

Briefly noted

News in the [December 2, 2008](#) issue

Oral Roberts University has settled a year-old lawsuit with two former professors who claimed that their actions as whistleblowers cost them their jobs. Former professors Tim and Paulita Brooker alleged that ORU president Richard Roberts and his family engaged in lavish, unchecked spending and illegal activity. The school in Tulsa, Oklahoma, announced October 22 that litigation with the Brookers had been “successfully resolved through mediation” and said the terms of the settlement were confidential. Richard Roberts, the son of university founder and evangelist Oral Roberts, resigned last November amid the allegations. He had succeeded his father in 1993. The university was more than \$50 million in debt last fall, but it has seen an infusion of funds from Mart Green, a Christian retail businessperson who has supported it with a \$70 million donation.

A Maryland appeals court has ruled that a suburban megachurch that split from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in 1999 must relinquish millions of dollars in property back to the denomination. The Heart Church Ministries in Temple Hills, Maryland, must turn over more than \$30 million in property, including three sanctuaries, an office building and a large tract of property owned by the ministry, the Maryland Court of Special Appeals ruled in an opinion filed October 28. Thomas L. McCally, a lawyer for the denomination, views the decision as significant for the individual church and others with similar hierarchical structures.