

Briefly noted

News in the [July 14, 2009](#) issue

Christian leaders, including three members of President Obama's faith advisory council, have urged the president to make good on his promise of comprehensive immigration reform. Samuel Rodriguez, Noel Castellanos, Vashti McKenzie and Jim Wallis, of the group Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, said that the government must give immigration reform the same high-level priority as banks, auto companies and health care. "This is the urgency of the now," said McKenzie, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Wallis, Castellanos and McKenzie sit on the White House's faith advisory council. Rodriguez is president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. CCIR released a statement June 10 asking the president to back legislation that would reduce waiting times for immigrants separated from their families, to provide a process for foreign-born workers and their families already in the U.S. to earn citizenship, to expand legal avenues for workers and families to enter the U.S., and to examine solutions to the root causes of migration.

A federal appeals court has declared the erection of a Ten Commandments monument unconstitutional, citing the "unusual" circumstances of its placement on the courthouse grounds in a small Oklahoma county. In its June 8 ruling, the Tenth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals noted statements by county commissioners about the monument, including one who said, "I'm a Christian and I believe in this." The court said "a reasonable observer" in the community would know of the religious motivations of a part-time minister who raised private donations for the monument and secured quick approval for its placement. Like the Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol whose placement was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2005, the Oklahoma monument stood among other monuments in a public place. Unlike the Texas monument, which stood for 40 years before it was challenged, the Oklahoma monument was challenged within months of its unveiling.