

Briefly noted

News in the [October 31, 2006](#) issue

Officials of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. are considering selling their Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, headquarters building, which currently houses Baptist offices in less than half of the space available. “We want to be good stewards of our resources and to ‘right-size’ to fit our current space requirements,” said A. Roy Medley, the American Baptists’ general secretary. The denomination’s General Board Executive Committee unanimously voted in September to recommend the sale; the full board is expected to act on the suggestion when it meets in mid-November. The recommendation comes as the American Baptists and other churches face changing giving patterns among members, who often wish to fund specific causes rather than the budget of a central office. If the three-story circular building—now 42 years old—is sold, proceeds will be used to create an endowment fund for the ABCUSA, a spokesperson said.

Pope Benedict XVI is set to revive the Latin version of the Roman Catholic mass, issuing a papal decree that could restore traditional forms of worship that fell out of favor 40 years ago. Rome’s *Il Giornale* newspaper reported October 11 that the decree, known as a *motu proprio*, would relax current church restrictions on the Latin mass known as the Tridentine rite. The change would allow priests to celebrate mass in Latin without having to seek permission of local bishops. A source close to Benedict confirmed the report, saying the pope could issue the document by the end of November in a bid to heal a rupture between church tradition and modern worship that occurred in the wake of the Second Vatican Council.

Roman Catholics in Poland have been warned against conversing with Jehovah’s Witnesses, a religious movement which has spread rapidly in the country since the collapse of communist rule 17 years ago. “It is important to be aware who we are talking to—members of a non-Christian community who do not recognize the dogmas of Holy Trinity or Incarnation and propose a false path to life and salvation,” the church’s Poznan archdiocese said in an October 5 statement. The Witnesses, founded in the United States in 1872, claim 129,000 members in 1,800 congregations in Poland, making them the country’s third largest religious community after the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Said the Poznan archdiocese:

“It should be stressed that not every Catholic is capable of engaging in theological dialogue with Watchtower Society members,” especially not those Catholics “who lack basic knowledge of their own faith and cannot use Holy Scripture properly.”