

"Our students need to know the kind of Baptist that CBF is, and CBF needs to know our students," said Elizondo, academic dean for the theological school. "I see it as a justice issue. You believe in justice. Hispanics deserve the best in the theological education. I look forward to reaching that goal together."

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, based in Atlanta, is a network of moderate Baptist churches and individuals. With an annual budget of \$16 million, CBF supports 125 missionaries in the United States and abroad and funds a variety of educational and ministry organizations.

Through the new partnership, the Hispanic Baptist Theological School will provide training and leadership development for Hispanic pastors and churches, as well as continuing education opportunities for those already serving. The seminary also will lead conferences on how to reach Hispanics.

The Coordinating Council voted unanimously to ratify the church-planting partnership and recommend its approval to the full CBF membership.

"I'm here with CBF because CBF is about love and building," said Moraga, coordinator of the CBF Hispanic network. "God brings people together for a reason. Who knows? Maybe God brought us together for a divine appointment."

The Fellowship has long maintained a network of Hispanic churches and has partnered on several projects among Hispanic Baptists.

"A partnership has to be good for everybody or isn't good for anybody," said Bill Bruster, CBF coordinator of networks and partnerships. "This partnership can be a win-win for everybody."

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Baptist missionary killed
in Philippine airport blast

By Greg Warner

DAVAO CITY, Philippines (ABP) - A Southern Baptist missionary was killed, and another missionary and her two children were injured, when a bomb exploded at an airport in the southern Philippines March 4.

William P. Hyde, 59, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, died in surgery from severe head and leg injuries. Slightly injured were Barbara Wallis Stevens, 33, of Willard, Mo., her 4-year-old daughter, Sarah, and her 10-month-old son, Nathan. Her husband, Mark, was not injured in the attack.

The Philippine government blamed terrorism for the blast that killed at least 19 people and injured 147 outside the arrival terminal at the airport in Davao City, the Philippines' second largest city. The bomb, reportedly hidden in a backpack, ripped through a rain shelter where travelers and others huddled to escape a downpour.

Hyde, a 24-year missions veteran, was at the airport to pick up the Stevens family, which had just arrived from a trip to Manila, when the bomb went off. "I just heard it explode to my side," Barbara Stevens told Associated Press. "I was carrying my infant son so I grabbed my daughter and picked her up and ran away. I was afraid there could be more bombs."

Hyde and his wife, Lyn Gage Hyde, were appointed by the International Mission Board in 1978. They have two grown sons. Barbara and Mark Stevens were appointed in September 2000. He is a church planter. She serves as a church and home outreach worker.

Hyde is believed to be the only American among the dead, which included 10 men, seven women, one boy and one girl. With many of the injured in serious condition, officials fear the death toll could rise.

"Our hearts go out to these families and their coworkers," said Larry Cox, a spokesman for the International Mission Board. "We are moving quickly to assist the missionaries affected by this tragedy."

The attack came two months after three Southern Baptist missionaries were killed in a terrorist attack at a mission hospital in the Middle Eastern country of Yemen. A Muslim extremist reportedly confessed to that Dec. 30 attack.

Officials were less certain who was responsible for the Philippine bombing. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which has been blamed for other recent attacks in the Philippines, denied responsibility for the airport bombing, according to the Associated Press. The rebels have been fighting for a separate Muslim homeland in the impoverished southern Philippines for three decades.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said several men were detained in connection with the blast, which occurred at 5:20 p.m. local time. Police said the bomb smashed windows in the nearby terminal building and could be heard three miles away. About an hour later, a second blast 18 miles to the north injured three people.

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Federal appeals court refuses
to reopen 'under God' ruling

By Robert Marus

SAN FRANCISCO (ABP) -- Public-school teachers in nine Western states will be barred from leading their classes in the current version of the Pledge of Allegiance until the U.S. Supreme Court says otherwise. That's the effect of a decision of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals announced Feb. 28.

The San Francisco-based court's full panel of 24 judges voted to decline a review of an earlier decision by a panel of three of the judges. In that 2-1 vote, the panel declared the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance to be an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. The opinion also outlawed recitation of the words in public-school classrooms.

The June decision provoked public outrage from many Americans, earning swift condemnation from the White House, both houses of Congress and California Gov. Gray Davis. The judges quickly put a hold on enforcement of their decision, pending the outcome of requests by the federal Department of Justice and a Sacramento-area school district that a larger panel rehear the case.

Nine of the circuit's 24 judges dissented from the most recent decision not to rehear the case. In an unusual move, six of those magistrates issued a vehement dissenting opinion.

"With grim insistence," they wrote, "the majority...continues to stand by its original error -- that voluntary recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public school violates the establishment clause [of the Constitution] because, according to the two-judge panel majority, it is 'a religious act.' Common sense would seem to dictate otherwise, as the public and political reaction should by now have made clear."

The dissent, written by Judge Diarmuid O'Scannlain, said if recitation of the pledge constituted an impermissible religious act in school, then so should the recitation of the Declaration of Independence, the

Constitution, and other historic national documents that contain references to God.

But in a separate opinion concurring with the full panel's decision, Judge Stephen Reinhardt lashed out at what he called "a disturbingly wrongheaded approach to constitutional law" in O'Scannlain's dissent.

"The dissent suggests that this court should be able to conclude that the panel's holding was erroneous by observing the 'public and political reaction' to its decision," wrote Reinhardt, one of two judges who issued the original decision. "The Bill of Rights is, of course, intended to protect the rights of those in the minority against the temporary passions of a majority which might wish to limit their freedoms or liberties."

O'Scannlain responded to Reinhardt's complaints in a footnote to his opinion: "My disagreement with the panel majority has nothing to do with bending to the will of an outraged populace, and everything to do with the fact that Judge Goodwin and Judge Reinhardt misinterpret the Constitution and 40 years of Supreme Court precedent. That most people understand this makes the decision no less wrong. It doesn't take an Article III judge to recognize that the voluntary recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public school does not violate the First Amendment."

The case originated with an atheist father, Michael Newdow, who filed suit against the Elk Grove Unified School District. Newdow claimed the school district violated his daughter's religious liberty by forcing her to listen as her government-paid teacher lead her class in recitation of the pledge.

In the June decision, the divided three-judge panel originally ruled that not only was recitation of the pledge in public schools unconstitutional, but so was the 1954 act of Congress that added the words "under God" to the pledge in the first place. The pledge, originally written in 1892, did not contain the phrase for the first six decades of its existence.

However, an amended opinion issued with the Feb. 28 decision struck that portion of the original ruling.

Most Supreme Court observers expect the case to be accepted by that panel next year, and Attorney General John Ashcroft has said the federal government would appeal the case. The high court has previously addressed government endorsement of generalized religious references -- what Justice William Brennan once famously termed "ceremonial deism" -- as not violating the First Amendment's bar on government establishment of religion. However, those earlier opinions are not binding on lower courts.

The case is Newdow v. U.S. Congress.

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