

There are Americans day in and day out, as we cast these debates and cast our votes, who back home are working to pay the taxes that finance this government, volunteering their time in civic activities to make their community better, and day in and day out do the work of this country.

I rise here today for just a moment to join many Americans who will next week in Washington, D.C. pay tribute to a great American, to a great Georgian, and to a personal friend of mine, Mr. Bradley Curry, a great businessman who built a company with his employees and his partners known as Rock-Tenn, a national, if not world leader, in packaging and in box board.

While he did that, he raised a wonderful family, committed his time to civic activities for the best of our community, whether helping to solve the problems of our public hospital, Grady Memorial, work in a voluntary think-tank called Research Atlanta, or join with hundreds of other Atlantans to make a dream come true to bring the Olympic Games, the Centennial Olympic Games, to our city in 1996.

Above all else, Brad Curry is a dedicated American. His partisanship is red, white, and blue. He works for the best of our country and business, the best in mankind in our community and, most importantly of all, for the continuing foundation of our freedom that we enjoy.

So for this moment on this floor, I rise to pay tribute to Bradley Curry, who will retire at the end of this year from the Rock-Tenn Corporation, but will not retire from his tireless efforts on behalf of his city, his State and his country. I ask all in this Congress to join me in paying their highest respects to Bradley Curry of Atlanta, Georgia, upon his retirement from the Rock-Tenn Corporation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EHLERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, today America is at a crossroads. Our people head into the 21st century having witnessed remarkable events all across the globe. We have seen the rise and we have seen the fall of tyranny, Nazism and Communism, with Americans being instrumental in the destruction of both.

We have seen technological and scientific developments unparalleled in history. America itself is more prosperous than it has been at any time in

its existence. The United States is now recognized as the unchallenged superpower in the world.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time that our Nation has seen so many achievements, we must admit that there are some areas where we are not making the progress that we should. Today, Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that in one area where we are losing ground is our treatment of religious believers. We are witnessing a rising level of bigotry against people of faith, especially Christians.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk about some of the most recent examples that I have seen. The first three followed after the tragic shootings in Littleton, Colorado, and Fort Worth, Texas.

After the memorial service for the families and victims of Littleton, Colorado, on May 1, the May 1 issue of the Denver Post editorialized against what it called, "the disenfranchising nature of this memorial service."

According to the editorial page writers, "While the service deftly satisfied the needs of fundamentalist Christians, it estranged too many others who came in search of healing and due to the fact that the primary entertainment was by Christian singers Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith, and the key speech was by the Reverend Franklin Graham, son of Billy Graham, it drove away a sizable number of people who had come to mourn the deaths." The editorial went on to say, "We urge State officials to learn from the error and plan future events to be inclusive, not divisive."

In other words, Mr. Speaker, the editors of the Denver Post objected to the families and victims turning to their faith in this terrible time of grief.

According to the May 18 edition of the Washington Times, plans to create a memorial for the family and victims of the Columbine shootings at the Foothill Parks and Recreational District near the high school were scrapped after the Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened legal action. The spokesman for the group said that the memorial would make non-Christians feel unwelcome at that park.

The day after the tragic shootings in Fort Worth this month, the Washington Times reported that Attorney General Janet Reno was asked the next day whether she thought that these shootings had anything to do with hatred or religious bigotry. Attorney General Janet Reno warned reporters that it was too early to characterize the Fort Worth shooting as a hate crime.

This reticence was in stark contrast to other cases of bigotry. For instance, last year the Justice Department offered its resources to help prosecutors prove racial bias in another Texas case involving the dragging death of James Byrd within days of that tragic killing.

It has been 2 weeks since the shootings in Fort Worth, and we are still waiting for the Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, there are still other examples. Whether we wish to admit it or not, Christians are now subject to ridicule, mistreatment and bigotry, pure and simple.

The television show "Nothing Sacred" lived up to its billing by trying to develop storylines with ministers of the cloth engaging in immoral activity or finding ways to belittle people of faith altogether. According to the New York Post which ran in March 1998, "Nothing Sacred" set an all-time low for viewership last year on a major network with 94 percent of the available market bypassing the program.

Hollywood is not any better. Movies such as this summer's release of Stigmata attack the Catholic Church, accusing it of being on a millennium-long crusade to stamp out the true teachings of Christ.

Mr. Speaker, there is more evidence that our society, rather than protecting religious freedom, is discouraging religious expression. According to the Associated Press, the ACLU sued the City of Republic, Missouri, on behalf of Jean Webb, a Wiccan witch, to have its city seal altered to remove the fish symbol.

The May 6 article stated that the ACLU planned to also argue that since the symbol is often found in Christian establishments, not non-Christian ones, and that most of the people who wrote letters supporting the fish symbol identified it as a Christian symbol, the ACLU had plenty of evidence that the city's support of keeping the fish symbol constituted an establishment of religion.

The Chicago Tribune reported that the ACLU this year sued the Chicago Public Schools because of its activities with the Boy Scouts of America. Why? The April 26 news story indicated that it was because the Boy Scout oath pledges that a good scout will obey God. By the ACLU's reasoning, such an oath, because it mentions God, makes the Boy Scouts a religious organization which should not be allowed on school property.

The USA Today ran a story last week announcing that the Augusta, Kansas, school board has revoked a policy that allowed students to lead classmates in prayer over the school intercom after the American Civil Liberties Union challenged the policy as unconstitutional.

On the May 21 broadcast of CNN's Crossfire, Barry Lynn, the executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, went so far as to criticize the acclaim given to Cassie Bernall, the young girl who was shot at Columbine High because she would not renounce her faith.

He said, I think that what we have done here is to take this one victim, turn it into an example of martyrdom, and then use it to become the springboard for even more exploitation of this tragedy by people with a religious political agenda.

Such insensitivity would have been denounced if he had said the same

about John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King or even, for that matter, Rodney King.

The District of Columbia public school system was sued this summer for allowing a church to use an abandoned park as a parking lot in exchange for providing after-school services for the neighborhood children. The September 17 story, as reported in the Washington Post, revealed that members of the Metropolitan Baptist Church have been parking about 300 cars on the field on Sundays for more than 10 years. Reverend Hicks agreed to cancel the contract rather than force the city to defend the suit. Reverend Hicks, pastor of the 5,000-member Metropolitan Baptist Church of Washington, D.C. got my attention with his statement when announcing plans to terminate the contract, saying there has been a shift in culture, he said. We have reached the point where God no longer has a place in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, imagine that. A simple contract between the city and the church, where the city says to the church they can use this parking lot on Sundays that would otherwise be vacant and unused if they will provide an after-school service, an opportunity for these children; and somebody challenges that because of their fear of religion and the city is forced to submit.

The Hagerstown Suns, a Single-A affiliate of the major league Toronto Blue Jays, is being sued by the ACLU because they ran a promotion for the past 6 years that reduced ticket prices on Sundays for anyone coming to the stadium with a church bulletin.

According to the Baltimore Sun in their June 29 edition, the ACLU believes this discount is a form of discrimination against the nonreligious.

Jeff Jacoby complains in his August 19 column in the Boston Globe of a blatant case of anti-religious bias involving an inner city Boston church. On July 15, the City of Boston sent a letter to Mason Cathedral warning the church center, which receives taxpayer subsidies to help wayward youth, not to involve its teenage counselors in religious activities, including but not limited to the following: praying, reading Bible stories, drawing Bible pictures, and cleaning in the areas of the church where there are religious symbols. All religious activities must cease immediately.

Jeff Jacoby interviewed the pastor: "For 5 years, they have been saying I do good work," says Reverend Thomas Cross. "This year, everything has changed."

Conversely, if anyone stood up and said that the groups like the National Organization of Women and the National Abortion Rights League should not be allowed to operate shelters for battered, homeless women because they cannot separate out their political agenda, they would be laughed right off the stage.

Amazingly, our own Federal Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Preven-

tion even funds the middle school curriculum "healing the hate." Get this, Mr. Speaker, our own Federal Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention even funds a middle school curriculum entitled "healing the hate" that suggests that among the warning signs for school counselors that a child may be dangerous is if he or she grows up in a very religious home.

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Mr. Speaker, I know of no religion, I know of no religion that preaches hate, violence, or even, for that matter, disrespect for other people. Yet, we have a Federal Government office that puts together a program that says that, if one identifies a child of faith, one should see that child as a threat to his companion children.

Mr. Speaker, this is done without any shred of evidence showing any linkage whatsoever between Christians and any of these terrible acts of violence that our Nation has faced. Imagine saying that a warning sign that a child may be dangerous or a threat to other classmates was the skin color or sexual orientation of that child's home. Such a statement would be declared outrageous or condemned in every quarter of the land.

In case after case, people of faith are told to mind their own business, keep to themselves, and stay out of the affairs of the rest of society. People of faith are called the extremists, labeled out and out threats to our Nation, and generally find "Not Welcome Here" signs all over the place.

Law-abiding people who regularly attend church, try to live their lives as examples to their children and their community are lampooned and mocked. Priests, ministers, and the laymen who support them are expected to sit at the back of the bus when it comes to participating in the public square.

As my colleagues have seen from my examples, when the rights of people of faith are trampled, newspapers and other leaders in our Nation are either silent or complicit. Why is this? What about the rights of people of faith?

Bigotry of any kind, Mr. Speaker, should be confronted. It is always irrational, and it is always unjustified. Madmen who kill at a synagogue deserve our most stinging disapprobation. The tragic death of James Byrd was worthy of the national condemnation. But just as we should be eternally vigilant against racial bigotry, we must also protect the rights of people of faith.

People of faith, Mr. Speaker, are decent, loving, and patriotic. They work hard to provide for their families and are tireless advocates for improving our communities across the Nation. Let us join together and condemn those who would deny freedom and opportunity for every American.

Mr. Speaker, let us have the simple common American decency to respect each and every person who feels within

their heart the need to express their faith and respect of other people. We must deal with these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, honestly and assertively.

We are a great Nation. We are a Nation that has been declared in the past to be a good Nation, a Nation of good people. No matter what our prosperity, no matter what our power, we cannot be that if we cannot be a Nation that has the decency to respect the faith of our citizens. We are failing in that regard, and we must turn it around.

MANAGED CARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 45 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Majority Leader for yielding me the balance of his time.

One can never say that the floor of Congress is a dull place. So this afternoon we have heard about art exhibits showing the blessed virgin with elephant dung on them. We had a 5-minute speech from the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) who had told us that he lives in Lake Wobegone. So I am going to speak about managed care.

I just thought I would ask the Majority Leader a question. I was wondering if the Majority Leader, in the spirit of a little levity, could tell me the difference between a PPO, an HMO, and the PLO.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I will rise to debate. Let me say to the gentleman, though, I am sorry I cannot tell him the difference between a PPO, an HMO, and a PLO.

Mr. GANSKE. Well, Mr. Speaker, one can negotiate with the PLO.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to use the balance of the time to discuss managed care reform legislation that we are going to be debating here on the floor next week. I appreciate the Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House for setting up this debate for next week.

The rumors are that we will be using the bipartisan consensus managed care bill as the base bill. That is the bill that I support. It is a strong managed care reform bill.

We are uncertain at this time as to what type of rule we will have. I would request that we have a clean rule; in other words, a rule that is limited to patient protection legislation and does not involve tax matters for which one could then get into discussions about offsets and other difficult problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, humor sometimes shows that the public is aware of a problem. I remember, a few years ago, my wife and I went to the movie "As Good As It Gets." Many people saw this movie. It featured Helen Hunt and Mr. Nicholson.

It was about a waitress played by Helen Hunt. She had a young son who