



Pastor's Perspective — Robbing the Text of Meaning

By Dr. Ron D. Lindholm, Senior Pastor

Shortly after surrendering to God's call to the gospel ministry, I attended a pastors' conference in a large church. The host and main speaker was the Pastor of that church, who was also a leader in the independent-fundamental Baptist movement of that day. The mood at the conference was both festive and militant, and the conferees, including yours truly, hung on his every word. I remember taking copious notes and dreaming of the day that I would be able to preach like him. But when I got home and began to pour over those notes and study the various Bible texts, I had my doubts, for no matter how much study I did, I wasn't able to see what he saw—and in time I understood the reason why. This pastor had violated a cardinal principle of interpretation. Instead of discovering the meaning intended by the author, he had imposed his own meaning (which is to rob the text of any meaning at all)—and then, based on that imposed meaning, had drawn fraudulent conclusions as to the contemporary significance of those texts.

On Easter Monday morning, I was reminded of that experience as I read *The Washington Post* article by Hamil R. Harris that reported on the Easter Sunday sermon preached by the Rev. Luis Leon at the St. John's Episcopal Church, where presidents have often attended. In the words of the article:

With President Obama and his family in the pews for Easter Sunday worship, the Rev. Luis Leon... took the opportunity to take a shot at political conservatives, arguing from the pulpit that some conservative positions are holding people back.

A text can't mean what it never meant.

Quoting from John 20:1-18, Leon said in the same way Jesus told Mary Magdalene not to hold onto him, it is time for conservatives to stop holding on to what he considers outdated stances on race, gender equality, homosexuals and immigrants.

"It drives me crazy when the captains of the religious right are always calling us back...for blacks to be back in the back of the bus...for women to be back in the kitchen...for immigrants to be back on their side of the border," Leon said.

Leon said people instead should use "Easter vision" to allow them to see the world in a different, more "wonderful" way.

After the sermon, Leon told the *Washington Post* that he was speaking about Mary realizing that she shouldn't hold on, accepting it, and changing from that point on.

"That is the invitation for all of us," Leon said. When asked to discuss his criticism of political conservatives, he said: "I will keep my thoughts there."

In my estimate, it would have been far better for the Rev. Leon to keep his thoughts to himself. Given the opportunity to speak of the fact and accomplishments of the resurrection, and how Christ-followers have the responsibility to share that message and not hold it to themselves, he chose instead to impose his own meaning and to make a political statement where there was and remains none. How sad....

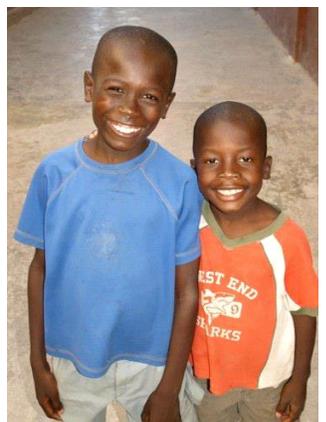
Trip to Haiti Brings Opportunity to Serve

Rose and Sherry Wasserstein will be going to Haiti this month on a mission trip to the orphanage where the two boys the Wassersteins plan to adopt live. Leaving April 26 and returning May 3, they will be working on projects to help the orphanage, teaching Vacation Bible School, having devotions with the older girls at the orphanage and getting to know Abner and Peterson better, as two of nearly 100 children living there.

The Centre for Children International Life Line d'Haiti Orphanage was established nearly 20 years ago by the Christian couple Nicole and Daniel Dieudonne, upon returning to their native Haiti after attending a Christian college in the United States. It is located in the poor village Dargout in Croix-des-Bouquets, near Port-au-Prince. The orphanage also provides a school for about 300 village children, a free clinic for the surrounding area, an on-site well providing a clean water source for the community, and food distribution and help in church construction. Daniel is a pastor and an overseer of nearly 200 churches throughout Haiti.

Daniel and Nicole desire to see Haiti turn to Jesus Christ and find life and hope in Him.

Please pray for the trip. Please pray that God would weave the hearts of the team (17 people) together for His purpose; that they would have a spirit of unity and servanthood; that the orphanage would continue to be a light and hope in a dark nation; that the kids and staff would be encouraged and touched by the visit, seeing God in them; that the projects would accomplish what He desires; and the children would grow from the VBS and devotion times. Please pray for protection traveling to and around Haiti; for the family as they are apart and for Rose and Sherry as they seek to bond more with Abner and Peterson—that God would be glorified.



Spring Festival Approaching

Spring is here and with the season comes the great opportunity to work together in a church outreach. The Spring Festival is right around the corner—May 18, from noon to 4 PM. The sign-up sheets will be available on April 14.

"I look forward to this every year," Lee Hoggard, Deacon for Outreach and Evangelism, said. "It's always a lot of work, but it's always a lot of fun!"

The event draws hundreds of people from the community — 201 came last year — for free games, crafts, food, music and fellowship. While giving out prizes and hot dogs, we also give them the opportunity to get to know us, receive information and hear the Good News.

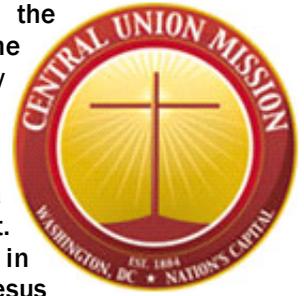
But it takes a lot of people to do the job: people are needed to help set up the festival, to tear it down afterwards, to bake cakes for the cake walk, to hand out prizes, to register visitors, to man the game booths and the craft table, to talk to people about the Gospel and to serve food. Last year about 40 people participated, and Lee believes we need at least 45 this year to meet all the needs.

"We need more people to volunteer," he said. "The outcome of our Spring Festival for 2013 depends on you!"



Youth to Serve in District

Pastor Stuart Odom is giving the youth from our church the opportunity to live out what they are learning in their Wednesday evening Youth Bible Study.



Recently, the group finished up a study on the miracles of Christ. Pastor Odom noted that in performing His miracles, Jesus reached out to those in great need. "He cared for the downtrodden, He welcomed the outcast, and He loved the unlovely," Pastor Odom challenged. He urged the youth to follow Christ's example and do the same...serving others as the Lord did.

Pastor Odom applied and received approval to volunteer at the Central Union Mission in Washington, DC. The Mission is the oldest social service agency in the District of Columbia, founded in 1884, and is a Christian organization started by Latham Douglass, who had "compassion for the thousands of homeless, neglected men who wandered Pennsylvania Avenue, many of whom were Civil War veterans," according to their web site.

The mission has survived the Great Depression, two world wars, 24 presidential administrations, community transitions and relocations. Currently they have programs in rehabilitation, offering shelter and free meals, clothing and furniture distribution and a camp for underprivileged children. While providing for the physical needs, they also seek to meet the spiritual needs of those they are serving. The mission currently serves homeless men, underprivileged women, children, seniors, veterans and the growing Hispanic community. Several times a month, the Mission conducts a Food Depot—basically a distribution of food to the homeless. Now that they are approved, our youth will have the opportunity to assist in these food giveaways. The first opportunity they will have will be May 4.

"I'm excited about doing this," Pastor Odom told the parents of the youth. "It will be a wonderful opportunity for Christian service, and a life-changing experience for our teens."

April Calendar

April 6	Awana Games at Evangel Baptist Church, Dale City, VA
April 12	Nursing Home Ministry (2:00 PM)
April 13	Men's Breakfast (8:00 AM)
April 19-20	Fellowship in Homes
April 24	Quarterly Business Meeting (7:30 PM)

Money Matters

March Giving Per Week (General Fund)	\$5,688
Weekly Need	\$5,229
Year-to-Date General Fund Giving	\$63,880
Year-to-Date General Fund Need	\$67,977

April Memory Verse Challenge



*You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
~ Matthew 5:43-45*

Fellowship Baptist Church

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