2014 Year in Review

Each year, EQUIP provides this Year in Review to help orient you with what happened on the streets and in the churches in the U.S. in the past year. If you are not a missionary, we invite you to share this with your friends who are. Download this resource (and previous years’ reviews) here. Electronic versions of the Year in Review include links to source websites and a wealth of additional information.

News in the U.S. Church

- *Time* magazine’s person of the year: medical missionaries fighting Ebola, many are Evangelical Christians.  
- *Christianity Today*’s coverage of *Time*’s choice (above).  
- U.S.-Cuba relations begin to thaw, and Pope Francis played a role.  
- A positive summary of Pope Francis in 2014 by the *LA Times* includes his work with the poor and meeting with victims of clerical sexual abuse.  
- Deaths of pastor Mile Munroe, Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church, and a list of 14 other religious figures who died in 2014, including historian and theologian Vincent Gordon Harding.

Issues and Trends in the U.S. Church

- Colin Hansen’s top 10 theology stories, including the taboo of mental illness in the church, the prevalence of sexual abuse in the church, and the dire situation of the few remaining Christians in Iraq.  
- Big changes coming to Calvary Chapel with Chuck Smith’s successor, Brian Brodersen.  
- Bob Jones University apologizes for mishandling sex-abuse cases, and an investigation recommends it "impose personnel action" upon its current chancellor.  
- Most-read articles from *Christianity Today*, including the Christian history behind the events in Ukraine, and “ Evangelicals’ Favorite Heresies.”  
- Most-read articles from the Gospel Coalition, including “Thoughts on Ferguson,” “4 Things Jesus Didn’t Die For,” and “Sex and the Single Woman.”  
- Mark Driscoll resigns from Mars Hill and the ministry is dissolved.  
- Trends in U.S. churches include more diversity, louder music.
Issues and Trends in the U.S. Church (continued)

- U.S. Hispanics are leaving the Catholic Church.  
  
- The status of world missions in 2014 from Gordon Conwell University, including statistics on Christian finance and world evangelization.  

Media

Books

- The best books of 2014 according to Christianity Today include “Strange Glory: The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,” and “The Rebirth of Latin American Christianity.”  
  
- Top books according to Tim Challies include “An Infinite Journey: Growing Toward Christlikeness,” and “Prayer” Experiencing Intimacy with God.”  
  
- Top books as chosen by the New York Times include “All the Light We Cannot See,” and “On Immunity: An Inoculation.”  
  
- Amazon.com’s list of top 20 books includes “Redeployment,” and “Everything I Never Told You.”  
  
- The top sellers on Amazon.com: #1 StrengthsFinder 2.0; #9 Jesus Calling; #10 Unbroken, the story of Louie Zemperini: Olympian, soldier, prisoner of war, and Christian convert.  
  
- A complete classical Christian-school reading list for grades 1-8.  

Movies

- The top grossing movies of 2014, including #1 Guardians of the Galaxy.  
  
- Christianity Today reviews the top three grossing movies: Guardians of the Galaxy, Mocking Jay: Part I, and Captain America.  
  
- PluggedIn.com (Focus on the Family) looks at the top films and DVD rentals of the year.  

Other Media

- The most popular song of the year was Happy (by Pharrell Williams), with other notables being All of Me (by John Legend), Counting Stars (by One Republic), All About That Bass (by Meghan Trainor), and Shake It Off (by Taylor Swift).  
  
- Topping the list of most-watched TV shows are The Big Bang Theory (apartment comedy about young adults) and two variations of NCIS (a crime investigation drama).  
  
- Video games and action figures are blended with popular games such as Skylanders and Disney Infinity.
News and Trends in U.S. Society in General

- **Top news stories as chosen by CCN.com readers** included the shooting of a black teenager Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, MO, and nation-wide protests; the Ebola crisis; and the disappearance of flight MH370. ①
- Biggest **news stories of 2014 from the Christian Post**, including Christian persecution around the world, and immigration and the border crisis. ①
- *Christianity Today*’s most-read “Gleanings”, including how megachurches spend their money, and Bill Gothard resigning amid sexual harassment investigations. ①
- Top political **stories from NBC** ① and PBS ① include the CIA torture report, and the deaths of African-Americans Michael Brown and Eric Garner by police officers, and the midterm election.
- A short video on **top Google searches** ① and a list of top searches, including Robin Williams, the World Cup, and Ebola. ①
- **Barna Group’s top findings** for 2014 include young adults questioning the value of their college degree, and what millennials want church to be like. ①
- What **new college freshmen** know (meds have always been an option for them) and don’t know (using Netscape as their web browser). ①
- A compendium of **top-10 lists from Time**, including top new gadgets and top new species. ①
- **Top financial stories** include the drop in oil prices, and cyber hacking. ①
- **Twitter enhances abuse reporting** in wake of “Gamergate” ① controversy. ①

Technology

- It’s predicted that by 2025 the **Internet of Things** (IoT) will be everywhere and you’ll be hard-pressed to find a device that’s not connected to the Web in some way. ①
- **Top tech news** included Big Data analytics that are helping fight crime; new wearable technology fitness trackers like Fitbit; and a cyber-attack on Sony Pictures for the film *The Interview*. ①
- Some of the **biggest tech stories** were the Heartbleed software flaw that threatened to cripple the Internet, Microsoft launching Office on iPads, and Apple announcing the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus with larger screens. ①
- USA *Today’s* **top free apps** for iPhone and Android devices included Elevate, a brain training app. ①
- EdTech named the **10 most popular stories about education and technology** ① including a story and interesting infographic: *Higher Ed’s New Normal*. ①
Pop Culture

- **Domestic violence took center stage in the NFL** with the Adrian Peterson and Ray Rice cases being followed by a strong anti-violence message from the NFL. 

- The **Ice Bucket Challenge for ALS** was a social-media-fueled fundraising campaign that went viral. ALS is a disease also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease. 

- **George Clooney**, the 1997 and 2006 "sexiest man alive" and sworn bachelor, marries British-Lebanese human rights lawyer **Amal Alamuddin** in an international paparazzi event of the year. 

- **Bill Cosby** is disgraced amidst the resurfacing of accusations of multiple cases of sexual misconduct over many years. 

- **Christianity Today** looked at the topic of **God in pop culture** in 2014. 

- A video memorializing filmmakers and actors who died in 2014 and a list from IMDB.com, including actors Robin Williams and Philip Seymour Hoffman. 

- “**Family**” TV shows are often unsuitable for children as they “will likely include sex, profanity and violence.”

Your Review

What would your review of 2014 look like? What stories were memorable to you? What trends did you follow? What stories would you have included that we missed? Contact us at equip@efca.org and tell us! You can also view and download previous issues here.


This review is just one of the many resources we offer. Contact us to find out more about learning resources — about various topics and in various modes — that can help you as you minister the love of Christ to others. We want to help you learn better today!