

A TRIBUTE TO THE CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF STONY BROOK, LONG ISLAND

HON. MICHAEL P. FORBES

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the Christ Community Church of Stony Brook, Long Island, as the church's members and friends celebrate its 30th anniversary year.

For more than three decades, before Christ Community Church was built, the Reformed Church of America has served the spiritual needs of this bucolic North Shore community. Since the founding of the Christ Community Church in 1967, a myriad of forces have changed the cultural, commercial, and political face of America and Long Island. But the steadfast devotion of the Christ Community Church and its members has neither wavered nor waned.

The origin of the Christ Community Church followed the 1962 birth of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. The new college and research hospital brought new jobs, thousands of new residents, and a demand for new houses of worship in this sleepy hamlet. So on land donated by businessman and legendary Long Island philanthropist Ward Melville, the Reformed Church of America began plans for its newest congregation.

So hungry for Christ's words were the first congregants that during construction the first pastor, Rev. Howard Newton, would lead the 50 charter members in worship in the garage of a home on Stockton Lane, in Stony Brook. Though the building was not fully complete and congregants had to use wooden planks to navigate across a sea of mud and puddles, the first formal worship service was held there on Palm Sunday, 1967.

Since its inception, congregants of Christ Community Church has sought to discover and apply Christ's word by serving God and community. Whether hosting the first organizational meetings of the Three Village School District, donating food, clothes, and money to the ministries at Coram or opening their doors to the Beth Emeth Reformed Congregation so that they could hold Sabbath services while their synagogue in Mt. Sinai was being built, the members of Christ Community Church have worked to serve their neighbors.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in this hallowed Chamber to join me in congratulating the members of the Christ Community Church, and all of its friends and neighbors, on this historic 30th anniversary year. I pray that the Stony Brook community and all Long Island will forever enjoy the spirit of the Christ Community Church and the good work of its members.

HONORING NANCY L. SCHUCKMAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and achievements of Nancy L. Schuckman. Ms. Schuckman was born in the

east New York section of Brooklyn and has dedicated her professional life to educating the children in that area.

Soon after Nancy graduated from Brooklyn College in 1961, she began her career teaching at P.S. 202. For over 30 years Nancy has managed to provide invaluable services to everyone at P.S. 202. While working at the school, Ms. Schuckman has served as, an innovative and dedicated classroom teacher, a coordinator of social studies, reading, and physical education, a teacher trainer, a UFT chapter chairperson, an acting assistant principal, and a principal. Rarely, do we see the type of commitment, to an area and school, like that shown by Nancy Schuckman to P.S. 202.

There is no doubt that she has left an indelible mark on all the teachers and students that she has come in contact with. Her professionalism and her dedication to education, and the style in which it is administered to students, is the benchmark for others who follow in her footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Ms. Schuckman and all her contributions in the field of education.

HONORING SEYMOUR AND LOTTE MEYERSON

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to commend two of northwest Indiana's outstanding citizens, Seymour and Lotte Meyerson. The Meyersons, who have lived in the Miller section of Gary for the last 45 years of their 54-year marriage, will be moving from northwest Indiana later this month. As they leave the region, the many accomplishments they have made in advocating individual human rights and liberties will be fondly remembered.

The Meyersons' long-time commitment to the ideals of dignity and rights for all human beings has brought positive change to the communities of northwest Indiana. Lotte Meyerson, a dedicated citizen activist, has made a campaign out of her devotion to human rights. Perhaps her most noteworthy contribution to the community was her leadership in forming the northwest Indiana Open Housing Center, of which she was president for 10 years. During her tenure with this organization, great strides were made in eliminating the institutional discrimination that prevents minorities from integrating into predominantly white neighborhoods. Lotte has further served her community by participating in activities with the Calumet Chapter of the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, the Gary League of Women Voters, and the Northwest Indiana Welfare Reform Coalition. Currently, she is serving as coordinator of the Northwest Indiana Coalition to Abolish Control Unit Prisons. This year, the coalition was successful in convincing the Indiana General Assembly to agree to study the advisability of limiting solitary confinement to 2 months or less and banning the practice for mentally ill prisoners.

A chemist specializing in mass spectrometry, Seymour Meyerson has made numerous professional contributions while maintaining

his respect for nature and all of humanity. An Amoco employee for 37 years, Seymour advanced to the top of his field and, throughout his career, shared his technical findings in international science circles. Just recently, Seymour unselfishly donated his collection of mass spectrometry journals, which are worth \$26,000, to Valparaiso University's chemistry department. Seymour shares his wife's deep-rooted convictions regarding the need to protect civil liberties.

The Meyersons will be moving to Asheville, N.C., where they will be living in a co-housing development community, which was founded on principles in keeping with their own. This unique living situation combines private homes with community living, and is modeled after a housing concept common in Denmark. Residents of the development, who are diverse in every respect, share a common house, where they can dine and share hobbies together, and common gardens, which are designed to foster a sense of community and belonging. Lotte and Seymour will be joining the family of their younger daughter, Elana Kohnle, as well as 24 other families in this community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending Seymour and Lotte Meyerson on the hard work and dedication they have put forth in achieving a better life for everyone in northwest Indiana. May their new life bring them much happiness and fulfillment.

CAPITAL GAINS TAX SIMPLIFICATION

HON. LINDSEY O. GRAHAM

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that removes the short-, mid-, and long-term distinctions on capital gains tax which were part of previous law and included in the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. This change simplifies capital gains tax assessments by removing arbitrary time constraints and applying the rates now, instead of in 2006. Without this change, gains made within the short- and mid-term rates will receive no tax break at all unless they are held for excessive periods of time.

The very idea of the Federal Government dictating time constraints on the holding of investments runs counter to the fundamental concept of our market-driven economy. With present holding periods, how can we conclude that an 18-month investment is better than a 17.9-month investment? For example, if an investor reaped \$1,000 in capital gains, they would receive a return of \$602 after taxes if they held it for 17 months and 30 days. But, after holding it for 1 day more, their after-tax return would jump to \$720. That is a ridiculous 20 percent difference in 1 day. This legislation removes these conditions.

As we discuss the modification and simplification of the present Tax Code, this bill demonstrates Congress' desire to bring about an immediate beneficial change. It is becoming more and more evident that the Tax Code is a growing impediment to families, small business, and investors. While we conduct hearings and debate on what changes are to be made, streamlining the capital gains tax

regulations in the interim shows the American people we are making progress toward a simple and lasting solution.

No changes in the gains tax percentages are made in this measure. The rates, agreed to by the Clinton administration earlier this year, would simply be applied without the time constraints. It is not only bipartisan, but logical as well. No concessions are made to corporate or big business capital gains taxes, nor is this bill designed to aid the wealthy. It allows individuals the opportunity to make investment decisions based on the market, rather than by obtuse Government time constraints. The rates in the present law are fair, the holding periods are not.

Mr. Speaker, this is a tremendous opportunity to help American families invest for their future. This bill removes frustrating obstacles for small businesses and investors who are often stymied in their efforts to reinvest their gains immediately because of the excessive losses they would incur under current law.

I urge my colleagues to support this technical change to the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997. Removing the time constraints on capital gains tax demonstrates our desire to simplify the Tax Code and help Americans invest without unnecessary restrictions.

PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN
FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES

HON. THOMAS J. MANTON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. MANTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late John Sturdivant, President of the American Federation of Government Employees.

Mr. Sturdivant passed away on October 28, 1997, after a long, heroic fight against leukemia. I extend my most heartfelt condolences to Mr. Sturdivant's family. I hope it is of some comfort to the family to know that John greatly improved the lives of many through his work with the AFGE.

Through charismatic and innovative leadership, John Sturdivant brought the American Federation of Government Employees to prominence. He strived to increase wages and improve working conditions and benefits for Federal employees. Whether faced with government downsizing or budget cuts, John Sturdivant would face the situation with strength and determination. He consistently, and successfully, fought for Federal employees and the 600,000 workers he represented are sure to feel his loss.

John Sturdivant will be missed not only by his family, but by all the Federal employees he represented, as well as those with whom he bargained. It is a rare individual who possesses the talent and skills demonstrated by John Sturdivant in his many years of service to the labor movement.

Mr. Speaker, today I pay tribute to John Sturdivant for his achievements as the progressive leader of the American Federation of Government Employees.

BISHOP WILLIAM SWING OF THE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CALI-
FORNIA DISCUSSES THE UNITED
RELIGIOUS INITIATIVE, AN EF-
FORT TO ENCOURAGE PEACE
AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN
RIGHTS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 4, 1997

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, the Right Reverend William Swing, Bishop of the Diocese of California of the Episcopal Church in the United States, is one of the outstanding religious leaders of our Nation. We in the bay area have the great blessing of having him in our city of San Francisco. Bishop Swing is an extraordinary man who is dedicated to promoting peace and respect for human rights around the globe. Throughout his life, he has also been sincerely dedicated to helping the homeless, the elderly, and the sick.

Recently, Bishop Swing has launched the United Religions Initiative which seeks to unite all religions in order to establish peace among them. In a world where blood is often shed in the name of religious belief, the United Religions Initiative is working toward the reconciliation of religious groups for the good of all nations.

Mr. Speaker, on October 29, Bishop Swing made a presentation at a briefing of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus to discuss the United Religions Initiative with Members of Congress and congressional staff. I had the pleasure of introducing Bishop Swing and spending time with him on that occasion as he presented his ideas for encouraging peace and respect for human rights.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that Bishop Swing's remarks at this recent meeting of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus be placed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to give thoughtful and serious considerations to the ideas of this dedicated man of God.

REMARKS OF BISHOP WILLIAM SWING TO THE
CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS

I would like to call attention to an Initiative that could have a profound influence on global peacemaking. I am referring to the United Religions Initiative. This initiative seeks to create a new global forum where the world's faith communities, continuing to respect each others distinctness, would meet together on a daily and permanent basis to deepen mutual understanding, recognition and respect; to create an open dialogue for exchanging ideas and finding a common voice; and to cooperate in new ways to address urgent suffering. This effort would create for the world's religions a forum with the stature and visibility of the United Nations.

As the people of the world work together to shape a new world order following the end of the Cold War, we confront enormous questions. How can we ensure peace? How can the world's people live together as neighbors? What structures of cooperative effort can help us to secure a decent world for our grandchildren? And what visions can guide us as we consider these questions? Finding answers together will require not only new ways of thinking and new voices at the table, but also a firm foundation of shared spiritual values. In this conversation, the world's religions must necessarily be involved.

When we look to our religious traditions for guidance, however, we must first ac-

knowledge a hard truth: while religions historically have been an immense source of good, they have also been the direct cause of much violent conflict. When not actually fighting themselves, they have all too often fanned the flames of hatred, or stood mute in the presence of injustice. Not one of the original founders of the world's religions taught murder, coercion or injustice as a way of propagating the faith; and yet religious violence continues to this day, deeply injuring the moral credibility of our religious institutions. Moreover, such violence is increasingly a major threat to world peace. Much of the large scale violence in the world today—in Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine, Northern Ireland, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and East Timor, for example—is caused, encouraged or abetted by religion.

And yet the world's religions are also humanity's great treasure houses, where our deepest values, aspirations and wisdom have been sustained. It is religion that reminds us that life is ultimately larger than what we know; that life is sacred; that each of us is called to act responsibly in light of these truths; and that the deepest meanings of life are to be found beyond narrow self-interest. Religions are our window to a larger life, a life beyond ourselves. Drawing on their deepest sources, could they themselves now set an example of how we all might live with one another as neighbors? It is the conviction of the United Religions Initiative that this is indeed the challenge.

The Initiative owes much to previous interfaith efforts. Over the last 100 years, many have worked to begin dialogue and cooperation among people of different faiths. On the local level, interfaith cooperation is already rapidly emerging in hospital ministries, jail ministries, and university campus ministries. Cities around the world are developing interfaith commissions. National interfaith coalitions are beginning to appear. And a few groups, such as the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, the Temple of Understanding, the International Association for Religious Freedom, and the World Conference on Religion and Peace, have undertaken significant international dialogues and action projects. All of these distinct efforts have begun to provide an infrastructure of interfaith work throughout the world; and all of this deserves to be acknowledged and genuinely celebrated.

Given this present level of interreligious activity, and the world's search for a new foundation of shared values, is there anything else that could happen among religions beyond what already exists? The answer is an emphatic yes. There is a vast untapped potential for partnership among the world's religions that could be an enormous resource for peace-making and community building. If religions themselves could move just one step beyond their ancient competitions and attempt a new dimension of religious cooperation, a great new focus for global hope would be forthcoming. And if religions, continuing to respect their differences, were then able to join their enormous resources in a serious, mutual effort of service to the world, a tremendous new force for global good would come into being.

The United Religions Initiative is an attempt to call together members of the world's religions and spiritual traditions to create a comprehensive global framework for just such an effort. With the help of an organizational development team from Case Western Reserve University, they are building a worldwide network of supporters at the grassroots level, while simultaneously overseeing a large scale collaborative process of writing an organizational charter for a United Religions Organization. This charter will be formally signed on June 26, 2000, the 55th