

Eight Associated Church Press awards for the *Century*

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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I'm just back from Toronto, where I attended the annual gathering of the Associated Church Press. The event was capped by an [awards ceremony for work published in 2014](#), at which the *Century* was given the "award of merit" (i.e., second place) in the best in class category for national and international magazines.

We also won seven additional awards honoring specific work from last year. Thanks to all who wrote it and all who read it.

If you missed these pieces when they came out and you're not a subscriber, you can read a few of them online for free—we've returned them temporarily to ["metered" status](#), which means you get a couple freebies (whether from this list or from our current content) before being blocked from further access.

Better yet, [subscribe](#) and read them all.

Award of Excellence (first place)

Devotional/inspirational. [Holy stuff: What's left when a church closes](#), by **L. Gail Irwin**. "The church is not a building," says the song. Yet most churches have walls, a basement, and decades of accumulated accoutrements.

Poetry. [The deft of it](#), by **Brian Doyle**

Award of Merit (second place)

Column. [Church in the Making](#). **Carol Howard Merritt** reflects on church reinvention and what it means for leaders, congregations, and denominations.

Theological reflection. [Why we mess things up: Sin is real but not "original,"](#) by **Charles Hefling**. Does it always happen that humans sin?

Obviously not. But is there any chance that they will *not* sin?

Critical review. [The poet and politics](#), by **Jeff Gundy**. As two new biographies and a massive collection of poems show, Denise Levertov's distinctive work and life remain relevant and rewarding.

Honorable Mention (third place)

Theme issue, section, or series. May 28 cover package on weddings:

[Why a church wedding? Truth telling about Christian marriage](#), by **B. J. Hutto**. Some ask why a pastor would pass up a chance to draw a young couple into the church. But perhaps that's the wrong question.

[Church\(y\) weddings: When worship is the main event](#), by **Steve Thorngate**. In a culture of personalized weddings, is a very liturgical ceremony simply the church nerd's niche? Or might it function as a corrective?

[Blessings all around: When my parishioner got ordained online](#), by **Katherine Willis Pershey**. I realized that my parishioner wasn't looking for my help finding a way out of officiating her friends' wedding. What she wanted was my blessing.

[Mixed and matched: Challenges of interfaith weddings](#), by **Celeste Kennel-Shank**. Interfaith couples can connect to their traditions and find commonality through symbols, such as a strand of rope that signifies unity and strength.

Poetry. [Book of Kells](#), by **Barbara Crooker**