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**Baptist leaders disagree whether Iraq war is 'just'  
By Tony Cartledge and Robert Marus  
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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP) – Southern Baptist speakers say the possible U.S. war on Iraq would be "just" according to historic Christian ethical principles. But former President Jimmy Carter – himself a Baptist – disagreed, saying that Bush's "apparent determination to launch a war against Iraq, without international support, is a violation of these [just war] premises.

The U.S. has sufficient moral cause to attack Iraq, according to speakers at a symposium at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., Feb. 26.

Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern and previously an advisor to former President George H.W. Bush, said the case against Iraq meets all the classical criteria for a just war. Heimbach is widely credited with outlining the just-war doctrine Bush employed during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. However, he cautioned against "regime change" as a valid reason for war.

Carter, in an essay in the March 8 New York Times, said the current conflict does not meet just-war criteria.

"As a Christian and as a president who was severely provoked by international crises, I became thoroughly familiar with the principles of a just war, and it is clear that a substantially unilateral attack on Iraq does not meet these standards," Carter wrote. "This is an almost universal conviction of religious leaders, with the most notable exception of a few spokesmen of the Southern Baptist Convention who are greatly influenced by their commitment to Israel based on eschatological, or final days, theology."

Heimbach told the seminary audience that the two key issues in determining whether this war is just are whether "just cause" exists and whether we have reached the point of war as a last resort.

The problem with relying heavily on just cause is that it can easily be transformed into a crusade ethic, Heimbach said. The United States still has just cause to enforce the 1991 terms of surrender at the end of the first Gulf War, he said, which was a response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. To enter Iraq with the goal of deposing Hussein, however, crosses the line into a crusade-like mentality, he said, seeking to impose American ideals on the Iraqi people.

Heimbach said he believes President Bush has provided sufficient evidence that Hussein is supporting global terrorism, which might provide just cause for a new war, but many others remain unconvinced. Thus, Heimbach said, if the president asked for his advice, "I would recommend that we not focus on what Iraq is doing to support terrorism, but focus on enforcing the terms of the 1991 surrender." Just war is based on actual wrongdoing, Heimbach said, not simply the potential for future wrongdoing.

The problem with defining when conflict becomes the means of "last resort" runs the risk of falling into practical pacifism, Heimbach said, because there can always be more negotiations. When it becomes apparent that the opponent is not negotiating in good faith, it is appropriate to set deadlines and regard the failure to meet them as the point of last resort, Heimbach said.

"We are way past" all reasonable criteria for seeing an impending attack as a last resort, Heimbach said. "Bush has been extraordinarily patient, more than morally necessary, in holding Hussein accountable."

The criteria of last resort depends on clear communication with the adversary and a clear response, not merely "signs of progress and endless negotiations," Heimbach said. Indeed, "failure to proceed after reaching the point of last resort is immoral," he said. "Bush has a moral duty to go to war to enforce the terms of surrender."

But Carter, in his essay, said all other reasonable resorts have not been exhausted. "In the case of Iraq, it is obvious that clear alternatives to war exist," Carter asserted. "These options – previously proposed by our own leaders and approved by the United Nations – were outlined again by the Security Council on Friday," including a beefed-up

weapons-inspection regime.

Carter also said that Bush's plans did not satisfy other criteria of classic Christian just-war theory, including: that the weapons of this war would sufficiently discriminate between combatants and civilians; that its "violence must be proportional to the injury we have suffered"; that the attacking country "must have legitimate authority sanctioned by the society they profess to represent -- namely the U.N.; and that the peace the war establishes "must be a clear improvement over what exists."

Also speaking at the seminary symposium was Richard Land, head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. He concurred with Heimbach on most points but said he believes regime change is a legitimate goal of the war.

Citing what happened when Hitler and Stalin were left unchecked by countries who thought it was not their business to intervene, Land said millions of lives could have been saved by removing them from power. Hussein is already responsible for many deaths, Land said, and must be deposed in order to save the lives of others.

Noting the criticism that the U.S. should not attack without the endorsement of the United Nations, Land said the legitimate authority for sending U.S. soldiers into action resides with the U.S. Congress, not with the U.N. Security Council. Still, the president should not act without congressional approval, Land said.

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**When can a war be considered just?**  
**By Tony Cartledge and Robert Marus**  
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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (ABP) – The concept of “just war” is sometimes identified with fourth-century Christian theologians, but the principle originated in Greek thought and is reflected in the writings of Plato and Aristotle in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., according to Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Christian theologians such as Augustine (fourth-fifth century), Thomas Aquinas (13th century) and Martin Luther and John Calvin (16th century) elaborated on the theory.

During the prelude to the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a detailed memo from Heimbach – then working as an advisor to President George H.W. Bush – led to Bush’s articulation of just-war principles in assembling a coalition of forces to wage war against Iraq.

As the potential for another war with Iraq unfolds, President George W. Bush has again employed just-war terminology in seeking support for the conflict. But critics such as Robert Parham of the Baptist Center for Ethics say he is employing it inconsistently.

The outline for just-war principles – those generally accepted by modern Christian ethicists – enumerates the following essentials for going to war:

- **Just cause:** Just causes for war may include the vindication of justice, the restoration of a just international order that has been violated, the protection of innocent human life, or the restoration of basic human rights, but not the imposition of the victor’s ideals.
- **Competent authority:** only those who are invested with proper authority and responsibility can initiate a just war.
- **Comparative justice:** The moral merit on “our” side must clearly outweigh the moral merit of the other.
- **Right intention:** The purpose of a just war must be limited to obtaining or restoring a just peace. Desires to punish or humiliate the enemy are not proper intentions.
- **Last resort:** All non-violent alternatives must be exhausted before resorting to war, with lethal force being seen as a tragic necessity when other approaches have failed.
- **Probability of success:** No matter how just the cause, war is only justified if there is a good prospect of success.
- **Proportionality of expected results:** The anticipated good to result from the war must be greater than the expected costs of the war.
- **Right spirit:** Even when judged to be necessary, war should be regarded as a tragic and regrettable means for obtaining or restoring a just peace.

Heimbach also listed several principles for the conduct of a just war:

- **Proportionality in the use of force:** No action should be taken that generates more harm than good. Deadly force should be used only to the extent needed to obtain a just objective, and no more.
- **Discrimination:** A distinction must be maintained between combatants and non-combatants.
- **Avoidance of evil means:** No matter how just the cause, the use of “evil means” is prohibited. These include actions

such as executing prisoners, taking hostages, pillaging, raping women, terrorizing civilians, desecrating holy places and slaughtering non-combatants.

- Good faith: As much as possible, the enemy must be treated in good faith to keep open the possibility of reconciliation.

The Baptist Center for Ethics' Parham added that simply satisfying some of the criteria listed above does not a just war make. "In order for a war to be just, all principles of just-war theory must be passed," Parham said. "If a war fails any one principle, it cannot be considered a just war."



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## **Christian leaders propose 'third way' plan for Iraq**

**By Robert Marus**

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WASHINGTON (ABP) – In a last-ditch effort to prevent war, a diverse group of Christian leaders opposed to President Bush's plan to attack Iraq has put forth an alternative plan that they say avoids pitfalls on both sides of the war debate. The leaders, representing several Protestant groups, issued a six-point plan March 7 for disarming Iraq without resorting to war.

"The delegation hopes that by presenting this six-point religious initiative, the world may avoid a war that could cause significant casualties, further destabilization of the Middle East and possibly fuel additional acts of terrorism," said a statement accompanying the plan. "While at the same time, we hope to bring a tyrant to justice, provide aid to the Iraqi people and bring lasting peace to the region."

The plan's drafters have reportedly said their proposal creates a "third way" between simple anti-war pacifism and hawkishness on Iraq by endorsing one of Bush's primary goals – the removal of Saddam from power – without risking thousands of Iraqi lives.

The plan was developed after national leaders of mainline and evangelical Protestant groups met with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London on Feb. 18. Blair, a devout Anglican and also Bush's chief international ally in proposing a war to disarm Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, discussed the theological implications of war with the leaders.

Signatories to the plan include Dan Weiss, the recently retired general secretary of the American Baptist Churches; Jim Wallis, editor of the evangelical journal *Sojourners*; John Chane, the Episcopal Bishop of Washington; Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and Melvin Talbert, ecumenical officer for the United Methodist Council of Bishops.

Bush so far has declined to meet with the group, even though it includes the ecumenical officer of the United Methodist Church, the denomination to which both Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney belong. The only anti-war religious leader with whom Bush has met so far is Cardinal Pio Laghi, a Catholic envoy sent from Rome by Pope John Paul II. Laghi met with Bush on March 5.

The plan's six points are:

- Remove Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath political party from power by establishing a United Nations tribunal that would indict Saddam for past "war crimes and crimes against humanity." The leaders believe such a move would isolate Saddam and "indicate the United States' sole interest lay in him and his weapons, and not in harming the Iraqi people." However, plan drafters admit that the proposal does not provide a specific way to oust Saddam.
- Institute a beefed-up U.N. inspection regime of "coercive disarmament." Similar to plans proposed by other world leaders, this would increase the number of inspectors and back them up with military force. However, critics of such plans have said disarmament will be impossible as long as Iraqi officials have the ability to move weapons from one inspection site to another or hide weapons in civilian facilities.
- Foster a democratic "post-Saddam Iraq governed temporarily by the UN and backed if necessary by international armed forces, rather than a U.S. military occupation." The leaders say this would defuse charges of American imperialism associated with Bush's plan to install a provisional authority over Iraq in the aftermath of war.
- Provide humanitarian relief to the people of Iraq now rather than waiting until after a war. International economic sanctions against Iraq for the past 12 years and corruption by Saddam's regime have contributed to significant economic hardships in the country. "These efforts would signal the international community's commitment to working in partnership with the people of Iraq in the rebuilding of their country, and make it clear that the world cares about them, while their ruler does not," the plan's drafters said.

– Recommit to an Israeli-Palestinian peace plan. "The U.S. and the U.K. must intensify their efforts, and publicly acknowledge their commitment to a peace plan that results in a two-state solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine," the plan said. The plan must call for a Palestinian state to be in place by 2005. Such a component of a peace plan, the leaders said, would defuse international charges that the U.S. was doing the bidding of Israel by attacking Iraq.

– Reinvigorate the international war against terror. The leaders contend that, although Bush has cast the Iraqi war in terms of helping prevent terrorism, it is actually distracting from the hunt for al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden and is jeopardizing the international cooperation necessary for winning such a war.



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## **Baptist Seminary of Kentucky holds inaugural convocation**

**By Trennis Henderson**

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LEXINGTON, Ky. (ABP) --Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, which launched its first year of classes last fall, held an inaugural convocation March 9 at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington.

Greg Earwood, elected seminary president in 2001, told a crowd of more than 400 people at the convocation that factors driving the creation of the school included "students seeking ministry preparation and churches seeking prepared ministers."

Emphasizing that "we affirm our Baptist heritage as a treasured gift from those who have preceded us," Earwood said, "The seminary is founded on historically held Baptist principles: the authority of the Scriptures, the priesthood of all believers, the separation of church and state, local church autonomy, freedom of conscience under the Lordship of Christ and an affirmation of both the sovereignty of God and the free will of humankind."

The seminary, which opened with 14 students, remains "in the infancy stage," Earwood told the Western Recorder later, "but we have a solid base of support that is growing." The seminary, housed at Calvary Baptist Church, lists 24 "charter churches" across the state that provide various levels of financial support.

Earwood explained last year that the school was established to help provide "more moderate, progressive opportunities" for seminary education in the region. Calling the school's first academic year "a solid beginning on which we can build," Earwood said, "We want to appeal to the center of who Baptists are in this region."

More than a dozen moderate Baptist seminaries, divinity schools and Baptist-studies programs have been started in recent years, as the six traditional Southern Baptist Convention seminaries have become increasingly conservative. However, none of the new schools is in Kentucky, home of the oldest SBC seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. The nearest are in Winston-Salem, N.C. and Richmond, Va.

Convocation speaker William Turner, former pastor of Central Baptist Church in Lexington, shared a series of "convictional incentives that helped birth this dream [of Baptist Seminary of Kentucky] and now help sustain it."

Those incentives, he said, include a history worth remembering, a heritage worth preserving, a task worth doing and a community worth gathering.

"Ours is a heritage which affirms the authority of Scripture alongside the obligation to be responsible interpreters of Scripture," said Turner, retired pastor of South Main Baptist Church in Houston.

Affirming such historic Baptist principles as religious freedom and church-state separation, he added, "We fully understand that words like 'faith' and 'forced' don't belong in the same sentence."

Citing concerns over "recent Southern Baptist history," Turner declared, "We've watched a cadre of self-proclaimed 'godly men' work to turn theological education into indoctrination. ... Thank God for a place like Baptist Seminary of Kentucky where academic freedom lives, so that spiritual and intellectual integrity might live and thrive as well."



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**Alabama church advocates yard crosses for Easter****By Cheryl Sloan Wray****Associated Baptist Press - [www.abpnews.com](http://www.abpnews.com)****March 11, 2003****Volume: 03-25-3490**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) – For several years, Gene and Lynda Murray of Hoover celebrated Easter in a way that displayed their faith to their neighbors. They erected a six-foot cross in their front yard, testifying to passersby that Easter had a significant spiritual meaning to their family.

The Murrays are now encouraging Christians of many different denominations to display similar crosses at their homes. The couple first took their idea to their home church, Green Valley Baptist Church in Hoover, and have since offered it to area churches of many different denominations. As a result, they expect to see thousands of crosses displayed throughout the Birmingham area during the week leading up to Easter.

"We had mentioned the idea to some friends who are members of a different church and they encouraged us to go talk to their pastor," Murray said. "As God called us to go out and talk to more pastors about it, we were overwhelmed by the responses we received. The Lord truly went before us and prepared the pastors' hearts for our message. Every one of the pastors said, 'Yes, let's do it,' within minutes of us being with them."

Murray's own pastor, Jeff Vanlandingham, immediately supported the idea. The project is so important, he said, because it gives Christians a simple way to proclaim their faith. "We are really praying that it takes off, and we think it can," he said. "It's a project that both small and large churches can do."

The symbolism of the project is important, Vanlandingham said. In a time when war may be imminent and so many issues bombard Christians culturally, the cross is a universal symbol for the hope of Christianity.

"This project shows the importance of the cross to us," he said. "The cross stands for Jesus' obedience to the Father, it shows the sacrifice given for our sins. It shows the great gift that we have as Christians."

The churches represented include Presbyterian, Methodist, Assembly of God, Catholic, Southern Baptist and others. Seven out-of state churches have even expressed interest in the project, leading to a current total of 25,000 crosses.

At the Metropolitan Church of God, pastor Raymond Culpepper was instantly enthusiastic about the project. "He prayed right then and there, telling God that we wanted to see thousands of crosses throughout the area," Lynda Murray said.

Each church is responsible for its own crosses, with individual churches developing different ideas about how to accomplish the cross-building and distribution. Ideally, each family will have a cross to display. The crosses, which are made from 1-inch-by-4-inch rough boards, cost no more than \$1.50 each to make.

The crosses typically are set in the yard on Palm Sunday and remain through Easter. Murray encourages participants to keep their crosses plain and simple, without paint or fancy adornments. "We want it to be as much like Jesus' cross as possible. It was a simple wooden cross," he said.

Once the Easter season is over, "The crosses could be retained by each family and used again during subsequent seasons," Murray said.

In talking with different pastors and church members, Murray was struck by the creativity used by congregations. At one Catholic church, the priest said that the Knights of Columbus and the Boy Scout troop would build their crosses. At Bluff Park Baptist Church, the idea developed for the RA group to build them. At the Church at Brook Hills, an existing workshop will be used to construct the 4,000 crosses needed by that congregation.

"This gives Christians the chance to be an example during this time," Murray said. "It is a beautiful emphasis on the true meaning of the Easter season."

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