

Faith Digest: Happiness found in church

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Happiness found in church, not shopping mall. Protestant and Catholic women in the United States have grown unhappier since stores have stayed open on Sundays, according to a study by economists from Israel's Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Chicago's DePaul University. The study found the repeal of "blue law" restrictions on Sunday shopping has corresponded with lower church attendance for white women. Meanwhile, the probability of women becoming unhappy increased by 17 percent. The study concludes that "an important part of the decline in women's happiness during the last three decades can be explained by decline in religious participation," said Danny Cohen-Zada, an economics scholar at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. The researchers analyzed churchgoing habits of women from the [National Opinion Research Center's General Social Survey](#), which has collected information about American characteristics and attitudes from 1972 to 2008. They also looked at data from states that have repealed "blue laws" restricting Sunday commerce—Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Vermont—compared to others with no change.

Western Wall partition may offer one-way viewing. Jewish authorities at Jerusalem's [Western Wall](#) hope to replace the existing opaque partition that separates the men's and women's prayer areas with one that will enable female worshippers to see into the men's section but not vice-versa. The move follows years of complaints by female worshippers who have been unable to see into the men's section, even during family bar mitzvahs. Currently, female relatives who want to see a bar mitzvah from the women's section must stand on plastic chairs and peer over the top of the tall barrier, called a mechitza. Mechitzas exist in all Orthodox synagogues

because Jewish law prohibits men and women from praying together, and it prohibits men from seeing women during prayer.

World Vision wins employment dispute. [World Vision](#), the Christian humanitarian organization, can fire employees who disagree with its theological tenets, a federal appeals court ruled. In a 2-1 decision, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said World Vision is a religious corporation and therefore exempt from a federal law that bars faith-based discrimination. Three employees, including two who had worked at World Vision 10 years, were fired in 2006 because they did not believe in the divinity of Jesus or the doctrine of the Trinity. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars religious discrimination, but it carves out an exemption for companies engaged in a religious purpose, the court ruled.