

Alan Geyer, former *Century* editor, dies

News in the [December 27, 2011](#) issue

Alan F. Geyer, 80, a widely published Christian ethicist and ecumenical leader and a former editor of the *Christian Century*, died November 28. Most recently he was canon ethicist at the Washington National Cathedral and professor of political ethics and ecumenics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

Geyer was editor of the *Century* from 1968 to 1972. James Wall, who succeeded him as editor, said that Geyer brought to the magazine "a greater concentration on academic rigor." Wall added that Geyer tried to instill in readers "a sense of mission that went well beyond the local parish."

Before becoming *Century* editor, Geyer was professor of political science at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, and director of international relations for the United Church of Christ, based at the Church Center for the United Nations.

Returning to academia and interdenominational relations in 1972, Geyer became the Dag Hammarskjöld Professor of Peace Studies and Political Science at Colgate University for five years. For a decade, ending in 1987, he served as the founding executive director of the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy in Washington, D.C., an ecumenical study center applying Christian values to public policy.

Geyer joined the faculty of Wesley Theological Seminary in 1987. From 1995 to 2005 he served the Washington National Cathedral in a variety of positions, including canon ecumenist and canon ethicist.

Geyer was born August 3, 1931, in Dover, New Jersey, where his father was a Methodist pastor. He earned degrees from Ohio Wesleyan University and Boston University School of Theology. His expertise in political analysis was reflected in his selection as primary author of the 1986 statement on nuclear disarmament by the United Methodist Council of Bishops, "In Defense of Creation."

He was the author or coauthor of 20 books, including *Piety and Politics* (1961), *The Idea of Disarmament: Rethinking the Unthinkable* (1982), *Redeeming the City: Theology, Politics and Urban Policy* (1982), *Lines in the Sand: Justice and the Gulf War* (1992), *Christianity and the Superpowers: Religion, Politics, and History in U.S.-U.S.S.R. Relations* (1990) and *Ideology in America* (1997).