

Faith Digest

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Preacher agrees to stop rocking the boat. Technically, Michael Ihedioha still can share his faith aboard the Staten Island Ferry. But odds are that the preacher who scuffled with cops on the boat will remain mum—or greatly reduce the volume—during the 25-minute ride, after cutting a plea deal to a misdemeanor obstruction charge. Ihedioha will be sentenced on June 18 to three years' probation stemming from an Oct. 23 incident on a ferry from Manhattan to Staten Island. According to court records, Ihedioha, 47, originally from Nigeria, was preaching around 12:45 a.m. with his arms outstretched, blocking an aisle. A police officer aboard the boat approached and told Ihedioha three times to keep moving. The preacher refused to move and had to be removed forcibly. After Ihedioha was taken to a secure location, he allegedly bit the officer's forearm, bruising it. Ihedioha was charged with felony second-degree assault, as well as obstructing government administration, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. Under the plea deal, Ihedioha, pastor of Christ the Lord Evangelistic Association, agreed to ride the ferry only for transportation and to abide by all posted rules.

NCAA bans eye black with messages. The [National Collegiate Athletic Association](#) has banned the use of eye black with messages—a practice prominently used by former University of Florida star quarterback Tim Tebow to display Bible verses. The NCAA's Playing Rules Oversight Panel approved a policy that players cannot place symbols or messages on the black strips under their eyes, which are used to reduce glare from the sun. "When this rule was proposed the committee did not focus on any one team or student athlete," said Cameron Schuh, a spokesman for the NCAA. "That measure reinforces what the intended use of eye black is, which is to shade the eyes from the sun."

City cannot silence church bells. A federal court has ruled an ordinance in Phoenix, Ariz., trying to limit the sound of church bells is an unconstitutional impingement on religious expression. In 2007, when Christ the King Cathedral moved to its current location, neighbors complained the church's electronic bells—rung every hour, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.—violated the city's noise ordinance. The ordinance, which prohibits “any unusual or disturbing” sound, allows ice cream trucks to ring at 70 decibels. The church's bells rang at 67 decibels. Although the church attempted to appease neighbors by erecting a buffer on its speakers and passing out informational flyers, the city filed a misdemeanor complaint last year. Pastor Rick Painter was found guilty in city court and sentenced to 10 days in jail and three years probation, but he never served time in jail. When Painter appealed that decision, a state court limited the chiming to Sundays and designated holidays, and set a limit of 60 decibels. Two nearby churches, St. Mark Roman Catholic Church and First Christian Church, joined Painter in a federal lawsuit last September. The federal court ruled in favor of the church bells, saying the city cannot prohibit “sound generated in the course of religious expression.”