

in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2823

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as cosponsor of H.R. 2823.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

SALUTING MR. TAUZIN'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF LOUISIANA MIS- SIONARY CHARLES SONGE

(Mr. SCHAEFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. SCHAEFER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the efforts of one of our distinguished colleagues, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN], in securing the release from Russia of Rev. Charles Songe, a Christian missionary from Houma, LA.

Mr. Songe was arrested in Russia last year on charges of violating currency laws. However, the nature of his case indicates the real reason behind his arrest was the Russian Government continuing to harass him. Due to the serious nature of these charges and the hostility shown to Mr. Songe by the Russian Government because of his religious activities, Mr. TAUZIN swung into action, appealing to the United States State Department and to Vice President GORE.

Mr. TAUZIN spearheaded a joint letter to Russian officials which I signed as well as others. These efforts were richly rewarded when a Russian judge imposed a suspended 3-year sentence.

I want to congratulate Mr. TAUZIN today for his fierce devotion to the principle of freedom of religion in this country, one of the cornerstones of it.

I would also like to say that this is just one way that we, as Members of Congress, can satisfactorily help many, many people who are constituents throughout the country.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following articles:

[From the Houma, LA Courier, Apr. 12, 1996]

THE BEGINNING OF THE END IS FINALLY HERE
FOR MISSIONARY

(By Dawn Crouch)

The Rev. Charles Songe is expected to return to Houma Sunday, ending a three-year odyssey that placed the Christian missionary at the center of cultural, religious and economic whirlwinds sweeping across Russia.

"He's on his way home," said Ken Johnson, a spokesman for U.S. Rep Billy Tauzin, R-Checkbay.

Johnson said he talked to Songe this morning before the Houma missionary boarded a train to Moscow.

"He was ebullient," Johnson said. "Clearly, he seemed as if he'd seen an angel. He just said how excited he was for this long ordeal to be finally over and how important it was for him to be united with his family and friends. He said he loved his family so much and was thankful that all this worked out."

In May, the Houma missionary was arrested in the town of Saransk on charges that he paid for goods and services using American dollars rather than Russian rubles.

Last week, Russian Judge Tatyana Yelina imposed a suspended three-year prison sentence and permitted him to leave the country voluntarily. Songe, 38, had faced the prospect of spending the rest of his life in jail until U.S. officials, led by Tauzin, waged a complex diplomatic effort to secure his release and return.

A Russian bureaucrat had refused to grant Songe an exit visa earlier this week, posing a potential last-minute hitch that could prevent the missionary from returning home. But Songe received a letter this morning from Yelina, who assured bureaucrats the missionary's case had been resolved.

"She assured the bureaucrats that they would not be held liable for cutting him loose," Johnson said.

After receiving his visa, Songe went to Russian police, who returned the property they had seized from him, including a journal of financial transactions that was used as evidence against him.

Songe's train ride from Saransk will take about 12 hours. He plans to board a plane in Moscow at 7 a.m. Saturday, arriving in New York that night. After a brief stop in Atlanta, Songe is expected to arrive at New Orleans International Airport at 5:30 p.m. Sunday aboard Delta Airlines Flight 2063. An entourage of relatives, church members and friends is expected to greet him, including Tauzin, who plans to fly in from Washington.

"It's been an extraordinary odyssey filled with happiness, sadness, disappointing setbacks and some major successes," Johnson said this morning. "I guess there's something to be said for the power of prayer."

IN THE BEGINNING

It all began when Songe, his wife Tina and their three children, members of Living Word Church in Houma, bought plane tickets to Russia in June 1993. Less than two years before, the Soviet hammer and sickle had been taken down from the Kremlin, marking the end of communist domination.

Charles and Tina Songe said this historic time offered a unique opportunity to spread the word of God as they understood it, in a country where religious freedom had been repressed for decades. Songe recalled those intentions in a final plea before Judge Tatyana Yelina and the two-member jury that heard his case.

"We came here to bless the people with the word of God, not to cause trouble," Songe said he told the judge.

But trouble was what he found, much of it having less to do with his own circumstances than with the larger political and social upheaval swirling around him.

After the fall of the Soviet Union's Iron Curtain of secrecy and censorship, chaotic winds of new-found freedom raced like wildfire across Russia. The country held its first truly free elections. A free press actively reported news of the nation and the world as its members saw fit.

Free-market reforms transformed a state-controlled economy into privatized industries. Many failed shortly after springing to life. Russia's currency, the ruble, was no longer subsidized and lost much of its value.

For seven decades, the government had tried to root out religious spirit and replace it with an atheism that set humanity, not

God, as the master of its own destiny. One result of this new religious liberty was the opening of borders to foreign faiths for the first time since 1917.

The Songes arrived among many missionaries who flooded the Russian provinces, only too happy to do their part.

After reaching Moscow, the Songes traveled 200 miles southeast by train to Saransk, capital of the former Mordvinian Republic, now a region of Russia. The industrial town of 400,000, rooted in coal mining, sits on the banks of the Insar River in the Volga uplands. At first, the major and deputy mayor invited the Songes to locate in the town, and they quickly began their ministry.

But they were not as welcome as they thought. One of the most unwelcoming groups for Western missionaries is the Russian Orthodox Church, scholars say. The church had been the state religion under the czars prior to the rise of the Soviet Union, and its leaders longed to restore its pre-eminence in Russian society. Many Russian Orthodox church leaders in Saransk and throughout the country feel threatened by the increasing presence of Western missionaries, seeing them as religious and cultural competition.

The missionaries contend they are not trying to compete with Orthodox Church. Their following consisted mainly of young people, some of whom felt disconnected from the archaic language and rituals of Orthodox services.

LAYING A FOUNDATION

The Songes, working through an international missionary group called Global Strategies, built the Saransk Christian Center from the ground up. On weekends, the couple joined other missionaries, playing acoustic guitar and singing hymns on street corners.

As passersby stopped to listen, the Songes invited them to visit their small church for prayer and Bible discussions. Some accepted; others shunned the missionaries for their different religious beliefs. At its peak, the church had 150 members, but the number dropped by at least two-thirds as Songe's legal troubles dragged on.

On the night of last May 16, as the couple celebrated their 14th wedding anniversary, 11 Russian federal agents and two witnesses crowded at their apartment's front door, flashing a search warrant, the Songes said.

Through a translator, the agents demanded financial records and answers to questions. Items were confiscated, including the journal in which Tina had recorded all the family's purchases since arriving in Russia.

The next day, Charles Songe was arrested and charged with 74 counts of violating Russian currency laws. Each charge carries a maximum of 10 years in prison; 740 years total. The journal became a key piece of evidence in the legal proceedings that followed.

Russian media focused attention on the couple's plight, and Tina began to fear she would be charged as well. In July, the Songes' daughter, 13-year-old Heidi, required medical attention for a minor ailment and returned to Houma, where she remained with relatives. Tina and the Songes' two other children, Jonathan, 7, and Rene, 11, returned to Houma in August.

CHURCH AND STATE

Almost from the start, U.S. officials and members of Songe's church in Houma expressed grave concerns. Johnson suggested that Russian authorities might have singled Songe out because of his religious convictions.

"Our suspicions of religious persecution are fact, not fantasy," Johnson said in November. "Russian officials are flexing their muscles, showing other missionaries that

they aren't welcome. A number of Russian leaders have admitted to the United States embassy that foreign missionaries have worn out their welcome."

Experts on the new Russian legal system agree that this was more than idle speculation. Foreign missionaries, seen by some Russian officials as spiritual predators in a land whose values and norms were undergoing rapid and dizzying change, were prohibited by an August 1993 version of the Russian Law on Freedom of Religion.

A provision of the Russian Constitution adopted by popular vote in December of that same year, however, made the ban moot, since broader religious freedom to all sects was granted—and protected. Attitudes die harder than laws, however, in any society. And the attitudes that sparked the missionary prohibitions—especially strong in provinces and towns removed from the urban centers of Moscow and St. Petersburg—remain.

Remote areas of any country—including the United States—are more prone to discretionary enforcement of laws, and Saransk is no different. The laws in Russia governing use of currency forbid the use of foreign currency—dollars included—for the purchase of goods or services.

Laws against using foreign currency were strengthened in about 1992 as a means of boosting the value of a plummeting ruble, experts on the post-Soviet legal system said. Greater devaluation of the ruble would mean inflation—which can have a disastrous effect on any economy.

Vratislav Techota, an adjunct professor of Russian law at Columbia University School of Law in New York, is among several experts who said that the currency law, with which Songe was charged with violating, is widely ignored.

"This is not a criminal offense in most cases," Techota said. "This is an administrative offense. Russia strictly regulates the circulation of foreign currency. It is not forbidden to bring the foreign currency into the country, but to bring the rubles out. You can exchange foreign currency for rubles at authorized banks."

Johnson is now convinced the currency charges were a ploy designed to harass Songe out of the country—and send a message.

"The case confirmed to me there is always another side to the story, and as a journalist, we always strive to get both sides. In this case we were getting it just from the embassy and the Russians—that he was guilty," said Johnson, a former news reporter. "Guilty of what? Guilty of breaking a law that everyone breaks or guilty of being a Christian in a country that didn't want him there?"

WATCHFUL EYES

Parts of Songe's ordeal reads like a spy novel. In May, he was placed under house arrest and prohibited from leaving Saransk. He and his wife, their landlord, a translator and fellow church members were interrogated by the FSB, Russia's equivalent of the United States' CIA. U.S. officials said the missionary feared his phones were being tapped, e-mail transmissions monitored and movements closely watched by Russian police.

One Friday night in February, Songe was attacked by two men as he walked along a Saransk street on his way to a prayer meeting. U.S. officials sought police protection.

"We have urged Charles to move into a new apartment and to have one or more church members staying with him at all times," Johnson said after the incident. "Charles' case is in the newspapers and on the TV. People know that his church at home sends him money. We suspect that someone was trying to cash in on this."

Songe's release rested heavily on diplomatic efforts. Early on, American officials

reported trouble penetrating the Russian bureaucracy in an effort to open negotiations. After weeks passed with little progress, Tauzin appealed to Tom Pickering, American ambassador to Russia; and Rep. Ben Gilman, R-New York, head of the House International Relations Committee.

In September, Pickering sent a senior-level diplomat to Saransk. Tauzin also brought the case to the attention of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Vice President Al Gore.

A LETTER FROM ON HIGH

By mid-October, a plea bargain was being arranged, and Tauzin's office said it was optimistic Songe could return home for Thanksgiving. Pickering appointed Richard Miles, the first ambassador to the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, to travel to Saransk and, as Johnson described it, "close the deal."

Back home, the family cautiously retained hopes that Songe would be home to celebrate his birthday Nov. 27.

"If this doesn't work, there will only be God," Tina, 37, said.

U.S. officials remained optimistic, but negotiations, dragged on. Russian authorities said the case would continue past Christmas.

At Tauzin and Pickering's request, two of the most powerful government officials in America sent a letter to Songe on Dec. 22. Senate Majority Leader and Republican presidential hopeful Bob Dole, along with House Speaker Newt Gingrich, said they were following the case and expressed hope for Songe's speedy return home.

"As American families all across the country celebrate this joyous season, we know how difficult it must be for you to be away from your loved ones," the Republican leaders wrote. "But please take heart that you are not alone. Members of Congress, as well as Americans around the nation, have you in their prayers."

HEADING FOR TRIAL

Efforts to negotiate a plea bargain failed, so officials focused on preparing Songe for trial. On March 22, the week-long proceedings against Songe and five other defendants began.

The prosecution's key witness was Oleg Kruchenkin, a Russian student who befriended the Songes early on. They said that later he turned against them. Kruchenkin reportedly described Charles Songe as the "ringleader of an illegal currency operation."

Songe pleaded "guilty in part," declaring that although he exchanged the money, he's been unaware that the transactions were illegal.

On April 3, Songe was convicted but given probation and allowed to return home voluntarily. The others on trial with him also were spared prison sentences.

Back home, a chorus of "hallelujahs" greeted Tina Songe as she stood before almost 100 members of Houma's Living Word Church, who gathered for a prayer service hours after learning that her husband's freedom was won.

Tina Songe noted that some had worried about the case greatly, but her faith in God kept her strong.

"I never lost a night of sleep during this, but I know some people would come to me and say, 'I woke up in the night a couple of times and had to pray for Charles,'" she said.

Both Charles and Tina plan to continue their missionary work, perhaps traveling abroad once again.

"My one regret is that I didn't know the law," Charles Songe said in a telephone interview last week from Russia. "If I ever do it again, I will make sure to inform myself and be careful to observe that country's customs."

[From the Houma, LA Courier, Apr. 15, 1996]

CHARLES SONGE RETURNS HOME—ORDEAL ENDS FOR HOUMA MISSIONARY

(By Dawn Crouch)

NEW ORLEANS.—More than 200 well-wishers bearing banners and singing joyous songs greeted Houma missionary Charles Songe at the airport Sunday as he ended this three-year Russian odyssey.

"I was told there would be a lot of people, but when you come out into a place like this, you try to be prepared but you can never be prepared," Songe, clearly overwhelmed, told the crowd outside Gate 15-D at New Orleans International Airport.

Songe, 38, caught a train to Moscow on Friday for the first step in his journey back home. When his flight touched down here Sunday, his wife, Tina, and the couple's three children boarded the plane to welcome Songe before he emerged.

"We're just so thrilled that the separation is over," Tina Songe said beforehand. "It's like the closing of a chapter in our lives and the beginning of another. I knew that God was going to bring him home. It was just a matter of being patient enough for that to happen."

It was the first time Songe saw his wife and three children since he was charged with breaking Russian money-exchange laws 11 months ago in Saransk, where he had worked since 1993 organizing a Christian church.

Accused of buying goods and services with U.S. dollars, Songe was charged in May with 74 counts of currency violations, each carrying up to 10 years in prison.

Songe's wife, son Jonathan, 7; and daughters Renae, 11; and Heidi, 13; were allowed to leave Russia soon after his arrest.

Embracing his teary eyed wife, Songe emerged from the plane with his beige buttoned-down shirt half untucked and loosened gray tie. He then hugged his mother, whom he hasn't seen since he left for Russia. The crowd sang "Celebrate Jesus" as Songe embraced and greeted family, friends and members of Houma's Living Word Church.

Before reaching the end of the walkway, Songe met U.S. Rep. Billy Tauzin, R-Chackbay, who had flown in from Washington to greet the missionary. Tauzin introduced himself and, without words, Songe clinched the congressman's fist. The two men held their hands above the crowd as Songe said "I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for Billy Tauzin."

Tauzin helped lead diplomatic efforts to secure Songe's return and release. The congressman enlisted the help of several top U.S. and Russian officials after Songe was arrested in May. Both Tauzin and his spokesman, Ken Johnson, kept in contact with the missionary several times a week as the case dragged on.

Tauzin repeated his contention that Russian authorities prosecuted Songe more for his religious beliefs than money-exchange laws, which experts have confirmed are selectively enforced.

"He was out there preaching the gospel of the Lord and doing his work and he was doing nothing wrong that any other citizen wouldn't do in Russia," Tauzin said. "If this wasn't a case of religious persecution, I've never seen one."

Tauzin said the Russian authorities were using Songe to send a message to missionaries that they are not wanted in the country.

"This was not just about you," Tauzin told Songe. "This was about every citizen who wants to do missionary work in other countries."

Tina Songe, carrying a batch of white roses given to her husband by a friend, held

Charles' arm as the couple thanked the people who prayed for them during the long ordeal. Songe also exclaimed at such a joyous homecoming.

Eleven-year-old Renae planned to be the first to hug her father. But, she said, "Mom got to do that. I didn't mind. The first thing I did was sing a song I wrote for him."

Renae said she was too startled to cry the first time she saw her father, but her song, "Praise God," allowed her to express her overwhelming emotions.

"I didn't cry and neither did Heidi or Jonathan. But my mom just grabbed him and cried," the girl said. "I feel like I've gone to the toy store and gotten my daddy as a gift."

Songe first touched American soil Saturday night after his 17-hour flight from Moscow landed in New York. Songe said he was too tired that night to do anything but call his family and sleep. He woke the next morning and ate an early breakfast of eggs, bacon, hash browns, orange juice and coffee.

"It was great," he said. I haven't had a meal like that in years."

Songe ate his second meal in America since his return in a restaurant with Tina and the children Sunday night in New Orleans.

"It's fantastic to see cars, nice cars. You can't see that in Russia," he said. "There is just a special air that tells you you're in America."

COMMUNICATION FROM THE HONORABLE DAVID E. SKAGGS, MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable DAVID E. SKAGGS, Member of Congress:

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
April 15, 1996.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: This letter notifies you, pursuant to Rule L [50] of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that a subpoena issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado in the case of United States v. Abbey was mailed to me at my Westminster, Colorado, district office.

I have been advised by the Office of the General Counsel of the House that the method of service of the subpoena did not comply with Rule 17(d) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. I have asked the Office of General Counsel to so advise the attorney who mailed the subpoena to me.

Sincerely yours,

DAVID E. SKAGGS.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

IN RECOGNITION OF NEAL WHITENER HAHN, JR., AND THE CHARLES GRAY MORGAN VFW POST, GREENVILLE, NC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, on April 25, 1996, the Charles Gray Morgan Veter-

ans of Foreign Wars Post, in Greenville, NC, will celebrate their 50th anniversary by recognizing their charter members. They, like all of our veterans, have made great sacrifices to protect the American way of life.

Mr. Speaker, what stands out in my mind, is that this generation of veterans, gave so much for their country and asked for so little in return. They answered their country's call to arms, fought bravely on foreign battlefields, and returned home to work hard, and build strong families. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize one of these selfless individuals in particular, Neal Whitener Hahn, Jr., of Greenville, NC.

Mr. Hahn was born in Kinston, NC, on September 7, 1919. Raised with his two brothers and one sister, Mr. Hahn lived most of his younger life in Wilmington, NC. He is married to his wife of 50 years, Helen, and together they have raised four children.

In 1938, as WW II loomed in the horizon, Mr. Hahn joined the North Carolina National Guard, Company A, 105th Medical Battalion. He was trained as a medic. On September 16, 1940, he was inducted into the U.S. Army and stationed at Fort Jackson, SC. He spent the next 4 years training new troops. On February 12, 1944, Mr. Hahn was ordered overseas. Ten days later he landed in Scotland, where he trained for several months. On June 10, 1944, his unit landed at Omaha and Red Beach as part of the Allied invasion of France.

Mr. Hahn spent the next 337 days on the front lines, as a combat medic. He received five battle stars during that time. On January 10, 1945, he was wounded in Belgium, during the Battle of the Bulge, and was awarded the Purple Heart. Then, on April 12, 1945, Mr. Hahn was awarded the Silver Star for Valor, the military's second highest award for bravery. The following is an excerpt of the official citation:

Neil W. Hahn, Jr., Medical Department, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 21 December, 1944, in Belgium. When they learned that men were lying seriously wounded in an open field, across a river, Private Hahn waded through icy currents of the river, and crawled for one hundred yards through intense enemy fire to the casualties. Finding that the wounded men were unable to move, Private Hahn and his comrade gave first aid and made three trips to evacuate them through the enemy fire and across the river. Their great heroism and unselfish devotion to duty, saved the wounded men, from death through wounds or exposure.

Mr. Speaker, what is even more remarkable, is that Mr. Hahn never actually received some of his military decorations and awards. For 50 years, this humble man kept quiet, never asking our Government for his medals. To Mr. Hahn, the medals were not important. What is important is that he served his country with courage and honor. Now, in conjunction with their 50th anniversary, the VFW Post in Greenville will conduct a special ceremony to finally present to Mr. Hahn all of the medals he has earned and so clearly deserves.

Mr. Speaker, Neal Hahn is certainly not alone, in deserving our recognition. I stand here today and salute all of our veterans, for their dedication to duty, for risking their lives to protect our families, and for their continued commitment to our way of life. Mr. Hahn, you, and men and women like yourself are the real heroes in our Nation. To Neal Hahn and veterans everywhere, I say, thank you for your dedication to our Nation.

□ 1515

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

FINALLY, CORRIDOR H FOR WEST VIRGINIA REGION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk today about a project that is very important not only to my State of West Virginia but indeed to this entire region, and that is corridor H.

Corridor H is a major four-lane road that has been on the books for 25 years and that we have been trying to build in West Virginia. The environmental impact statement after 6 years has finally been completed, and the public comment period begins on April 26 and will extend for 30 days. This is a time for citizens and groups and businesses and all those individuals who want to have another say and want to review the EIS to do so.

This EIS has been 6 years in the making. It has been one of contention. It has been one in which the State department of transportation has had to meet and accommodate many, many legitimate concerns: environmental, historical, terrain, cost. After a long time the State took four corridors and narrowed it down to a preferred corridor, and then within that 2,000-foot way the State has now accommodated the various concerns that have been made, whether it is a Civil War battlefield or whether it is a stretch of wetland.

After being in the Department of the Interior for a number of weeks, all questions about boundaries for historic battlefields have now been resolved. The Federal Highway Administration