

Briefly noted

News in the [April 3, 2007](#) issue

The Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery says that reconciliation efforts have failed to convince its second-largest congregation to remain in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The 2,600-member Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church of Tulsa was thus declared last month to be in schism with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) by the regional body. The presbytery expressed “deep sadness” over the loss and over “the sense of division which plagues our denomination,” said presbytery executive Greg Coulter. In August, Kirk of the Hills pastor Thomas W. Gray explained on his blog why the congregation was leaving: “We at the Kirk are holding to what scripture clearly teaches,” he said. “The PCUSA has left this critical foundation.” Gray, the associate pastor and the church sought affiliation with Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The presbytery will seek to protect its property rights, citing the PCUSA constitution that states church properties are held in trust for the denomination.

A resolution stating that “the blessing of same-sex unions is consistent with the core doctrine of the Anglican Church of Canada”—a proposal at odds with the global Anglican Communion’s stance—will be submitted to this June’s triennial General Synod, the Canadian church’s highest decision-making body. Deliberation may be too late, however, to prevent the loss of a ministerial license for an Anglican priest in Saskatchewan who has refused to obey a 2005 church moratorium on sanctifying gay unions. “I felt unable to say no to those requests,” Shawn Sanford Beck told the Saskatoon StarPhoenix. If Beck’s license is not renewed, he will remain a priest but may not preside over baptisms and the Eucharist unless he receives special permission.

Poland’s Roman Catholic nuns withstood pressure from the communist-era secret police far more robustly than male clergy, new research shows. “It’s obviously hard to make comparisons,” said Jolanta Olech, president of Poland’s Conference of Superiors of Female Religious Orders. “But the documentation shows nuns proved much tougher than priests. We can certainly say that, in this very difficult situation, the sisters passed the test.” The nun was speaking as investigations continued into the Polish church’s infiltration by the communist-era secret police, following the January 7 resignation of Archbishop Stanislaw Wielgus of Warsaw. Olech told ENI

news service that the secret police made “determined efforts” to find agents among Poland’s 27,000 nuns. She noted, however, that interior ministry files suggested that no more than 30 were recruited nationwide during the 1980s, a hundred times fewer than in the case of Roman Catholic priests.