

Briefly noted

News in the [February 20, 2007](#) issue

The president of the All Africa Council of Churches, a fellowship of mainline Protestant, Orthodox and indigenous Christians, has called Pentecostalism a “disease” spreading across Africa, according to an AACCC news release. Speaking last month at the Ecumenical Platform of the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, Nyansako-ni-Nku seemed to direct his remarks at a type of Pentecostal prosperity preacher who “gets richer and the congregation gets poorer.” Nyansako, who is moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, exhorted “mainline churches [to] wake up to the challenge and provide direction; otherwise many people will follow these Pentecostal churches.”

The tiny church in the town of Stratford-on-Avon, England, where William Shakespeare was baptized and buried is falling apart, and fans of the bard are being asked to help raise more than \$6 million to repair the ravages of eight centuries. Above the burial spot, inscribed simply “Will Shakspeare, Gent,” Holy Trinity Church’s spire is cracked, its windows are broken, its bricks are eroding and its roof is leaking. Dry rot and generations of beetle infestations have added to the 800-year-old church’s woes. Church officials estimate that it will take \$6.3 million to repair all the damage—and at least \$400,000 of that is needed urgently for work on the spire alone.

Russia’s Orthodox Church has bought a Roman Catholic church and monastery in Amsterdam and plans to turn them into the largest Orthodox complex outside Russia. “Many churches have had to close here, especially in suburban areas, and all kinds of things are happening to them,” explained Pieter Kohnen, spokesperson for the Dutch Catholic Bishops’ Conference. Attendance has plummeted at Dutch Catholic parishes in the past 10 years.