

Briefly noted

News in the [January 11, 2005](#) issue

The Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment says its national clergy sabbatical program will continue for a sixth year in 2005. Recently the foundation announced 132 recipients, who will receive up to \$45,000 each. The 2004 winners represented 23 Christian denominations in 37 states. In the National Clergy Renewal Program's first five years, more than 600 pastors have earned time off to travel, study or refresh their ministries with the support of their congregations, which receive up to \$15,000 to compensate for the pastor's temporary absence.

Philippine Roman Catholic and Protestant churches have joined a national campaign to abolish the death penalty, arguing that it does not deter violent crime, and they are lobbying the government to institute what they call "restorative justice." Said Abraham Luis, a United Church of Christ pastor: "Each of us, despite our human frailties, is created in the image of God, so each of us is important before the Lord." Luis spoke at an ecumenical service for international human rights December 10 in Baguio City. The death penalty was restored in the Philippines in December of 1993, six years after it became the first country in Asia to abolish capital punishment for all crimes. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lifted a moratorium on executions in 2003. In a prayer, Catholic priest Andres Cosalan urged Filipinos to introduce "a more humane criminal justice system based on forgiveness and reconciliation," which, he said, is the essence of restorative justice as opposed to "punitive justice."