

Formation blends learning, discipline, community

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Growing up in a Baptist church and later working part-time as a youth minister, Johnny Sears—director of the Academy for Spiritual Formation—believed his faith had to go deeper than a set of beliefs or activities.

Former Point of Grace member wants to share legacy of hymns

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Since retiring from the contemporary Christian group Point of Grace in 2008, Heather Payne has had her hands full raising four young children and serving in various ministries at First Baptist Church in Fisherville, Ky., where her husband, Brian, is pastor.

Line between inspiration and

insanity may be narrow

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Historic figures who started new religious movements—including Martin Luther, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy and Ellen White, as well as Jim Jones of the People's Temple and David Koresh of the Branch Davidians—were viewed by outsiders as delusional. The question is: How can you tell?

Actress pushes churches to reach out to prisoners

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Jesus said to love thy neighbor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the prisoners. So why do so many churches have such a hard time with that last one? Oscar-winning actress Hilary Swank, for one, is waiting for a good answer.

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Four in 10 Americans believe God created humans in something like their

present form within the last 10,000 years, a recent Gallup Poll revealed.

‘Heaven’s Rain’ producer talks about forgiveness on NBC

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A former Oklahoma state senator turned Hollywood filmmaker who plays his father in a new movie said a scene re-enacting his parents' murder 31 years ago was harder than he expected but worth it.

New York mosque named top religion story of 2010

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The protracted and contentious debate over plans to build an Islamic community center near Ground Zero in New York was the top religion story of 2010, according to a survey of religion journalists.

For 2010 top religion stories, a major case of deja vu

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The calendar may have said 2010, but for Pope Benedict XVI and much of his global flock, it looked and felt a lot like 2002. For the second time in a decade, charges of child molestation at the hands of Catholic priests dominated headlines—this time reaching the highest levels of the Vatican, as critics questioned whether Benedict himself mishandled abuse cases. The Roman Catholic Church wasn't the only institution battling a sense of deja vu, as some of the most controversial religion stories from the past 20 years returned to the headlines.

Gallup Poll: U.S. personal religiosity stable, influence declines

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A new Gallup poll shows that, while personal measures of religious sentiment have remained fairly high among Americans, their membership in houses of worship continues a long decline and they increasingly believe that religion is losing influence.

Divide over Islam dominated religious-freedom news in 2010

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Judging from end-of-year assessments published in the last few days, there seems fairly universal agreement among close observers of faith and public life that the biggest religion story of 2010 in this country was also the biggest religious-freedom story: Islam and its discontents.