

important program and the positive influence it has on young people in our country.

Higher education is an important component of success in today's economy, as well as a valuable end in itself. A college education opens doors to exciting new job fields, new experiences, and a deeper understanding of the world. Yet many lower-income Americans face a multitude of obstacles when they consider furthering their education. Parental income is one of the top predictors of whether or not a child will succeed in college, and if he or she is the first in the family to pursue a college education, the challenges can seem insurmountable.

This is why I am a strong supporter of the TRIO programs, which were created to support Congress's commitment to providing educational opportunities for all Americans regardless of race, ethnic background, or economic circumstance. TRIO programs help students exceed societal expectations and predictions by providing tutoring in college preparatory classes and help in navigating through the sometimes daunting maze of required forms and tests known as the college admission process.

Congress enacted the National TRIO Day in 1986 in order to increase awareness and support for the programs, as well as to recognize the achievements of the TRIO programs and their important role in advancing equal opportunity in post-secondary education. Congress declared National TRIO Day "a day on which the nation is asked to turn its attention to the needs of disadvantaged youth and adults aspiring to improve their lives, to the investment necessary if they are to become contributing citizens of this country, and to the talent which will be wasted if that investment is not made."

National TRIO Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate this investment in the lives of young people and in the future of our nation. It is also a National Day of Service, and on February 23rd the TRIO programs in my State commemorated the day by doing a wide range of service projects throughout their communities.

As co-chair of the TRIO Caucus, it is my goal to make people aware of this important program and the profound impact that it is having on the lives of students in my home State of Idaho and elsewhere. National TRIO Day gives us a valuable opportunity to recognize that impact and commit ourselves to ensuring that these programs can continue to change the lives of students for years to come.

HONORING REVEREND G.L.
JOHNSON

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. RADANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Rev. G.L. Johnson upon his 80th birthday and his 45th anniversary with Peoples Church, as well as his retirement from the church. Reverend Johnson will be honored on Sunday, February 24, at Peoples Church in Fresno, California.

Reverend Johnson was born in 1928 in Houston, Texas. He attended Navarro Junior College in Corsicana, Texas and South-

western Assembly of God College in Waxahachie, Texas. He has ministered in many different capacities since 1946, moving from Texas to various cities around the United States.

His ministry began in 1946 when he served as a youth speaker, traveling around the United States speaking at various functions and prayer services. Shortly after marrying Jacqueline Cockerell in 1950, he settled in Corsicana and took a position as a full-time Pastor. In 1951, Reverend Johnson became ordained. His ministries took him back on the road in 1953, as he traveled throughout Texas as an evangelist. In 1957, Reverend Johnson moved his family to Kentucky for a year and then to Florida to serve as a Pastor. In 1961 Reverend Johnson took on a different role. He became the associate director of the Latin American Orphanage. In 1963, he joined People's Church as the senior pastor and has been there ever since.

In Reverend Johnson's time with Peoples Church, he has seen the church build a new facility and has seen different staff members come and go. More importantly, he has seen the rise of the church's attendance and influence. Today the Sunday morning services' attendance averages 4,000 worshippers. This service is also broadcast over the radio every Sunday morning. Along with his position with Peoples Church, he is also involved in a number of religious and civic boards and finds time to teach.

Reverend Johnson has served as the chairman on many religious boards, including: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary Development Committee, Fresno Christian Schools, International Board of Asian Outreach based in Hong Kong, Asian Outreach USA, and Northern California National Association of Evangelicals. Various other board memberships include: Assemblies of God Theological Seminary board of directors; Vanguard University in Costa Mesa, California; Church Growth International in Seoul, Korea; Presbyterian International Missionary Advance in Seoul, Korea; Asian Center for Theological Studies; and more. Outside of the church, Reverend Johnson serves on the Board of Sequoia Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Fresno Leadership Foundation, Police Activities League, Clergy Advisory Council for Clovis Unified School District, North Fresno Rotary Club, and The International Fellowship of Christian Schools. He still finds the time to teach as an adjunct professor at California Theological Seminary and Institute for Clergy Enrichment.

Reverend Johnson has given himself to the church and the community. He has been invited to attend and speak at conferences around the world. He has had numerous books and articles published and has received many professional honors and awards. Reverend Johnson has had a positive impact and success on the many projects he has been involved in.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Rev. G.L. Johnson upon his 80th birthday, his 45th anniversary and his retirement from Peoples Church. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Reverend Johnson many years of continued success.

HONORING DR. ELVIS HESTER

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man of God who has dedicated the past 28 years of his life to a church in Georgia's 3rd Congressional District.

Only those who have never darkened the door of a church hold the mistaken impression that preachers work 1 day a week. The writing and delivery of the Sunday morning sermon comprises just a small portion of what a minister does in the service of God each week. In addition to a teacher, a great minister also serves as a CEO of a nonprofit and as a shepherd of the flock, who tends to the sick, the lost and those in need.

Dr. Elvis Hester has fulfilled all of these roles, and his leadership in the service of the Lord has blessed his flock at Eagle's Landing Church of God in McDonough.

As CEO of a big church, a minister often is as deeply involved in management and logistics as he is in pastoral care. Dr. Hester started his career working in logistics for the Federal Government. He went on to serve a stint as an adviser to the nation of Bahrain. There in the Middle East, he helped establish a Church of God populated with 100 Christian converts. A colleague established a sister church in Pakistan.

Upon Dr. Hester's return to the United States he went into the ministry full time, first working at a church in Franklin, GA. In 1980, he took the helm of the church that would become Eagle's Landing Church of God. Under Hester's leadership, the church experienced tremendous growth, with membership topping 1,000.

But Dr. Hester's church members don't focus on how he has affected membership numbers. They reflect on how he has touched their lives.

"The pastor has led our congregation by example for 28 years, serving us all through thick and thin," said church member Janice Ross. "My family remembers when a life- and-death crisis kept us up all night and the next day. After going through a horrible operation, we were blessed by the sound of the pastor in prayer. We are thankful that our pastor has stayed faithful to the Lord and the Word of God."

One of his staff members, youth minister Brian Coody, said: "Our Pastor is the type who is open for everyone to talk to, often going out of his way when you need counsel. He is very much filled with the spirit and he touches the lives of all those he meets. I have personally seen him moved to tears when a troubled soul was touched by Christ. Pastor Hester is a great man of God."

Dr. Hester's ministry has extended far beyond Henry County. He spread the Word in many countries throughout South America, Africa, Europe and Asia.

"While they say there are no absolutes in life, I truly believe that the one absolute that does exist is that long after Pastor Hester and his wife, Rita, are gone, the things that were done and said by our once-in-a-lifetime pastors will be treasured and used by generations to come to spread goodwill and bring the light