

iraq_food_82503

August 23, 2003

Posted: 8/22/03

Iraq workers anticipate arrival of food boxes

By Mark Kelly

International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptist workers in Iraq are excited about the expected late-August arrival of 46,000 boxes of food packed by churches this past spring for hungry families in Iraq.

The workers said they are grateful Southern Baptists cared enough to send a practical demonstration of God's love to Iraqis who are struggling to put their country back together.

"I'm thrilled, because I know how much the Iraqi people have suffered," a missionary said. He cannot be identified because of security concerns. "And I also know what their perceptions of Americans are, and of Christians.

"To have something tangible that we can present to a Muslim family, just to say, 'We love you, God loves you and we want you to have this as a demonstration of that love,' is very significant."

In April, churches all over the United States began filling 70-pound boxes with rice, flour, beans and other food staples. Each box will feed a family of five for about a month. In June, the boxes arrived at ports in Norfolk, Va., and Houston, where they were loaded into containers to be shipped

overseas.

The boxes have left The Netherlands and are expected to arrive in the Middle East in late August to be transported overland into Iraq.

Southern Baptist volunteers and other Christian co-workers will place the food boxes directly into the hands of Iraqi families in September and October.

Collecting 2.4 million pounds of food was a generous demonstration of compassion, another worker in Iraq said.

“I am very pleased and thankful for the response of Southern Baptists to the crisis in Iraq,” he noted. “It makes me proud to be Southern Baptist and for the heritage we have (that is) continuing on in this great and wonderful opportunity.

“The need for prayer is greater than ever now, as we put something tangible in Iraqi families' hands and in their homes. We now need the Lord's presence so that the message of the gospel can go forth—from generosity on that side of the ocean to the hospitality and reception of these Iraqi families—that they would receive these boxes and receive the message of Christ as well.”

The workers in Iraq have requested prayer for several needs:

Safety of the food boxes as they transit stormy seas.

- ◆ Delivery of the boxes into the right hands in Iraq.
- ◆ A proper attitude in delivering the food and receptive hearts to receive it.
- ◆ The volunteers who will help distribute the boxes.

- ◆ That the gesture would result in a network of relationships that will further God's kingdom.
- ◆ Jordanian Baptists, who are using vacation time and personal money to reach out to Iraqis.
- ◆ All believers who are and will be serving in dangerous places.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.