The theology of atonement is a minor position with the New Testament. It is found only in the gospel of John. In one way or another, the Synoptic Gospels portray the death of Jesus as involving an innocent victim. This Jesus suffers unfairly, and those who witness his death encounter God: the power of vicarious suffering inspired by the suffering servant songs in Isaiah. Jesus suffers not because it is God’s plan for him to do so, but because of Roman injustice. The experience of Jesus’s death leads one to God. It has nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins. See Matthew 27: 32-54, Mark 15: 16-35, and Luke 23: 26-46.

—Rick Herrick, Oak Bluffs, MA

ATONEMENT THEOLOGY

Tikkun magazine is . . .

... a vehicle for spreading a new consciousness. We call it a spiritual progressive worldview. But what is that?

What Do You Mean by “Spiritual”?

You can be spiritual and still be an atheist or agnostic. To be spiritual, you don’t have to believe in God or accept New Age versions of spirituality. You don’t need to give up science or your critical faculties. We use the word “spiritual” to describe all aspects of reality that cannot be subject to empirical verification or measurement: everything pertaining to ethics, aesthetics, music, art, philosophy, religion, poetry, literature, dance, love, generosity, and joy. We reject the notion that everything worthy of consideration to guide our personal lives and our economic and political arrangements must be measurable.

What’s a Spiritual Progressive?

To be a spiritual progressive is to agree that our public institutions, corporations, government policies, laws, education system, health care system, legal system, and even many aspects of our personal lives should be judged “efficient, rational, or productive” to the extent that they maximize love, caring, generosity, and ethical and environmentally sustainable behavior. We call this our New Bottom Line. Spiritual progressives seek to build “The Caring Society: Caring for Each Other and Caring for the Earth.” Our well-being depends upon the well-being of everyone else and also on the well-being of the planet itself. So we commit to an ethos of generosity, nonviolence, and radical amazement at the grandeur of all that is, and seek to build a global awareness of the unity of all being.

If you are willing to help promote this New Bottom Line for our society, you are a spiritual progressive. And if you are a spiritual progressive, we invite you to join our Network of Spiritual Progressives at spiritualprogressives.org.