

Briefly noted

News in the [May 17, 2005](#) issue

The church council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has recommended that its churchwide assembly in August approve interim sharing of the Eucharist between the ELCA and the United Methodist Church. The ELCA bishops earlier endorsed the step, which follows years of Lutheran–United Methodist dialogues. Under an interim relationship, congregations and regional bodies could hold joint communion services and explore shared ministry opportunities. Eventually, the two churches hope to inaugurate full communion, which would also allow for clergy of one church body to serve in congregations of the other. The ELCA already has full communion ties with the Episcopal Church, the Moravian Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

Five Muslims, all U.S. citizens who said they were detained at the border as they were returning from a religious conference in Toronto, have filed a federal suit in New York against the Department of Homeland Security, alleging that they were targets of ethnic and religious profiling. The Muslims said they were detained at separate times in December and subjected to interrogation, fingerprinting and being photographed despite the fact that four of them had U.S.-issued passports and the fifth had a New York state driver's license. The religious conference was one held annually by Muslim groups in Canada. The suit was filed April 20 by the Council for American-Islamic Relations and the New York Civil Liberties Union, whose director said the Muslims were victims of the government's "overzealous and counterproductive" profiling.

The U.S. Air Force Academy has begun a mandatory class in religious tolerance for cadets and staff. In the past four years, the 4,300-student school near Colorado Springs, Colorado, has received 55 complaints of religious discrimination. The grievances included religious slurs against non-Christian cadets, proselytizing by evangelical students and special treatment given to Christian students and staff. The school requires one-time attendance at a 50-minute class on "respecting spiritual values."

Rabbis representing the Reform, Conservative/Masorti and Reconstructionist movements in Israel have announced that they support the right of gay and lesbians to hold a controversial festival in Jerusalem August 18-28. The International WorldPride festival—which will include a parade in downtown Jerusalem—has been denounced by leading Orthodox Jewish clerics in Israel, along with Muslim and Christian clerics in Israel and abroad. U.S. evangelicals have launched a petition campaign to prevent the event from taking place. The non-Orthodox rabbis said they felt compelled to back the event to counter the “intolerance” and “homophobia” of some of their colleagues. Reform Rabbi Na’amah Kelman-Ezrachi, the first woman rabbi ordained in Israel, said that “it is incumbent to welcome the WorldPride parade and conference and to march with it.”