

A time for change

by [John Buchanan](#) in the [September 30, 2015](#) issue



There is a time for everything, the preacher in Ecclesiastes observed. It is now time for new leadership at the *Christian Century*. I have told the *Century's* board of trustees of my intention to retire as editor/publisher as of December 31.

I've loved my association with the magazine since I became editor/publisher in February 1999. The *Christian Century* has been a reliable and invaluable resource and companion since I first started reading the journal in divinity school and as a young pastor in the early 1960s. Over the years I relied on it to tell me what was happening in theology, biblical ethics, and the global church. I depended on the *Century* for book recommendations. I looked to it for thoughtful Christian social commentary, whether the topic was civil rights, poverty, war, or the conflicts in the Middle East.

It's been a great honor and privilege to have my name on the masthead. One of the first things I did when I started at the *Century* was to arrange for photos of Reinhold Niebuhr and Martin Luther King Jr. to be displayed in the lobby alongside quotations from articles that they wrote for the *Century*. Every time I come to work I'm reminded of whose footsteps we seek to follow.

A wonderful dimension to my work has been hearing from and meeting many loyal *Century* readers. I've come to regard the readership as a national—and international—community of faithful inquiry, engaged in an ongoing conversation about critical issues.

The best part of my job has been the association with the remarkable individuals who constitute the staff and who turn out a lively, attractive, and thoughtful magazine every two weeks. I'm grateful beyond words for them.

Some time ago the magazine defined its mission in a phrase: helping Christians to “think critically and live faithfully.” That mission is more important than ever.

People of faith need an authentic, thoughtful, dialogical voice in the midst of a cacophony of extremist religious and political rhetoric. And the culture needs to hear from a Christian voice that is intellectually alive, a creative partner in conversations about justice, peace, and a sustainable future. Whatever changes lie ahead, the magazine remains committed to being that voice of faith for many years to come.