

Briefly noted

News in the [November 2, 2004](#) issue

New guidelines for starting Southern Baptist churches ask members of new congregations to affirm biblical inerrancy and male-only deacons. The guidelines, adopted October 6 by trustees of the North American Mission Board, do not apply to existing Southern Baptist congregations but can be applied to the 1,500 new churches planted by NAMB each year. Though the guidelines could be used to exclude funding of new congregations that decline to adhere to its standards, officials of the Southern Baptist agency said the guidelines won't be used for that purpose. "It's a statement of guidelines, not a checklist of dos and don'ts," said Martin King, a NAMB spokesman.

In light of the thousands who have died or are missing in the wake of tropical storm Jeanne in Haiti, a nation already beset by political violence, an American Baptist official has asked the White House to grant Temporary Protected Status to Haitians now in the United States. The letter from Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, executive director for the American Baptist Churches' national ministries, asked President Bush to grant that request from Haiti's Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue. The TPS program was begun to protect people who are temporarily unable to return to their homelands.

The Catholic Diocese of Tucson, Arizona, filed for bankruptcy protection September 20, making it the second diocese in U.S. history to take such a step. Like the Portland, Oregon, archdiocese, which declared bankruptcy in July, the Arizona diocese sought legal protection after dealing with ongoing lawsuits concerning sexual abuse of children by parish priests. The Tucson diocese also made the move because it is facing serious debt, the Associated Press reported. It had a \$7 million deficit in unrestricted net assets and \$4.64 million in long-term debt as of June 30, according to its financial statement.