

The most popular *Century* articles of the year

December 26, 2011

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

1. "[**You can't make this up: The limits of self-made religion,**](#)" by **Lillian Daniel**: "If we got all these spiritual-not-religious people together, they might find out that most of America agrees with them. But getting them together would be way too much like church."
2. "[**Normal Mormons: A 'model minority' blends in,**](#)" by **Jana Riess**: "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."
3. "[**Loose connections: What's happening to church membership?**](#)" by **Amy Frykholm**: "Most churches still approach membership the way they did in the 1960s. But if new modes of affiliation are appearing, churches will need new ways of thinking about membership."
4. "[**Voice lessons: Learning to preach,**](#)" by **William H. Willimon**: "King George was terrified to be in front of a microphone. That's nothing compared to going head to head with the average North American congregation with nothing but three points and a poem."
5. "[**Why do men stay away?**](#)" by **Thomas G. Long**: "Men and the church are often at odds. Sadly, many of the reasons

researchers give for this are as insulting as they are misguided."

6. "**Same-sex complementarity: A theology of marriage,**" by **Eugene F. Rogers Jr.:** "Marriage is a means by which God draws a couple close by turning their limits to their good. And no conservative I know has seriously argued that same-sex couples need sanctification any less than opposite-sex couples do."
7. "**New harmonies: Music and identity at four congregations,**" by **Steve Thorngate:** "Some post-worship-war churches revel in musical eclecticism. Others have a singular approach and sound, rendering the terms *traditional* and *contemporary* irrelevant."
8. "**And Jesus sang,**" by **Barbara Brown Taylor:** "After Jesus shared his last supper with his friends, they sang a hymn together. There is every reason to believe it was the Hallel, Psalms 113 through 118. How have I missed this before?"
9. "**Why sermons bore us,**" by **Thomas G. Long:** "Much of the snickering about boring sermons comes not because we expect so little but because we have hoped for so much. A hunger persists for a word from the Lord—without which we are left to our boring selves."
10. "**Advice and consent: Monogamy in the age of Dan Savage,**" by **Benjamin J. Dueholm:** "While Dan Savage, an atheist, wouldn't put it this way, the popular sex columnist exegetes rules about relationships with the precision of a rabbi or canon lawyer. Pastors should pay attention."