out and will return to Gaza as soon as possible," he said.

Southern Baptist worker Rose Mary Register in Nazareth said little anti-American sentiment has been seen among the mixed Jewish and Arab population. The Baptist school in Nazareth has helped Baptists in the city to have good relations with residents, she said.

Register, of Peru, Ind., said people in Nazareth have been out on the streets shopping, but added, "We're staying close to the house and are having to stay in a lot. We're just doing the necessary things. When we go out, we carry our gas masks. Everyone is tense, but we've been further away from the action."

She and her husband, Ray, have called to check on believers. Also, Muslim friends have been checking on them. "That makes you feel good," she said.

"Many here have been surprised we didn't leave," she said, but she estimated that less than half the Americans in the Nazareth area have left. Press reports said more than 70,000 Americans lived in Israel before the war.

Mrs. Sibley also expressed gratitude for the prayer support from Southern Baptists. By the time alarm sirens sound, she said, friends in the United States are calling to check on them. "We've never felt such prayer support as we do right now. There are daily calls affirming prayer. We feel very undergirded and supported," she said.

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YouthReach to emphasize  
baptizing teenagers

By Mark Wingfield

N HMB

Baptist Press  
1/23/91

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists hope to resurrect an 18-year dip in youth baptisms through a nationwide emphasis called YouthReach.

YouthReach is not a new program, but is a simultaneous evangelism emphasis among Southern Baptist churches, said Dean Finley, youth evangelism specialist with the Home Mission Board.

YouthReach was designed by Finley and a task force of youth leaders from the Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission. The task force was created to explore ways to increase the number of youth baptisms in Southern Baptist churches.

Youth baptisms reached a peak of 137,667 in 1972 and gradually fell to a low of 79,900 in 1987. That number has increased slightly the past three years, with a projected 86,000 youth baptized in 1990.

Despite a decrease in birth rates after the Baby Boom generation, youth baptisms in Southern Baptist churches have not held steady in proportion to the youth population, Finley said. Additionally, the birth rate in America began growing again in 1977, meaning that today's 13-year-olds are the front edge of an expanding youth population.

For YouthReach, churches are asked to include two events as part of their year-long strategy for evangelizing youths: a "Gather at the Pole" prayer rally the first day of school and a baptismal celebration service between the third week in August and the third week in September.

The "Gather at the Pole" event is similar to the "See You at the Pole" emphasis promoted by Texas Baptists last year. In Texas, more than 41,000 students met at their school flag poles to pray on the same day.

As part of YouthReach, Baptist students nationwide are encouraged to meet at their school flagpoles 30 minutes before school starts the first day of classes, Finley explained. The event provides an opportunity to pray for the school and other concerns as well as provides a witness to the community.

The second aspect of YouthReach is a baptismal celebration service to be held between the third week in August and the third week in September. The purpose of this event is to encourage teenagers to be baptized and encourage both teenagers and adults to evangelize teenagers, Finley said.

He suggested the celebration service could be the time to baptize all teenagers converted during summer camps and other special events. Also, the celebration could be an opportunity to baptize youth who have made professions of faith but never been baptized.

A pilot project of YouthReach was conducted in five churches: First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.; New Hope Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Ga.; First Baptist Church of Ferguson, Mo.; Sagemont Baptist Church of Houston; and First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga.

Rex Alexander of First Baptist Church in Ferguson, Mo., said his church adopted YouthReach into a larger strategy for reaching teenagers. "We identified every lost person or unbaptized person on our Sunday school rolls," he said. "Each department got a list of those people and we became intentional in trying to share the gospel with them during the year."

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The Missouri church then held a YouthReach weekend. Events were presented with a military theme, so that witness training was called basic training and evangelistic visitation was called field experience.

At the baptismal celebration service a week later, the church baptized 10 teenagers. "Because this was a youth baptism service there were several teenagers willing to be baptized who had been putting off baptism," Alexander said. "And sometimes people just haven't talked to teenagers about being baptized. We had some like that."

In Snellville, Ga., First Baptist Church baptized 45 teenagers in an all-youth celebration service after summer camp, said youth minister Lee Mabry. The event was so popular the church now plans to have two youth baptismal celebrations each year.

Calvin Carr of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., said the Florida church held its baptismal celebration on a Wednesday night after summer youth camp. It took more than 25 minutes to baptize 64 teenagers in that service, he reported.

"It was an exciting time," Carr said. "To take one night of the year and highlight youth baptisms really does put the burden on the church that we've got to reach young people."

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Students strengthen link  
between U.S., Soviet Baptists

By Chip Alford

N-FMB

Baptist Press  
1/23/91

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist college students continue to play a key role in the development of ties between Baptists in United States and the Soviet Union, according to Brad Gray, consultant for evangelism/world student ministries at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department.

Two Baptist student mission teams from Georgia and Oklahoma made separate trips to Leningrad between Dec. 8 and Jan. 16 to assist in the restoration of the Temple of the Gospel Church. They were invited by Russian Baptists following the success of four student teams that participated in the same project last summer.

The restoration is the first volunteer mission project in the Soviet Union by Southern Baptists, Gray said, adding plans already have been approved to send student teams from six other states this summer. Teams will go from Louisiana, Missouri, Arizona, North Carolina, Tennessee and South Carolina.

"The project has been a tremendous success," Gray said. "Measures are already being taken to secure an on-going relationship to provide opportunity for further student involvement and ultimately for the development of a student ministry to Soviet students."

Although the restoration project soon will be complete, Temple of the Gospel already has envisioned a "multitude of ministries that may be conducive for our future involvement," he said.

Students and student ministry directors who made the recent trips to Leningrad said they built something far more important than walls and floors -- friendships.

"Our whole purpose for being there was not just to help with construction. We were there to show our solidarity with Soviet Christians," said Bobby Lipscomb, co-director of the Baptist Student Union at Northeast Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, and one of two student leaders who accompanied the Oklahoma team.

"The trip expanded our perspective to include what God is doing all over the world," Lipscomb said.

Team members assisted in several phases of the restoration of the church, a structure 100 years old given to Temple of the Gospel by the Soviet government in 1989. The building formerly belonged to a branch of the Russian Orthodox Church and also at one time had been used as a small industrial plant.

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Lending their support, the Baptist student teams brought in steel beams to use for support, poured concrete floors, built staircases, installed insulation and helped with the construction of a baptistry. They also unloaded truckloads of food sent to the church from congregations in Norway and Finland.

The students left Leningrad humbled by the faith, determination and sacrifice of their Russian hosts. Food rationing was in effect in Leningrad, and many of the host families obtained food coupons from friends and relatives in order to feed their American guests.

"They trust God for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and they sacrificed so we could have more," said Andrew McWilliams, a student at Georgia State University in Atlanta and a member of the Georgia team.

McWilliams described Temple of the Gospel as "a strong, vibrant church. I was very impressed with their work there. They are interested in becoming an evangelistic center and they want to start other churches," he said.

During their two-week stay, Lipscomb said members of the Oklahoma team saw about 100 people make professions of faith in Christ during church services at Temple of the Gospel. The students also were able to attend the church's first open Christmas celebration in 73 years.

"It was exciting to be there and witness the joy in their faces," Lipscomb said.

Russell Perkins, a student at North Georgia College, a military school in Dahlonega, said his face-to-face encounter with the Russian people changed his perspective of the "enemy."

Perkins's host was a young cadet in the Soviet Army.

"One night he and I sat up talking about different Scriptures," Perkins recalled. "He is a Christian and I shared with him how accepting Christ is just the beginning of the Christian life.

"It was really a good experience for me because when I was training in the Army the 'enemy' we trained to fight was always a Russian. I was able to look the enemy straight in the eye and get to know him. It really changed my perspective. He became my friend."

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Rogerson relates terror  
of attacks on Israel

By Mike Creswell

*N. EMS*

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JERUSALEM (BP)--After two nights of Iraqi missile attacks and many false alarms, Southern Baptist representative Sonny Rogerson in Israel said a dead cat was one of the most frightening sights he has ever seen.

Rogerson, of Georgetown, S.C., was having breakfast alone in his Jerusalem apartment at 7:30 a.m. Jan. 20 when air raid sirens screamed again. His wife, Sissy, and their three children had evacuated to Cyprus Jan. 13, several days before war broke out in the Gulf.

He didn't panic at the sound of the sirens but continued eating, twirling the radio dials to find a news broadcast to determine if the attack was real.

Before he found the news, he cracked open a window shade to see if anything was happening outside.

"What I saw restored my panic," he said. "A dead cat in our front garden was evidence enough! I ran quickly to the sealed room I had prepared two days earlier, this time wearing my gas mask for the first time, certain there had been a chemical or gas attack."

The telephone rang "10 difficult minutes later," and a neighbor told him all was clear. Rogerson later determined the cat likely had been dead at least a day.

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"The story gave us something to laugh about as each person related his experience the next day," said Rogerson.

For millions in Israel, however, the threat of poison gas from Iraq continues to be a very real, non-humorous possibility. Four people, including a child, suffocated when they did not operate their gas masks properly during the first Iraqi attack.

News of the first missile attack came to Rogerson in the early-morning hours of Jan. 19 when his sister called from Summerville, S.C. She told him Cable News Network was reporting Scud missiles fired from Iraq were falling somewhere within Israel.

"After managing to awaken enough to make myself pick up the ringing telephone," he said, "I somehow could not absorb the words."

As he talked on the phone, his doorbell started ringing repeatedly. "My neighbors and their two teen-age children quickly entered, heading toward the (sealed) room. Despite newscasts of the last months and attempts to prepare emotionally and physically, there was an air of sheer panic and disbelief. It took me about 10 minutes to recover my composure," he said later.

Rogerson said his neighbors -- almost all of them Arabs -- have been very tense, especially when sirens sound. "People are trying to conserve food; they don't know how long this will last," he said.

In more normal times, Rogerson has worked with two congregations of Christian believers, one in East Jerusalem and another in Bethlehem, within the area known as the West Bank.

Like other Christian workers in the region, Rogerson worries about how the war will affect Christian ministry. "I'm afraid that the long-term effects of this war will be devastating," he said. As war rages, "My only hope is in Christ and the peace that he gives, which cannot be taken away."

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Baptists in Congress  
back U.S. war effort

By Tom Strode

<sup>CO</sup>  
N-CLC

Baptist Press  
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WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist members of Congress expressed widespread support of the United States' armed forces in the hours following the American-led offensive against Iraq.

A sampling of Southern Baptists in both the Senate and the House of Representatives revealed the following opinions: Regret that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein failed to withdraw troops from Kuwait by the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations Security Council, hopes for a quick resolution of the war, and concern for military personnel and their families. Several said that they were praying for the servicemen and women and their families.

Tennessee's Albert Gore, one of 10 Democratic senators who voted on Jan. 12 to authorize President Bush to use force against Iraq, said, "I believe that Saddam Hussein represents both a clear evil and a clear threat to the United States in a way that absolutely compelled us to respond to him.

"If this man had any compassion for his own people or any intention to avoid this test of will with the United States and with the clear demands of the world community, he has never demonstrated it," Gore said. "He could have demonstrated it before this moment and prevented this action."

Sen. Wendell Ford, D.-Ky., who opposed the resolution permitting the use of force, said, "It is clear that Saddam Hussein has made his most serious miscalculation to date. He has miscalculated the American people's resolve, and he has confused our diversity of opinion over this crisis with division. We are united, and we stand firmly behind President Bush and our servicemen and women in the region."

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Rep. Newt Gingrich, R.-Ga., a proponent of the president's policies in the Persian Gulf, told reporters in his home state that "every American regrets" the need for military action after months of waiting for Hussein to withdraw his troops, according to the Clayton (Ga.) Daily News.

The House minority whip said he is hoping for the establishment of "a post-Saddam government very quickly or a surrender by the Iraqi military in the face of a huge technological mismatch," the paper reported.

Carroll Hubbard, D.-Ky., said from the House floor on Jan. 17, "Mr. Speaker, today is a momentous day for all Americans -- a day of prayer. All of us had hoped for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in the Middle East. However, in recent days it became more and more obvious that Saddam Hussein was not interested in negotiating a settlement."

Hubbard, who voted for the resolution authorizing the use of force, said in concluding his remarks, "Saddam Hussein assumed we were full of rhetoric and lacked the backbone for action. Well, we've made a believer out of Saddam Hussein. The end for Saddam Hussein is near."

Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., sponsored a resolution favoring the continued use of sanctions. It failed, and the House majority leader voted against the directive supported by President Bush. He said shortly after the beginning of Operation Desert Storm, "... my hopes are for a swift and successful conclusion to this war."

Sen. Thad Cochran, R.-Miss., a supporter of the resolution allowing force, said, "Our military forces in the area have performed magnificently. They deserve our congratulations and our support and best wishes in the days and weeks ahead. My hope is that we can see the prompt restoration of peace and security to the region."

A spokesman for Jack Fields, R.-Texas, said that the congressman expressed on the day after the attack that the offensive was necessary because it was clear that Iraq was not going to pull out of Kuwait. Fields voted for the use of force. He said the country should unite behind the president, the spokesman said.

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European Baptists urge Gorbachev  
to deal peacefully with Lithuania

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*N-FMB*

HAMBURG, Germany (BP)--European Baptist Federation leaders have sent a telegram to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev appealing for "a policy of peaceful negotiation" with the breakaway republic of Lithuania.

The telegram followed the death of 13 Lithuanians in a Jan. 13 clash with Soviet troops, who were backing Communist Party loyalists attempting to take control of the republic. Lithuania's legislature declared the republic's independence from Moscow last March.

Baptist leaders depicted the action against "an unarmed people" as "a backward step in the path of democratization which you have been so courageously following and which has won the admiration of the nations of the world."

They urged Gorbachev "to exercise patience and to pursue a policy of peaceful negotiation, however difficult this may be." Such actions, they added, "would send a signal to all involved in the Gulf crisis that justice and peace can be established and maintained without resort to armed force."

The telegram, signed by European Baptist Federation President Peter Barber and General Secretary Karl-Heinz Walter, also assured Gorbachev of Baptists' prayers.

The EBF also sent a telegram to Baptist leaders in the other two independence-seeking Baltic republics, Estonia and Latvia, to assure them of "our love and prayers in these difficult days." Pro-Soviet commandos killed five people Jan. 20 in Latvia.

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Southern Seminary  
helps sister school

F-10 SBT

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary students, faculty and staff have sent more than \$2,000 to Baptist seminarians in Romania to help them cope with critical food shortages in the Eastern European nation.

The bulk of the offering for Bucharest Baptist Theological Seminary was collected following a chapel service at the Louisville, Ky., school. Three student groups, Seminarians United Against Hunger, the Master of Divinity Council and the Student Missions Committee, coordinated the effort.

The seminary was informed about the need in Bucharest by School of Theology Dean Larry McSwain who, along with other Baptist educators, visited Eastern Europe last fall representing the Baptist World Alliance. The president of the Bucharest seminary, Vasile Talpos, is a 1983 Ph.D. graduate of Southern Seminary.

Southern students plan to keep collecting money for the Romanian seminary through the end of February.

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SBC task force encourages  
sensitivity to Arab students

By Chip Alford

N-SSB

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NASHVILLE (BP)--With war raging in the Persian Gulf, the Southern Baptist task force on international students has mailed a special bulletin to directors of Baptist student ministries encouraging special sensitivity to the needs of Arab students studying on American college campuses.

"The members of the task force felt Arab students were going to be facing some intense pressure," said Nell Magee, a member of the group and a consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's student ministry department. "We hope some directors are already involved in meeting the needs of these students, but if not, we hope this will lead them to take action."

The task force, which includes representatives from the Foreign and Home mission boards and the Sunday School Board, was meeting in Nashville when war broke out Jan. 16. The bulletin prepared by the group encourages BSU directors to make contact with the foreign student adviser on their campuses and offer assistance in protecting the students, developing community understanding and forming support groups for Arab students. The task force also suggested the formation of groups to pray for Arab students and their families, American military personnel and their families and for United States students studying abroad, especially in Middle Eastern universities.

Some harassment of Arab students on American campuses already has been reported, according to a spokesman for the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Washington.

Magee said she hopes the war will increase the awareness of need for ministry to international students in America. "We feel this might be a point at which some (BSU) directors who have never really gotten concerned about international students begin to lead their program to greater involvement in international ministry," she said.

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A copy of the bulletin is being mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the SSB bureau of Baptist Press.