

Faith Digest: Driscoll apologizes for marketing campaign

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Driscoll apologizes for marketing campaign. Mark Driscoll, Seattle megachurch pastor, wrote a letter to his congregation to explain recent controversies, including the marketing campaign intended to place the book, [Real Marriage](#), on *The New York Times* best-seller list. Driscoll has been an influential pastor within Reformed evangelical circles, helping to found the Acts 29 church-starting network, and [Mars Hill Church](#) attracts 14,000 people at 15 locations in five states each Sunday. In recent months, reports emerged that Driscoll plagiarized some of the material in his books. *World* magazine also reported Driscoll hired a firm to buy copies of the book he wrote with his wife, Grace, so it would top the best-seller lists. In a letter posted March 15 on Reddit, Driscoll apologized for using the marketing strategy and said he would quit social media for the rest of 2014 to “reset” his life. “The distractions it can cause for my family and our church family are not fruitful or helpful at this time,” he said.

Czech priest-philosopher Halik wins Templeton Prize. Tomas Halik, a Roman Catholic priest and philosopher, onetime Czech political activist and an advocate for religious freedom and interfaith dialogue, won the [2014 Templeton Prize](#) for religious and spiritual progress. Halik, 65,



a convert to Catholicism whose influences include religious figures such as Mother Teresa and author Graham Greene, in recent years has been increasingly active in building bridges between people of different faiths and between those who claim a religious tradition and those who do not. Halik has taught the sociology of religion at Charles University in Prague since 1997. One of his books, *Patience With God*, was named the European Theological Book of 2009-10. The Templeton Prize, valued at about \$1.8 million, is one of the largest awards given annually to an individual. Founded in 1972, the award honors a living person “who has made exceptional contributions to affirming life’s spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery or practical works.” Previous Templeton laureates include Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

Retired Methodist bishop may face trial for officiating at gay wedding. Complaints have been filed against a retired United Methodist bishop who presided over a same-sex wedding of two men in defiance of his denomination’s rules prohibiting such ceremonies. Melvin G. Talbert is the highest clergyperson to have broken the church’s official laws and the only known bishop to do so. He officiated at the Oct. 25 union of two men in Birmingham, Ala., even after the local bishop and the executive committee of the Council of Bishops urged Talbert not to go ahead with the ceremony. Days later, the denomination’s Council of Bishops requested complaints be filed against Talbert. United Methodist church law calls homosexuality “incompatible with Christian teaching,” and the denomination bans clergy from performing and churches from hosting “ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions.”

Bats in the belfry a serious matter for Anglicans. Bats are making life

unbearable for congregations by defecating on worshippers from roofs as well as bell towers, according to a report to the Church Buildings Council of the Church of England. Church wardens say bat droppings can seriously damage a person's health. Droppings and urine present a risk of gastrointestinal infection through accidental hand-to-mouth transfer. The report prepared by academics at Bristol University suggests that with clever use of lighting systems and acoustic devices, bats can be kept away from parts of churches.