

Briefly noted

News in the [April 20, 2010](#) issue

About 2,000 Canadian members of a breakaway Anglican group and a small group of U.S. Anglican dissidents said in March that they have accepted the offer made by Pope Benedict XVI last October that permits disaffected congregations to defect to Rome while keeping many Anglican traditions, including married priests. The agreement will allow members of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada, which claims about 40 churches, to keep its own bishops. A similar move said to affect about 100 U.S. churches was approved in Orlando, Florida, by the Anglican Church in America. By contrast, another body of traditional Anglicans—the Anglican Church in North America, which counts 700 parishes and about 100,000 members—remains aligned with conservative Anglicans in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Religious leaders from around the world pledged at a meeting in the Netherlands to work to eliminate the stigma and discrimination of those living with HIV/AIDS. “Religious leaders can play a vital role in the AIDS response,” said Michael Sidibe, executive director of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS in his opening address to the summit. The first High Level Summit of Religious Leaders on HIV, held March 22–23, included some 40 Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh leaders. U.S. participants included Calvin O. Butts III, pastor of New York’s famed Abyssinian Baptist Church; Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly. The leaders committed to “work to end the silence that fosters stigma and discrimination.”

One year after a majority of Americans said they hoped the sour economy would not impact their church giving, three in ten Americans now say they’re putting less in the offering plate, a Barna Group study shows. Compared to a similar study Barna conducted at the end of 2008, the percentage of Americans who have reduced their donations has increased by a staggering 45 percent. Many of those who traditionally give to their congregations have been able to maintain their usual level of giving, but those who have not substantially reduced their giving. Almost one-quarter of church donors cut their contributions by at least 20 percent. The

Barna study was based on telephone interviews in January and early February with a nationwide sample of 1,008 adults.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will vote this summer on a budget that is \$1.65 million smaller than the current spending plan. The CBF Coordinating Council voted February 19 to recommend a \$14.5 million budget for 2010-11, to be presented at the organization's General Assembly June 23-26 in Charlotte, North Carolina. CBF moderator Hal Bass called it "a realistic budget" after more than a year of reduced spending. Daniel Vestal, the Fellowship's executive coordinator, described the 20-year-old organization as "financially plateaued" and said it has been for about four or five years. "Obviously we are living in a financially challenging time right now," he said.