

Briefly noted

News in the [October 2, 2007](#) issue

European-based Christian groups are backing Patriarch Bartholomeos I, seen by many of the world's Orthodox Christians as their spiritual leader, after he was called to testify in a Turkish court for allegedly violating an order barring him from using his traditional title of "Ecumenical Patriarch." In a letter released August 30, Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, said "you have our firm support." A Turkish court ruled in June that the Istanbul-based patriarchate was authorized to perform religious functions only for Turkey's 6,000-member Greek Orthodox community and as such had no right to call itself "ecumenical," though Christians say the appellation goes back to the sixth century. Turkey regards the title as having political overtones that could undermine Turkish sovereignty. The nation, an applicant to join the European Union, has promised to safeguard religious freedoms, but church leaders worry about recent anti-Christian incidents, including the fatal shooting of a Catholic priest and the killing of three staff members of a Protestant publishing house.

A media frenzy over the religious doubts and supposed emptiness in the life of Mother Teresa, made public in some of her newly published letters, derives from a lack of spirituality, says Catholic Archbishop Lucas Sirkar of Calcutta. "Those who are questioning the faith of the Mother have no idea of what is spiritual life," Sirkar told Ecumenical News International in his office on September 5, the 10th anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa. The collection of letters between Mother Teresa and her confessors and superiors over a period of more than 60 years is contained in a book, *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*. *Time* magazine published excerpts from the letters.