

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Water and Power of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, October 30, for purposes of conducting a subcommittee hearing which is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. The purpose of this oversight hearing is to receive testimony to review the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's hydroelectric relicensing procedures.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CELEBRATING FLORENCE G. HEDKE'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

• Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, it is my pleasure and privilege to join the friends and family in celebrating the 100th birthday of a distinguished citizen of Riverdale, IL, Miss Florence G. Hedke, on November 11, 1997.

Miss Hedke is a testament to Riverdale's heritage. She began teaching at the Bowen School in 1919, and later became the school's principal before retiring in 1964. Miss Hedke cherished her experiences at the Bowen School so much that she now lives in the building that was once home to the original Bowen School.

As an educator, Miss Hedke inspired her students to dream, encouraged excellence and showed them the many avenues of opportunity made available through learning. She gave her students the foundation for their dreams. Her influence on the many students she touched has enriched their lives, and ours, in ways too numerous to calculate. She gave young people the confidence in themselves and hope for the future.

The Village of Riverdale, the State of Illinois, and our nation are all better as a result of Florence Hedke's talent, love and commitment to education. She is truly one of Illinois' special treasures, and I am honored to join in the celebration of her 100th birthday. •

CHRISTIANITY IN PUBLIC LIFE TODAY

• Mr. BROWBACK. Mr. President, I rise to submit for the record an address delivered by my colleague, Senator ABRAHAM from Michigan, to Legatus, a group of Catholic business leaders concerned to bring their faith into their economic and public lives.

We live in an era, Mr. President, in which religious Americans are faced with a number of obstacles as they seek to live their faith in our public square. I believe that Senator ABRAHAM well states the dilemma faced by people of faith and I hope our citizens, and Members of this body in particular,

will heed his call for greater understanding and accommodation for religious principles and beliefs.

As we face a continuing breakdown of our families and communities, I believe it is essential that we return to the fundamental institutions, beliefs and practices on which our society was founded. And to do that we must recognize the central role religion has and must continue to play in shaping our character and our community.

The address follows:

CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA TODAY

An address delivered to the Legatus Regional Conference on October 11, 1997 by Senator Spencer Abraham

First I would like to thank Tom Monahan and all the members of Legatus for having me here. Your work, bringing your faith to bear on your daily lives as business people and citizens, is crucial, in my view, to the health of our republic and the souls of our people.

Because I am speaking today about Christianity in America, I first must point out the standpoint from which I speak: I am both a Christian and a United States Senator. Now, some people might say that "Christian Senator" is an oxymoron, right up there with "political ethics" or "military intelligence." And it certainly can be difficult to stand up for what is right, for what Christ demands, if you listen too closely to the Washington wisdom. But I think those of you here today know full well how difficult it can be to bring your private beliefs into your public life. Indeed, I think our country as a whole suffers from the fact that we tend to seek a Christian private life while the government too often discourages Christian conduct.

Christianity in America and Christianity in Washington and our state capitals seem to be different things. The good news, of course, is that Christianity in America is in many ways thriving.

For example, by now most Americans have heard of the Promise Keepers. This organization was founded in 1990 by former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney. Since its inception over two and a half million men have been to Promise Keepers conferences.

Here they promise to:

- (1) Honor Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's word.
- (2) Pursue friendships with men who will help them keep their promises.
- (3) Practice spiritual, moral, ethical and sexual purity.
- (4) Strengthen their commitment to their wives and children through love, protection and devotion to the Bible.
- (5) Become more involved in their churches.
- (6) Seek racial harmony, and
- (7) Follow the Golden Rule by loving God and loving their neighbors as themselves.

That's an unfashionable set of promises to ask men to keep. Yet hundreds of thousands of them came to Washington on October 4, pledging to keep these promises in their daily lives.

And there are a number of other important groups working to bring Christianity back into people's lives. Just a couple of weeks ago in Washington there was an "Emerging Urban Leaders Conference." Dozens of young people—so-called "Generation Xers"—from all over the country came together. At this conference they discussed ways to cooperate and learn from one another as they worked in faith-based groups struggling for community renewal.

The conference was held in a spirit of optimism because of the new organizations and

networks that are forming around the idea that faith-based programs can save our inner cities, and those who live in them.

And the statistics from a Gallup poll conducted just this year show that Christianity is very much alive among the American people.

Despite what you may hear in the press, less than 1% of the American people are atheists. Meanwhile, 9 out of 10 Americans give a religious identification. 7 out of 10 say they are a member of a church or synagogue. 6 out of 10 say religion is an important part of their daily life. 77% believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. 40% attend church on a weekly basis—a rate that has held steady for almost 40 years. 66% report that prayer is an important part of their daily life. And 61% believe religion can answer all or most of today's problems.

Unfortunately, despite this common religious attitude among the people, in Washington and many state capitals Christianity is having to struggle.

Let me give some examples.

First, one of the fundamental bases of our moral order, recognized by Judaism, Christianity and Islam alike, is the Ten Commandments. The moral principles laid out in these commandments, including love of God as well as rules against murder and perjury, literally gave birth to our society. We ignore them at our peril. Unfortunately, at least one judge has sought to bar expression of these principles from our public square.

Recently, an Alabama judge ordered his colleague, Judge Roy S. Moore, to stop displaying the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. This ruling, now on hold, rests on the mistaken belief that the Constitution's religion clause forbids such displays. It also rests on hostility toward public affirmations of our religious heritage. It can only undermine our adherence to the principles underlying our moral order.

A resolution introduced by my colleague, JEFF SESSIONS, would state that Judge Moore should be allowed to continue displaying the Ten Commandments in his courtroom. I believe that this is the appropriate response.

Unfortunately, activist judges have not been the only ones opposing any role for religion in our public life. Our elected officials too often undermine worthy projects out of hostility or fear toward religion.

For example, my colleague, Georgia Senator Paul COVERDELL, has proposed education legislation establishing "A-Plus Accounts." These accounts would allow parents to use the tax-free education savings accounts provided in the recent Taxpayer Relief Act for their children's elementary and secondary schooling, rather than just for college.

This would give parents greater control over their children's education. With help from these accounts, parents could buy a home computer to enable their child to explore the internet; pay for tutoring for a child having trouble with math; get occupational therapy for a child with special needs, or save for tuition payments and home schooling.

The interest on these savings accounts would not be taxed so long as it was used for educational expenses. And the cost to the federal government and taxpayer? Zero. A+ Accounts would simply allow parents to spend more of their own money on their children's education.

Unfortunately, the President has vowed to veto any bill containing these provisions. This administration does not want parents