

Preaching the news: Texts for preaching

by [Heidi Neumark](#) in the [May 1, 2013](#) issue

We wondered what kind of reading ministers rely on for inspiration or help in preaching—apart from reading commentaries on scripture or other materials directly related to the task. Do they draw on certain authors of fiction or nonfiction? Are they influenced by essays, poetry, magazines or children’s literature? Here are some reflections. —Ed.

In addition to the biblical text, the most important material for me tends to come from our context and from what I discern in the lives, community and world around us. Other than scripture, the writing I refer to and quote most frequently would be printed and online news sources. Because I live in New York City, I often turn to the *New York Times*, the *Daily News* and *El Diario*. Recently I have found helpful material in the *Huffington Post*.

I tend to think and preach in images, so I look for one particular image in a news story that becomes a window into the larger story. I try to find something that carries an emotional impact that connects with me and that I believe will connect with others.

Beyond the current news, I sometimes draw on prophetic writings and poetry. Because of the racial and ethnic diversity of my congregation, I try to highlight African-American and Latino voices. Examples I have drawn upon repeatedly are Martin Luther King Jr., Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Julia Esquivel, Maya Angelou and Elie Wiesel. I also use some of the Hasidic tales collected by Martin Buber.

Read [all reflections](#).