

Briefly noted

News in the [August 7, 2007](#) issue

Governor Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana has signed into law two bills banning a controversial form of late-term abortion, making that state the first to outlaw the procedure after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a federal ban in April. Under the two laws, which went into effect July 13, anyone convicted of performing “a partial birth abortion . . . thereby kills a human fetus” and can be imprisoned for one to 10 years, fined from \$10,000 to \$100,000, or both. Women who have the procedure will not be subjected to fines or jail time under the new laws. A doctor charged with the crime can seek a hearing before the State Board of Medical Examiners to determine whether the procedure was necessary to save the mother’s life—an exemption under the new laws. Earlier in July, Blanco signed into law a bill that requires that a woman be told before an abortion that a fetus can feel pain.

Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod convention delegates meeting in Houston July 16 voted, 846-345, to enter into fellowship with the American Association of Lutheran Churches. The declaration recognizes doctrinal agreement and approves intercommunion and pulpit exchanges with the 78-congregation AALC, based in Minnesota, and the much larger LCMS. The conservative AALC was established in 1987 by pastors and congregations concerned about doctrinal positions—especially on the authority of scripture—of the church bodies involved in the merger negotiations of the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America, which became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988.

Already reeling from “increasing numbers of abductions, extrajudicial killings and other human rights violations,” Philippine Protestant and Catholic church leaders have condemned new antiterror legislation. The Human Security Act, which took effect July 15, is “a travesty against God’s will for human freedom,” the general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdez, told Ecumenical News International. Under the antiterror law—said to be modeled on a similar one in the U.S.—authorities can wiretap the telephone and freeze the bank accounts of anyone they suspect to be a terrorist. Among other provisions, the authorities will also be able to control public gatherings. Catholic

Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez of Kalookan told Catholic-run Radio Veritas, “The antiterror law will lead to greater tumult, especially when used to deal with those who do not agree with the government’s thinking.”