

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 Carlyne 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 Sollereeder. “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."