

Briefly noted

News in the [May 15, 2007](#) issue

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has approved the pentacle, a religious symbol used by Wiccans, as an official symbol for veterans' gravestones, according to a settlement announced April 23. "The Wiccan pentacle will henceforth have the same status as the other emblems of belief on the VA's list of emblems available for inscription on government-furnished headstones and markers," reads the settlement released by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. The pentacle will join 38 other religious or philosophical symbols permitted by the VA. Wiccans had long sought to have the pentacle—a five-pointed star within a circle—included among the symbols used by the VA.

Anglican bishops in central Africa, unlike their Roman Catholic counterparts who have called for increased pressure on the Zimbabwe government, are urging the European Union and the U.S. to scrap sanctions placed on the country's ruling elite. The letter was signed by 14 bishops, including Nolbert Kunonga, the Anglican bishop of Harare, who is a staunch ally of President Robert Mugabe and who once referred to the government's opposition as dogs barking at an elephant. The central African bishops represent Anglicans in Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. "The deteriorating economy has rendered the ordinary Zimbabwean unable to make ends meet," wrote the bishops in an April 19 letter. Kunonga has a running feud with his own church members because of his open support for Mugabe's ruling Zanu-PF Party.