

# **Religion shaped 2008 in big, dramatic ways**

December 11, 2008

The unprecedented and extraordinary prominence of religion in the 2008 election was easily the year's top religion story.

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## **Christians have opportunities to shape lives through foster care**

December 11, 2008

While Scripture advocates taking care of orphans and widows, the church has abdicated that responsibility to the state, some Christian child-advocates insist.

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## **Merton's legacy looms large four decades after his death**

December 11, 2008

This month, many contemplative Christians—including an ever-growing number of evangelicals—are remembering the life of Trappist monk

Thomas Merton, who died 40 years ago in a freak accident.

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## **At 72, gospel music's best-selling artist won't slow down**

December 11, 2008

Bill Gaither may not be an A-list celebrity in some circles, but over a half century he has sold 20 million recordings and 20 million DVDs—more than any other gospel performer. And his impact exceeds mere sales figures.

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## **Faith Digest: Lutheran publisher announces cutbacks**

December 11, 2008

Lutheran publishing house Augsburg Fortress is cutting back operations, closing nine bookstores in the United States, laying off more than 50 employees and declining to publish new books in its consumer-oriented line.

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# **History's most notorious rude host gets a bum rap**

December 11, 2008

Christmas pageants everywhere dramatize a cold-hearted innkeeper, who shoos away the holy family to a lowly stable. Pointing to what he says is a mistranslation, one scholar is trying to rehabilitate the innkeeper's reputation.

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# **Global downturn necessitates increased U.S. anti-poverty efforts**

December 11, 2008

The global financial crisis makes it even more urgent that the United States not only take care of its own economy, but also redouble efforts to aid the world's poorest, according to a new report and several development experts.

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# **Studies show rise in greenhouse gases in 2007**

December 11, 2008

Greenhouse-gas emissions continued to rise in 2007, according to two new studies. But Southern Baptists are still divided over what, if anything, to do about it.

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# **Atheists sue Kentucky for requiring crediting homeland security to God**

December 11, 2008

An atheist-rights group and 10 Kentucky citizens are suing the commonwealth to remove a requirement that the state's Homeland Security office credit God for keeping residents safe from terrorism.

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# **A            'Simple            Christmas'**

# suggestion box

December 11, 2008

Here are some suggestions to reduce and reallocate Christmas spending habits: Design and make your own gifts. Bake something. Give gifts only to children....

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## **Tough economic times don't dim lights on Living Christmas Trees**

December 11, 2008

Rather than cutting back on lavish Christmas programs this year due to the economy, some church leaders insist hard times make them more valuable than ever.

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**Whose birthday are we**

# **celebrating?**

December 11, 2008

It's time to "Unplug the Christmas machine," according to a new book. And one church is trying it out for real.