

The most-read *Century* articles

December 26, 2013

Here are the *Century* magazine articles that got read the most online this year. Thanks for reading.

**1) [Singing from one book: Why hymnals matter](#), by Mary Louise Bringle.**

“Many churchgoers greet the announcement of a new hymnal with a single puzzled, even outraged question: Why?”

**2) [Sticky faith: What keeps kids connected to church?](#) by Jen Bradbury.**

“We youth ministers have often tried to make our ministries cool enough to compete. But every teen knows that the church is not cool.”

**3) [Caught in the middle: On abortion and homosexuality](#), by Wendell Berry.**

“Nowhere has our callow politics asserted itself more thoughtlessly and noisily than in the politicization of personal or private life.”

**4) [Spiritual cul-de-sac: How the church fails the divorced](#), by Carolyn Call.**

“Divorce is a time when we most need our brothers and sisters in faith. Yet churches and clergy often ignore divorcing people.”

**5) [What's really killing the church](#), by Samuel Wells.**

“I asked an older English woman who left the church long ago why she now wants to come back. Her response made the color drain from my face.”

**6) [The purpose of dinosaurs: Extinction and the goodness of God](#), by**

**Bethany Sollereder.** “If God is both the author and lover of creation, why would God develop complex beings through a process that necessitates species extinction?”

**7) [What's the text? Alternatives to the common lectionary](#), by Steve**

**Thorngate.** "The *RCL* includes a few 'optional' readings, to be subbed in as needed. Of course, it's all optional—and there are other lectionaries out there."

**8) [The Bible's violent God](#), by John M. Buchanan.** "Most media representations of the biblical story are too literal. In the effort to get the story's details right, the storyteller misses the point."

**9) [Why the cross? God's at-one-ment with humanity](#), by Charles Hefling.**

"Some questions won't go away. The creed says Jesus was crucified 'for us,' but what do those two little words mean? What good is the cross?"

**10) [R-rated: How to read the Bible with children](#), by Sarah Hinlicky Wilson.**

"Much of the Bible is not fit for children—it's a book to ease little ones into, not drop them in cold. So what's the best way to go about this?"

**11) [The Protestant: My first encounter](#), by Brian Doyle.** "The Protestant was sitting alone at a table in the far corner. I assumed it was because no one else spoke Protestant."

**12) [How to con a pastor: A few friendly pointers](#), by Benjamin J. Dueholm.**

"So you've decided to make your way in life by bilking ministers. How can you increase your odds of walking away with some cash?"

**13) [The good kind of liberalism: Reviving a theological tradition](#), by Theo**

**Hobson.** "Liberalism's collapse was so dramatic that most theologians distanced themselves from the tradition, as if to avoid infection. But now the dust has settled."