

Faith Digest: Bad sex a problem

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Bad sex bigger problem than religious differences. According to a new study from the Washington-based [Public Religion Research Institute](#), conducted in partnership with Religion News Service, 54 percent of Americans surveyed said an unsatisfying sex life is a major problem for a relationship or marriage, while only 29 percent cited a couple's differing religious beliefs as a major problem. Only white evangelicals—56 percent—seemed to focus on religious difference as a big relationship issue. But that doesn't mean they're not concerned about a bad sex life—57 percent see it as a major problem. Catholics also stand out in the study: Relatively few Catholics—19 percent—consider differing religious beliefs a big concern for a couple. The Catholic Church, meanwhile, encourages a shared faith and typically frowns on a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic within the church. The survey of 1,021 Americans was conducted between Feb. 6 and 10, and it has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Newtown prayers spark Missouri Synod Lutheran dust-up. Matthew Harrison, leader of the [Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod](#), censured a pastor for participating in a prayer service for victims of the Sandy Hook school massacre. Harrison asked Rob Morris, pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Newtown, Conn., to apologize for participating in a public interfaith vigil with President Obama two days after a gunman killed 20 children and six adults at the town's elementary school. Morris apologized and Harrison accepted, but the exchange sparked a media firestorm with charges that the 2.4 million-member denomination was intolerant, insensitive or both. Harrison subsequently said he made a bad situation even worse. His handling of the Newtown service is almost certain to be a factor as Harrison seeks re-election in July when delegates gather in St.

Louis for their triennial convention. The Missouri Synod's constitution prohibits members from taking part in worship services that blend the beliefs and practices of Lutherans with those of other faiths and Christian denominations.

Cash-strapped NCC to move to D.C. The [National Council of Churches](#) is moving its headquarters from New York City to Washington, a change the cash-strapped ecumenical group predicts will save as much as \$500,000 over time. The move is part of a restructuring that eliminated six administrative positions and outsourced human resources and other NCC departments. In its 2011 annual report—the latest available—the NCC showed \$4.3 million in revenues and \$5.6 million in expenses. The NCC will transform its current D.C. satellite office—in a building owned by the United Methodist Church across the street from the U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court—into its national headquarters.

Long sued over alleged Ponzi scheme. Bishop Eddie Long, an Atlanta megachurch pastor, faces a suit from former parishioners who say he encouraged them to invest in a company operating an alleged Ponzi scheme. A dozen former members of [New Birth Missionary Baptist Church](#) in Lithonia, Ga., filed suit in DeKalb County court in late January. After Long introduced businessman Ephren W. Taylor as his friend, the former New Birth members lost more than \$1 million investing with the self-described “social capitalist.” The suit says Long’s assistant had been warned Taylor was running a \$3 million capital deficit, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported. The Securities and Exchange Commission charged Taylor in 2012 with running a Ponzi scheme, and a civil case against him is pending. SEC officials said he promised to use investments for charity and to help economically challenged areas but instead diverted the funds he received after speaking to churches, including New Birth, to pay other investors and finance business and personal expenses.