

# TRANSCEND: NOVEMBER

Ascot Vale Uniting Church Newsletter 2014

60 Maribyrnong Road, Moonee Ponds



Services: Sundays 10 am

## Hatred or tough love as a means to self realization?

In these days of terrorism and the savagery of marauding Isis hordes our nation looks to its institutions for maturity and leadership. Australians look to their schools, to their government, to the Australian Defence Force, and at times even to churches for maturity.

The Apostle Paul wrote about maturity. He was trying to achieve it himself. He wrote:

*“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self indulgence ... rather, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” - Galatians 5: 13-15*

Is that a level of maturity we can achieve?

**Being angry for the right reasons; using our anger constructively and our freedom wisely, these were some key themes in the last few Sundays since my return from the USA.**

We have examined maturity, particularly how hatred, vengeance and anger retard an individual's growth, keeping them in a child-like state. We have looked at the destructive and catastrophic effects of these emotions in recent acts of terrorism and the persecution of the innocent.

We have seen that unmitigated resentment and unchecked anger within a person do not empower, they decay. If allowed free reign within one's mind anger and resentment induce forms of mental illness and spiritual disease. But this can be corrected or prevented.

**Jesus saw with absolute clarity that hatred destroys finally the core life of the person. He affirmed life. So he saw hatred as the great denial of life.**

I have applied these kinds of insights in my preaching, and hopefully in my life, from the classic Christian study of these matters called, *‘Jesus and the Disinherited’* by theologian Howard Thurman. Thurman, an African-American and himself an object of discrimination in a segregated nation, wrote the book in 1949. In it he describes the religion of Jesus as an alternative to violence and an antidote to the emotions of fear and hate. Thurman described how hate and fear, and acts of deception often form the invisible bars to the mental prisons of the disinherited- to those living with their backs to the wall.

One major difference between the persecuted that Thurman describes, and many recruits to Isis from western nations is that the latter are frequently young men from relatively comfortable or at least stable positions in life; from middle class Australian families for example.

**So why their uncontrolled rage and vengeance ideation?**

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## Hatred as a form of self realization?

Thurman examined in some detail the oppressive conditions that Jesus and his contemporaries lived under as unwilling subjects in an occupied state.

He observed that they would have had plenty of reasons to rage against the state- against Rome, against the chief priests and their cohorts at the Jerusalem temple, and the list goes on.

But they didn't. Deep from within that order Jesus and his companions projected a dream.

The dream became the word made flesh, a reality through their community, which cut straight through to the despair of their fellows. **In their community no-one was a threat to another and there was room for all. 'The kingdom of God is within you' meant that every person had the means within them for creative survival and well being, without resort to violence.**

**Are parents and grandparents helping their children to learn this lesson?**

**What's a constructive use of anger?**

Thurman also brought forth a key insight regarding hatred. For an oppressed or disadvantaged person whose life is regarded as of no value, hatred serves as a dark source of self validation for their personality. In hating the other your hatred gives you a sense of significance and worth which you 'fling defiantly into the teeth of another's estimate of you.' So according to Thurman hatred can serve as a dimension of self realization to protect your personality from complete disintegration.

**But often there is only a thin line between bitterness and hatred on one side, and righteous indignation and self realization on the other.**

## Selling the fantasy

A terrorism expert described this very dynamic at work in the militant group ISIS and it's recruiting, calling ISIS ***"masters of packaging the fantasy deal"***. He explained that they offer an opportunity for young men to feel powerful. *"They're making disillusioned, disaffected radicals feel like they're doing something truly meaningful with their lives; appealing to a passionate need to right some wrong, to address some sort of injustice, to restore honour to those from whom its been taken away."*

The white heat of hatred burns any ethical or moral values out of a person; it so dominates one's horizon that there remains no creative impulse in one's mind and spirit to give to great ideas, to great concepts. Jesus rejected hatred. It was not because he lacked the incentive. Jesus rejected hatred and contempt because he saw that they meant death to the spirit, death to the mind, death to communion with God. Jesus affirmed life and we do the same. **To affirm life is to cultivate a deep reverence and respect for the personality of others.**

**In the forthcoming Sundays** during November and December we prepare for Christmas.

We do so by turning to the worship themes of:

**'Passionate Marriage, keeping Love and Intimacy Alive in Committed Relationships', by David Schnarch; and**

**'Happy Children' by Steve Biddulph**

Jesus came so that we might do this, to form a healthy bond with others, to build healthier marriages and families, and thereby to create a healthy bond with life. In this way we stand up to our full stature and maturity as human beings. Come and see.

Rev Ron Rosinsky

## Coming Events

Tuesday October 28th.	Joint Nomination Committee meets with Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee
Saturday November 1st.	Fish and Chip Night 6pm
Saturday November 29th.	State Election      Cake Stall and Sausage Sizzle at church
Saturday December 6th.	Christmas Barbecue 4pm
Sunday December 14th.	Kid's Uniting Christmas Party

## SERVICES: Sundays 10am

- 9 November: Family Service 'Raising Children: Making Tomorrow's People' Matthew 25: 1-13 - Midnight Oil
- 16 November: 'It's time that we plan for a new kind of man and woman' Matthew 25: 14-30— Parable of the Talents
- 23 November: 'Kids and emotions; your children need you happy and healthy' Matthew 25: 31-46 - The judgement of the nations
- 30 November: 'Curing by listening; how to help youngsters (and adults) deal with an unkind world'; Luke 19: 1-10 -Zacchaeus
- 7 December: Communion Sunday: 'Seeds in the mind; how we hypnotise our children (and adults) every single day'; Luke 1: 46- 55 Mary's call to rise up
- 14 December: **Kid's Uniting, end of year Christmas party**

## Alternatives to radicalisation and terrorism

As mentioned in the worship services, check out community activist **Shameema Kolia** from Perth, and the **Australian Multicultural Foundation**. They are featured on page six of the Age newspaper from 13 October, 2014.

Kolia and more than 80 Muslim activists are delivering a nationwide program in community centres and houses of worship. The program developed by the Australian Multicultural Foundation, draws on research from Monash University known as 'The Radicalisation Indicators Model'

The program looks at risk factors and includes case studies where people who have become isolated from the community turn to radical ideology and to violence.

The program began more than a year ago. Kolia is now training others to run it. She said that winning over the mothers did not surprise her, but winning over the sons did. "A lot of times the young men are a little bit disengaged in the community, and to be honest, they are a little bit lazy in comparison to girls," Kolia said. Nice to know that there are people making a difference.

R.R.

Caterina Rosinsky will be starting soon as our new Kid's Church Teacher.  
We wish Caterina well and are sure that the children will enjoy their time with her.

# STATE ELECTION SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29th.

## ELECTION DAY CAKE STALL

The church will again be a Polling Place for the coming election.



We will be holding a Cake Stall at the church. Cake stalls have always been very good money raisers. We will follow the usual arrangements for cake stalls. Candace will coordinate the arrangements.



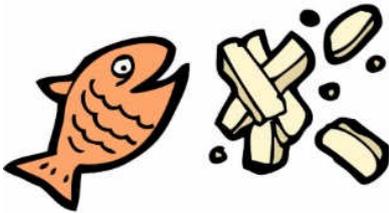
With the cake stall we will be also having a 'sausage sizzle'  
If you are able to assist on the day please speak to Michael or Melita.

**WE HAVE NOW GOT RID OF THE BACKLOG OF GARDEN REFUSE. TO PREVENT THE ACCUMULATION OF GARDEN RUBBISH IN FUTURE PLEASE PLACE ALL GARDEN CUTTINGS, DEAD PLANTS ETC. IN EITHER THE GREEN BIN OR ONE OF THE TWO COMPOST BINS.**



**OUR GARDEN IS NOW PUTTING ON A BEAUTIFUL DISPLAY. SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WATERING. IF YOU HAVE SOME TIME DURING THE HOT SUMMER DAYS WATERING WOULD BE A GREAT HELP. NOTE THE TAP AND HOSE IN THE PHOTO OPPOSITE. THERE IS ANOTHER BEHIND THE TOWER NEAR THE CAR PARK.**

## COME ALONG TO THE FISH AND CHIP NIGHTS



### **Saturday November 1st: Fish & Chip & Board Games night from 6pm**

Please join us for some fun, friendship and fellowship. Bring along your food and drink while also dusting off those old board games!

### **Saturday December 6th: Christmas BBQ from 4pm (BBQ dinner from 6pm)**

Everyone is welcome for a great afternoon and evening of Christmas cheer, songs and laughter while feasting on delicious BBQ food!

Please bring some food for the BBQ, some salad or desert and a small gift.

We will hand out presents for everyone so please bring along a small gift, and there will be a sweet treasure hunt for the kids (big & small)!



The Port Phillip West Presbytery is made up of the churches in the western and north west regions of Melbourne, from Lorne through-Geelong, to the western edge of Bacchus Marsh, then to the north including Kyneton and Craigieburn, then to Brunswick and Northcote on the eastern boundaries.

In past years, belonging to a church was seen for many as an important part of life. Churches often had sports clubs, womens' groups, social events, children's clubs, youth groups and large Sunday schools which formed an important part of community life.

However times have changed. Sundays are not much different from any other day. There are now many other faiths in our community, and there are a multitude of things that can be done on Sundays. Social attitudes have also changed. Trying to attract people to the traditional model has not been very successful. The majority of the younger generations have no interest in church. As a result many of our churches are in decline. If we don't do something where will the Uniting Church be in 20 years?

In response to this situation, the Presbytery has adopted a strategy to revive churches and establish new ways of reaching out to the community. This strategy is 'Regenerating the Church'.

Newly appointed Ministers in the Presbytery are expected to commit, with their congregations to this strategy.

To find out about Regenerating the Church have a look at their interesting and informative new website

<http://www.regeneratingthechurch.org.au>

It has interesting examples of the new approaches being taken by some of the churches in the Presbytery.

## WORKING-BEE ON OCTOBER 12th.

Congratulations and thank you to those who took part in our working-bee. It was one of the best working-bees we have ever held. The large accumulation of rubbish was moved into a skip and there was a general tidy-up of the garden.

Isabella and a team of mostly young helpers did a splendid job cleaning all of the church chairs. Our group of weary workers finished up with a shared lunch.





All of the green chairs were scrubbed and rinsed. Our children were wonderful helpers.

Ken trampolining in the bin.



Ron with a souvenir from his recent holiday.



## UPDATE ON APPOINTING A PERMANENT MINISTER

The Joint Nominating Committee has completed the Church Profile and Terms of Placement documents. A manse inspection was carried out by Rev. Robert Renton (Presbytery Minister—Administration) on October 28th. The manse was judged to be in excellent condition.

The JNC then met with the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee at Hoppers Crossing on Tuesday October 28th at 7.30pm.

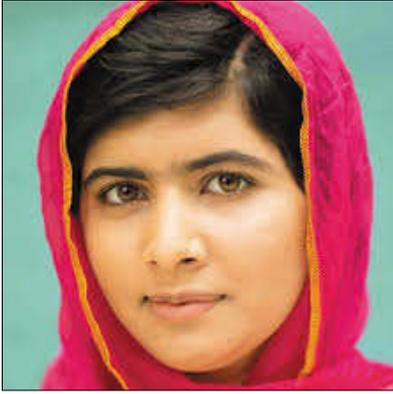
At this meeting the Profile was discussed at length, we answered questions about the Profile and explained our request for special consideration regarding the Placement.

All of our documents are now lodged and will be passed to the Synod Placement Committee. The Placement Committee will provide the Joint Nominating Committee with the name/names of suitable Ministers who have expressed interest in the position.

The Joint Nominating Committee will then interview. The JNC can only consider those whose names are provided by the Placement Committee.

It is hoped that a decision can be obtained as soon as possible.

## MALALA, AN EXAMPLE TO ALL



Malala Yousafzai has been advocating for Pakistani women and children since the age of 11, when she wrote of life in the Swat Valley under Taliban rule during a time when girls in the region were prohibited from going to school.

A Taliban gunman shot Yousafzai in the face in October 2012 for her views on female education. She narrowly survived the ordeal and received intensive care in England.

Last year, she spoke at the UN headquarters--demanding worldwide access to education--and also published her first book: *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, in collaboration with British journalist Christina Lamb.

Seventeen year-old Malala was awarded the 2014 Nobel Peace, the youngest recipient of the award. She will donate \$50,000 to help rebuild U.N. schools damaged during the recent conflict in Gaza.

Some quotes from Malala.

*"If he [the Talib] comes, what would you do Malala? ...If you hit a Talib with your shoe, then there will be no difference between you and the Talib. You must not treat others...with cruelty...you must fight others but through peace, through dialogue and through education...then I'll tell him [the Talib] how important education is and that I even want education for your children as well... that's what I want to tell you, now do what you want."*

*"The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born."*

*"One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen, can change the world."*

*"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful."*

*"Let us make our future now, and let us make our dreams tomorrow's reality."*

*"I believe it's a woman's right to decide what she wants to wear and if a woman can go to the beach and wear nothing, then why can't she also wear everything."*

A guy is 80 years old and loves to fish. He was sitting in his boat the other day when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up."

He looked around and couldn't see any one. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up."

He looked in the water and there, floating on the top, was a frog.

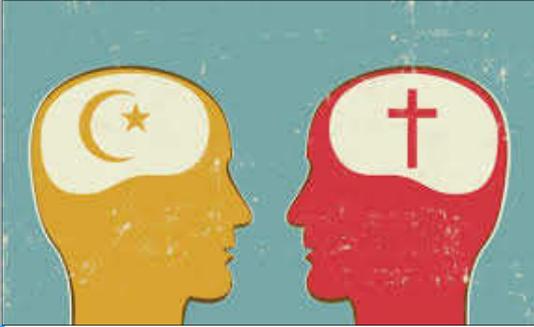
The man said, "Are you talking to me?"

The frog said, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up, then kiss me and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because I will be your bride!"

The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully, and placed it in his front breast pocket.

Then the frog said, "What, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me and I will be your beautiful bride." He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Nah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

# WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT ISLAM?



Many unfortunate impressions about Islam have been propagated in our society – such as that Muslim women are oppressed and denied education by men, and that Islam promotes violence. But what do Muslims themselves say about these questions? What does the Qur'an say?

## **Status and Treatment of Women:**

“And for women are rights over men, similar to those of men over women.” (Qur'an 2:228)

“Education is compulsory for every Muslim.” (Muhammad)

- > Muslim women are given the utmost respect and honour, such as the right to equal pay, choice of spouse, pursuit of education, and the right to divorce and inheritance.
- > Many Muslim females have been great scholars of jurisprudence, and have had famous male scholars as their students.
- > Gender does not play any part in how a person is rewarded and judged.

## **Wearing the Hijab:**

- > The Hijab grants women dignity and self-respect for who they are. Their worth can be judged by their righteousness, knowledge and societal contribution, instead of – as is the case in many societies today - by superficial standards, such as their appearance.
- > Muslim males are also required to dress in loose and unrevealing clothing in order to maintain their modesty and dignity.
- > The hijab does not symbolise suppression or silence. It is a guard against degrading remarks, unwanted advances and unfair discrimination.

“I don't wear it because I am oppressed, I wear it because I am empowered” (Joumana, 23, Melbourne)

## **Jihad:**

- > Islam clearly prohibits the despicable act of targeting innocent non-combatants. In fact Muslims are not allowed to destroy plants and animals unnecessarily, let alone innocent humans.
- > “If anyone murders an innocent person, it will be as if he has murdered the whole of humanity. And if anyone saves a person it will be as if he has saved the whole of humanity.” (Qur'an 5.32)
- > “Jihad” means “struggle”. It can refer to one's striving to do good deeds, or to give to charity. Military Jihad is permitted only in order to preserve the well-being of society, to oppose oppression, and to promote justice. It is important to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance to occupation, as the two are very different.

**In conclusion:** The mistreatment of women, and the use of violence against innocent non-combatants (terrorism) found in some Middle Eastern countries, are due to cultural factors that some Muslims wrongly follow, not because of Islam. (Islamic pamphlets) (**Note:** does this sound familiar, as we think of the war between Irish Catholics and Protestants, for example?)

**Sources:** Pamphlets distributed at the “No Islamophobia” stand at the recent Rally for Asylum Seekers in Melbourne –

Dorothy Howes, for Social and Environmental Justice Committee

I bought a lap dog, but I had to get rid of it. Every time I sat on its lap it bit me.  
Did you hear about the blind man who went bungee jumping? Scared the heck out of the dog.

## CHURCH ROSTERS

<u>AVUC ROSTER 2014 – 2015</u>	SERVICE/ LEADER	COMMUNION ELDER	DUTY ELDER	MUSIC	WELCOMER	READER	MORNING TEA
9 Nov	Rev Ron		Dina	Maria	Andrea	Ken	Ken/Jenny
16 Nov	Rev Ron			Maria	Chris	Bente	Bente/Barbara
23 Nov	Rev Ron		Peter	Candace	Marycon	Peter	Marycon/ Angelika
30 Nov	Rev Ron			Maria	Cally	Cally	Chris/Bente
7 Dec	Communion Rev Ron	Melita	Melita	Rob	Dina	Candace	Dina/Jutta
14 Dec Christmas Party - KU	Rev Ron			Maria	Ken/Jenny	Chris	Ken/Jenny
21 Dec	Rev Ron		Angelika	Candace	Andrea	Barbara	Bente/ Barbara
25 Dec Christmas Day	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Melita/ Michael	Michael	
28 Dec	Rev Ron			Dorothy	Dina	Angelika	
4 Jan 2015	Communion Rev Ron	Noel	Noel	Rob	Ken/Jenny	Ken	-----
11 Jan	Rev Ron			Maria	Chris	Chris	-----
18 Jan	Rev Ron		Dorothy	Dorothy	Cally	Cally	-----
25 Jan Australia Day	Rev Ron			Candace	Dina	Bente	-----
1 Feb Recover- ing Service	Communion Rev Ron KU recommence	Peter	Peter	Rob	Michael/ Melita	Melita	Ken/Jenny
8 Feb Evolution Sunday	Rev Ron			Maria	Andrea	Marycon	Marycon/ Angelika
15 Feb	Rev Ron		Michael	Dorothy	Dina	Candace	Dina/Jutta

*'Transcend' is published monthly  
Articles and photos are welcome.*

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Michael Long	

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