

TRANSCEND: APRIL

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2014

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds

Was Jesus' death on the cross a sacrifice for sin?

'Fall-Redemption' or Ransom theory of atonement

R.R.R



Services:

**Sundays at
10am**

Lenten Study: 'Original Blessing- A Primer in Creation Spirituality'

An excerpt from the study notes, Monday 31st March.

Key ideas: the central thesis of the fall-redemption or Ransom theory of atonement is that human nature and all of creation are fallen and sinful. Sin entered the world in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve ate forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is called "original sin". God was so offended by this act of defiance that he became wrathful and threw Adam and Eve, and humanity out of his field of mercy. The only thing that could atone humanity with God was a sacrifice as great in its importance as the sin had been. No mere mortal could make such a sacrifice so the son of God himself, Jesus, became man in order to pay the debt.

So in the 'fall/redemption' model Jesus' life is primarily spoken of as a payment for our sins, a kind of paschal lamb or blood sacrifice. Sacrificing animals to appease this or that god was standard practice in agrarian and pastoral religions. Jesus' death on the cross was interpreted as the central act of God's master plan to 'take away the sins of the world', and restore us to right relationship with God.

History: Maybe Paul believed in this theory of atonement, referred to as 'the cosmic transaction', though recently that has been brought into question by modern scholars. Nevertheless Paul was preaching to bankers and merchants, so the language of payment of a debt or redemption from sin would have resonated with them.

Many early Christians would have interpreted Christ and God in this way because they were raised in the Jewish faith. They were taught that the people's sins must be cast upon the paschal lamb (done every year at the Passover festival) and in this symbolic way God takes away sins. In the fourth and early fifth centuries St. Augustine elaborated on this doctrine of atonement for 'original sin'.

- Ask: Does the 'fall/redemption' Christology with its emphasis on Jesus dying for our sins destroy the principle that we are saved by God's grace alone?

In this view can God's grace really be grace? By definition God's grace is God's love for us- unconditional, freely given and without the need for any preconditions such as Jesus' atoning death.

- Would a loving parent enact such preconditions before loving their child?

- Does the doctrine of 'original sin- fall-redemption' set up in Christians a state of permanent anxiety rather than trust?

- Does 'fall-redemption' foster an obsession with self and a phobia about 'being saved' rather than evoking compassion?

From the Minister Rev. Ron Rosinsky	1 2
Worship Themes & Readings	3
Coming Events Kids Uniting A New Elder	4 4 4
Movie Night: "Noah" Calling Musicians	5 5
Welcome to a new member Thank you Patricia	6 6
A note from Palliative Care Easter in Scotland	7 7
Library News	8
Poetry	9
Rosters	10

Ascot Vale Uniting
Church
avuniting@hotmail.com
www.ascotvaleuniting.org.au

Contd. page 2

Page 1

From Page 1.

An ancient and alternative view of atonement: 'Moral Influence' theory of atonement- Christology of 'Original Blessing'

Key ideas: In the 'Moral Influence' theory of atonement there is no need for an atoning sacrifice and humans are not born into 'original sin'. We are already God's elect; we are a mixture of good and bad; and with God's guidance we are evolving to be more compassionate and God-like.

So the Apostle Paul bids his readers to stop trying to justify themselves or get right with God, but faith is to trust in God's love for us (part. see his epistle to the Romans)

Christ was crucified to evoke in one's heart a better response- the sentiment of compassion.

Our compassion for the suffering of life thereby removes from our minds a blind commitment to the goods of this world. It is in compassion with Christ crucified that we turn to Christ; the helpless and injured one on the cross becomes our Saviour. Human compassion is his victory and his reign.

This view of Christ is said to have its roots in the actual words and deeds of the historical Jesus.

What he actually said and did, as opposed to the words put into his mouth by some early Jewish-Christian preachers, scribes and evangelists. This Christology is informed largely by the compassion of the Hebrew prophets in defending the widow, the orphan and the disadvantaged.

In Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (2: 5-11) he quotes an ancient/early Christian hymn which encapsulates the moral influence view of atonement.

Paul writes that Christ did *not* think that his Godhood was something to be held to – neither should we – but rather, yielding, he took the form of a servant even to death on the cross. This is the joyful affirmation of life despite the sufferings of the world. The imitation of Christ means then to participate in the suffering and joys of the world, all the while seeing through them the radiance of the divine presence.

Also Jesus' crucifixion-martyrdom is not viewed as 'hero worship', but as an example of how we can participate in God's good purposes; how to live and love unconditionally. And it serves as a cautionary tale of what wealthy and powerful people have done to those who fight for justice and radical equality. Above all Christians emerge out of the depths of death and Good Friday: so God's love triumphs, it's not defeated by death on a cross but it brings about the courage to be.

Atonement in this view is at-one-ment with God's Spirit and moral purposes known fully through Christ. It is the suffering of the 'suffering servant' in any situation or era that evokes the humanity of the human heart. This saves us from base, selfish motivations by bringing us into alignment with our true life- eternal life- released into the world as compassion and healing.

Summary: the moral influence view of atonement teaches that the purpose and work of Jesus Christ was to bring positive moral change to humanity. *In Christ's life and teachings God is seen less as a righteous judge and more as a loving parent who wishes to bless all people.* This moral change came through the teachings and example of Jesus, the Christian movement he founded, and the inspiring effect of his martyrdom and resurrection (spiritual or physical). So it's not Jesus' blood that matters but ours in fighting for the widow and the orphan.

History: It is one of the oldest views of the atonement in Christian theology and arguably a prevalent view for much of early Christian history. The moral influence view was prevalent among many writers in the early church. Christian writings from the first to fourth centuries CE testify to the strength, if not the predominance of the moral influence view among Christians. Medieval theologian Peter Abelard (1079-1142) was a particularly eloquent spokesman for this view.

Moral Influence and Original Blessing- Summary: *The creative energy or word of God creates life: this is the main event, not the mythological fall of humanity in the garden. The Spirit of God invites people to create and to share the blessings of life with all people, especially with those in society who are the 'have nots'.*

Contd. Page 3

This is the ultimate blessing— a universe which is alive! It's conscious and biased toward life, justice and compassion. The life of the Spirit authors life on this planet in a multitude of forms. At the heart of this blessing is God's unconditional love for us all called grace.

God's grace is incarnate fully through the Christ of our faith who fought for justice. In this view God is not a wrathful God who has to be appeased by the sacrifice of his son to render humans acceptable. Instead Jesus' crucifixion gives us a dramatic example of how to live and love extravagantly, while his suffering evokes our compassion.

Rev. Ron Rosinsky

WORSHIP THEMES AND READINGS - Sundays 10.30am

6 April: Communion Celebration- *'Love of life or death: which will triumph in you?'*
John 11: 1-45- Lazarus

13 April: Palm Sunday- *'Why civil disobedience will save us'*
Matthew 21:1-17- Jerusalem, Jesus and Pilate

18 April: 9:30am - Good Friday- The Service of Shadows
10:30am- Brunch- Join us for brunch in the welcoming space.

20 April: Easter Day- *'A spiritual resurrection we need: love is stronger than death, mightier than the grave'*
Matthew 28: 1-10

27 April: Commemoration of Anzac Day Luke 19: 41-48- Jesus weeps over Jerusalem

4 May: Communion Celebration- *'The small moments that make or break us'*
Luke 24: 13-35- The walk to Emmaus

11 May: Mother's Day Celebration- *'Mothers: beyond narcissism and self pre-occupation'*
Acts 2: 42-47

“Many are called
but most are frozen
in corporate or
collective cold,
these are the stalled
who choose not to be chosen
except to be bought and sold.



- Lee Carroll Pieper

“All of creation God gives to humankind to use. If this privilege is misused,
God's justice permits creation to punish humanity.”

_ Hildegard of Bingen, 1098-1179

Coming Events

Saturday May 3rd	Board Games Night at church
Sunday April 6th	Daylight Saving Ends. Turn clock back one hour
Sunday April 13th	Palm Sunday - 2pm- Demonstration for Refugees- at State Library
Friday April 18th	Good Friday Service 9.30am - followed by brunch at church
Friday April 25th	Anzac Day
Sunday May 11th	Mothers Day
Saturday May 31st	Curry Night (Dine out) Details to be announced
Thursday June 5th	World Environment Day
Monday June 9th	Queen's Birthday
Sunday June 22nd	Refugee Sunday

Kid's Uniting

Dates:

Term 1: last Sunday 30 March

Term 2: 22 April- 27 June

Kid's Uniting re-commences on Sunday 27 April- and concludes on Sunday, 27 June

Topics: Secondary aged children: teachers, Noel, Claire and Ron

Knowing the mind of God through science and religion- God as the ultimate improviser;

Civil disobedience and non-violence for social transformation



Primary aged children: teachers, Claire and Bernadette

Women in the early church- radical equality;

The Hebrew prophets- creativity and social justice

Our teachers use the 'Godly Play- Montessori' methods of teaching. This approach uses play to engage a child's imagination and empathy in the Biblical story.

Congratulations to Dina who was elected as an Elder at our A.G.M. on March 16th. Since joining our congregation Dina has been of great assistance across many areas of the church. Most will know of her experience as a refugee and the difficulties she has had to deal with in her life.

Please support Dina in her calling as an Elder.

MOVIE NIGHT FUNDRAISER FOR THE ASYLUM SEEKER RESOURCE CENTRE

Join us for a screening of the film 'NOAH'



When: Thursday April 3rd at 7pm

Where: Sun theatre,
8 Ballarat st Yarraville

Price: \$22

For enquiries and tickets
contact: Claire Sidlow as soon as possible
claire__002@hotmail.com

The ASRC assists over 1,200 asylum seekers at any one time through programs such as material aid, health, legal, counselling, casework and a food bank. They have assisted over 10,000 people seeking asylum, provided more than 2.5 million hours of free help and turned no one in need away. All of this achieved without any Federal Government funding.

Many of the asylum seekers no longer have a place to truly call home. Most have been forced to leave their family behind and live in destitute conditions here in Australia, while seeking refugee status. Your support is needed for these vulnerable people.

Calling Musicians and Guitarists



Ascot Vale Uniting Church is currently recruiting musicians and guitarists to complement our band and music program, to play for Sunday morning services.

We like to have fun, and play modern songs as well as some classical Christian hymns with a social justice focus.

We like creating good music.

Music helps bring meaning and hope to people's lives, it both consoles in times of sadness and in-

spires to action, and engages congregations in sacred moments where their faith is enhanced.



If interested please contact Maria: gumbyprickle@yahoo.com

WE WELCOME A NEW MEMBER

At a special service on March 9th 2014 Ashia Golmohammadi Mirkohi was baptised by Reverend Ron and welcomed into membership of our church.

Ashia who is from Iran is living in Hoppers Crossing, learning English and making a new life in Australia.

Our congregation has committed to assist him in his journey

Welcome Ashia and we wish you every happiness in the future.



Patricia, Dina
Georgina and
Michael enjoying
pancakes after the
service.

THANK YOU PATRICIA

For many weeks, Patricia has been quietly working away in the church garden, weeding, tidying and planting. She has done a wonderful job and has brought the garden back to a state that we can all be proud of.

This has truly been a labour of love. In the photo you will see that the rubbish pile is gone. Thank you for arranging its removal Patricia. It's time now for all of us to lend her a hand and maintain and improve our lovely garden.



A NOTE FROM PALLIATIVE CARE

In the August 2013 Transcend I put in a short article about the thoughts of a palliative care nurse. As you may well know I am in palliative care myself now and I will give you a few of my thoughts.

I have frequently heard people say, when having beaten cancer or some other life-threatening illness, that they want to live every day as if it were their last and they go on a frantic bid to do everything they wanted to; what has become known as “the bucket list”. I know some people like that, ticking off the trips, the places, the experiences. Personally I have found the opposite to be true. To be able to live every day as though it is not to be your last is a luxury and makes for a much more relaxed and pleasant life. I had things I wanted to do and now accept I will never do them; but then have found myself doing other things just as good, if not better. For example I had always wanted to go by train across Canada, but instead I went by train across Scotland, at a friends urging, at a fraction of the distance and cost. I now have memories of the most wonderful train journey on The West Highland Railway with a best friend.



I think the secret is to enjoy the small things in life, to make the most of whatever we do. When we have a cup of tea or coffee make sure it is good coffee or tea, have a favourite biscuit with it, sit in the sun in the garden, don't sit there working out what task you have to do next, but relax and enjoy the moment. It really is about those little moments of happiness – allow yourself to have them.

And now the drinks trolley is on its way round – say what you like about the Roman Catholics but.....

Patricia R.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF EASTER IN SCOTLAND



I spent my childhood in Scotland before migrating to Australia.

Easter and Spring occur at the same time in the Northern Hemisphere. Hence the lambs, bunnies and chickens. As children we enjoyed wearing our new spring outfits which would be our Sunday best for the whole year.

We would boil eggs and decorate them with faces and designs. On Easter Sunday, the whole neighbourhood would gather on a local hill

and we would roll our eggs carefully down the hill. If your egg got to the bottom of the hill without cracking, you would have a free wish.

It is said that the rolling of the eggs was symbolic of the rolling back of the stone from the tomb. To us children it was simply a time for fun.





BOOK REVIEWS by Jean

The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom.

This story is about a Dutch Christian family who lived in Holland during World War II when Holland was invaded, then occupied by the Nazis. This family saw the persecution and deaths of many Jewish people. At great risk to themselves they found ways of rescuing, hiding and relocating to safety many of these people. Eventually the Nazis caught and imprisoned them but not before they had saved many Jews.

William Booth by Janet and Geoff Benge

This is the story of the founder of the Salvation Army. William Booth was surrounded by poverty and suffering in industrial England in the 1800s. Many needy people never went to Church and would not have been welcomed to go there if they did, So he went out among them. He went to the hotels and other places where the people gathered and told them of God's through practical Christianity. He met their needs where he could, as dirty, ragged hungry people are not ready for the gospel message until they see that God really cares about them.

The new library shelves are in place thanks to Dina. Dorothy and Jean are completing the organization of the books. If you wish to borrow please see either of them. Donations of suitable books would be most welcome.

Smart Dog

A dog walked into a butcher shop with a purse strapped around his neck. He walked up to the meat case and calmly sat there until it was his turn to be served. A man, who was already in the butcher shop, finished his purchase and noticed the dog. The butcher leaned over the counter and asked the dog what it wanted today. The dog put its paw on the glass case in front of the ground beef, and the butcher said, "How many pounds?" The dog barked twice, so the butcher made a package of two pounds of ground beef.

He then said, "Anything else?"

The dog pointed to the pork chops, and the butcher said, "How many?"

The dog barked four times, and the butcher made up a package of four pork chops.

The dog then walked around behind the counter, so the butcher could get at the purse.

The butcher took out the appropriate amount of money and tied two packages of meat around the dog's neck. The man, who had been watching all of this, decided to follow the dog. It walked for several blocks and then walked up to a house and began to scratch at the door to be let in. As the owner opened the door, the man said to the owner, "That's a really smart dog you have there."

The owner said, "He's not really all that smart. This is the second time this week he forgot his key."

CHURCH ROSTERS

Thank-you Peter Macdonald for doing the rosters for the past few years. Dorothy Howes has now taken over from Peter. We thank Dorothy for taking on this important task.

If you are unavailable when rostered, please arrange for a swap so that your duties can be carried out.

REMEMBRANCES

We met and married a long time ago,
We worked for long hours when wages were low,
No TV, no wireless, no bath, times were hard,
Just a cold water tap and a walk in the yard.
No holiday abroad, no carpets on the floors,
We had coal on the fire, and we didn't lock doors.
Our children arrived, no pill in those days
And we brought them all up with out any state aid.
They were safe going out to play in the park
Any old folk could walk in the dark.
No valium, no drugs and no LSD
We cured most of our ills with a good cup of tea!
No vandals, no muggings, there was nothing to rob,
We felt we were rich with a couple of bob.
People were happy in those far off days,
Kinder and caring in so many ways.
Milkman and paperboy whistle and sing,
A night at the pictures was our one mad fling.
We all got our share of trouble and strife,
We just had to face it – that's the pattern of life.

Now we reflect and look back through the years,
We remember the blessings, our homes and our love
That we shared them together, I thank God above.

Author unknown
Contributed by Bob M

MY WINTER POEM

There were sleepless, starless nights, storms,
dark days, loneliness, with endless winters.
Even so, there in the dark was the seed.
Some nights, as I wandered in my winter land,
I pleaded "Where are you Lord?
help me stay with you, for I am so in need".
No answer came, bleak winter held me tight.

One day at dawn, I asked myself, most sincerely,
'Is it possible that I am mad? that, my faith,
is nothing more than madness?"
But even as I questioned my faith,
the knowing would not leave me.
Once upon a time, the day dawned, when,
there was no more I could do.

As I stared deep into the heart of my winter,
sadness, and despair, poured out, and over me.
From my longing, came a soundless voice,
and said "I hear you, see you, I Am, you".
The hushed silence filled me to the brim with light,
opened the sweet sleeping seed of my sad heart.
Since that moment, no winter has ever been too
long,
no darkness too deep, nor have I ever felt, so
sane.

Trish S.

1995



SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE UNITING CHURCH

The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest around the world is wide and growing. We must do more to empower individuals through decent work, support people through social protection, and ensure the voices of the poor and marginalised are heard.

United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon.

To find out about the many initiatives that the Uniting Church is taking for Social Justice visit the Uniting Church website.

The Justice and International Mission (JIM) unit provides resources to engage and educate the church about social justice issues. Crucially, JIM facilitates opportunities for church members to speak out about the issues that concern them, and to be a voice for justice in the wider community.

Date	Leader	Communion	Duty Elder	Music	Reader	Welcomer	Morning Tea
April 6 Communion	Rev Ron	Noel		Rob	Robin	Chris	Ken and Jenny
April 13 Family Service	Rev Ron		Noel	Maria	Marycon	Michael	Fiona and Bente
April 18 Good Friday 9.30	Rev Ron			Maria	Barbara	Peter	Angelika and Jill
April 20 Easter Day	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Bente	Ken and Jenny	Dina and Chris
April 27	Rev Ron		Dina	Candace	Ken	Andrea	Barbara and Lodenah
May 4 Communion	Rev Ron	Angelika/Dina		Rob	Cally	Gavriel Family	Marycon and Jutta
May 11	Rev Ron		Michael	Maria	Candace	Chris	Ken and Jenny
May 18	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Peter	Melita	Barbara and Bente
May 25	TBA		Peter	Candace	Robin	Marycon	Angelika and Chris
June 1 Communion	TBA	Dorothy		Rob	Angelika	Michael	Fiona and Marycon
June 8 Family Service/ Pentecost. World Environment Day 1	Rev Ron		Melita	Maria	Ken	Ken and Jenny	Barbara and Lodenah
June 15	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Barbara	Chris	Ken and Jenny
June 22 Refugee Sunday	Rev Ron		Angelika	Candace	Melita	Cally	Marycon and Jutta
June 29 Refugee Sunday part 2	Rev Ron			Maria	Marycon	Peter	Fiona and Bente
July 6 Communion	Rev Ron	Michael	Dorothy	Rob	Peter	Ken and Jenny	Angelika and Jill
July 13 Family Service	Rev Ron			Maria	Bente	Andrea	Dina and Chris

ASCOT VALE UNITING CHURCH ROSTERS
 Readings in Transcend... Please arrange swap if unavailable