

Pre-emptive war unpopular



Patricia Schoelles, SSJ

The moral life

motion cycles of violence and retaliation. Such action would undermine our firm national intent to eradicate global terrorism."

General Secretary Jim Winkler of the United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society: "The United Methodist Church has called for 'Support for Self Determination and Nonintervention' for all nations (2000 *Book of Resolutions* No. 277). ... We recognize the first moral duty of all nations is to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among nations. United Methodists have a particular duty to speak out against an unprovoked attack. President Bush and Vice-President Cheney are members of our denomination."

In the just-war tradition, pre-emptive strikes have been deemed immoral. In international law and practice, pre-emptive strikes have been deemed illegal and disruptive to international relations. There has never been an unprovoked pre-emptive military action by our government against another sovereign state. If we allow September 11, 2001, to turn us into a warring people so fearful of threats from smaller and weaker nations that we disengage ourselves from the international community, disregard international law and ignore the counsel of our own religious leaders, it is my firm belief that we have indeed embarked on a path of certain self-destruction.

Sister Schoelles is president of St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

Both parties of both houses voted last week to grant authority to the Bush administration to initiate a pre-emptive strike against Iraq.

If you access "morality of pre-emptive strike" on *google.com*, you quickly learn that there are many who think it is wrong to initiate a first strike against Iraq. A host of esteemed leaders have spoken against a pre-emptive strike:

"In a letter to President Bush, Bishop Wilton D. Gregory expressed serious questions about the moral legitimacy of any preemptive, unilateral use of military force to overthrow the government of Iraq as he welcomed the President's efforts to focus the world's attention on the need to address Iraq's repression and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction in defiance of the United Nations."

"Fifty-one heads of American Protestant and Orthodox churches and organizations and of Roman Catholic religious orders today announced opposition to U.S. military action against Iraq. ... (T)he church leaders acknowledged that 'Mr. Hussein poses a threat to his neighbors and to his own people, [but] we nevertheless believe it is wrong ... to launch an attack on Iraq.'"

The presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Mark Hanson: "While we are fully aware of the potential threat posed by the government of Iraq and its leader, I believe it is wrong for the United States to seek to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein with military action. Morally, I oppose it because

is not possible to list all of her accomplishments in one article. I take my computer in hand to mention just one more facet of her work that wasn't mentioned in the article.

Virginia was the founding director of the Diocesan Festival Choir. My wife, Anne, and I were members for 10 years (1978-1987). Membership was interdenominational and open to anyone in the Rochester area. Under her leadership and tutelage, the musical competence of most members increased. Most performances were accompanied by an orchestra — also directed by Virginia.

It is fair to say that — for the years of the organization's existence — many local church choir directors were the beneficiaries of Virginia's DFC efforts, whether they knew it or not. Many DFC members received a level of vocal training that was not available in their own churches. It was a win-win situation. We singers and instrumentalists gained from our experiences with Virginia and our churches got the benefit of our increased musical competence.

It was a great ride while it lasted. Thanks, Virginia!

Richard B. Blankfield
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not know the answer to the Church's questions regarding the "unexplained psychological genesis" of homosexuality (Catechism paragraph 2357). The Church has an ethical and moral obligation to objectively seek truth about this. Homosexual and heterosexual persons should read Scripture to light their path, pray for God's will, read Church and scientific articles, seek continued revelation, and inform their consciences to make moral decisions. Since it was Jesus who gave the Church, through Peter, the ability to bind on earth and therefore in heaven, it is the Church's responsibility to make informed moral decisions and continue to seek revelation if there is anything "unexplained."

Jim Buckheit
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DFC director aided choirs

To the editor:

The September 11 Our Towns section of the *Democrat and Chronicle* carried an extensive, informative, and well written by article by Kevin Bryant Hicks about the many accomplishments of soon-to- retire Sister Virginia Hogan. The readers need to know that it

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