

Monday digest

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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New today (and Friday) from the *Century*:

- Jana Riess on [Mormon assimilation](#): "Mormons are in the familiar situation of being on the defensive theologically and politically. But they are also in terra incognita: they are viewed as leading the way in preserving family values."
- Peter Marty, [do you love people?](#) "A pastor 30 years older than I was interviewing me for my first parish assignment. His final question unsettled me." (subscription required)
- David Heim comments on the fact that almost a third of wedding couples now choose to [have a friend or family member preside](#): "While real ministers may publicly lament this sign of decreasing religiosity, many are no doubt secretly happy to be involved in fewer weddings with couples who have no religious inclinations."
- Harold Bush reviews [Susan Harris's book on American involvement in the Philippines](#) at the turn of the 20th century: "Once upon a time, there was a large, wealthy and powerful country that wanted to help a smaller, struggling, powerless country find a pathway into a more stable, democratic, freedom-loving and civilized future." (subscription required)

- David Lewicki wants to know [what class you are](#): "I always assumed we were 'upper middle class' with middle-class sensibilities. In fact, we probably started that way. But by the time I graduated from high school...we were probably rich."
- Clay Oglesbee [blogs the lectionary](#): "Texts about "striving" make me itch. They bring to mind our own cultural commitments to speak about lifting ourselves by our own bootstraps to reach high goals."
- Three poems by John Petrenka: "[-O-](#)," "[After](#)" and "[Matins](#)"

In the news:

- [Criminals in Ala. offered choice between pews and the pokey](#)
- [Rob Bell isn't first megachurch pastor to seek life beyond the pulpit](#)
- [Muslim students vow appeal in free speech conviction](#)
- [Amnesty International slams Irish Catholic Church on abuse](#)
- [Suicide bomber attacks packed Indonesian church](#)

Links from elsewhere:

- RIP [Wangari Maathai](#)
- [A Catholic call to abolish the death penalty](#)
- A legal immigrant is handcuffed for no reason--[on church grounds](#).