

## The Concept of Paul's Katallage and Hilasmos: Internalization Through Group Counseling for Millennials

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Received October 02, 2021;  
Revised November 31, 2021;  
Accepted December 10, 2021;  
Published Online 2021-12-20

### Conflict of Interest

#### Disclosures:

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

**Abstract:** The Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith that must be held and believed to gain one's salvation. Paul calls this concept with two words Katallage and Hilasmos which means restoring the relationship between God and sinful man to live again to the design that God has ordained. However, this concept rarely gets attention because Christians focus more on Justification. In addition, the atonement made by Jesus is also tricky for the millennial generation to accept in this postmodern era because of the relativism and pluralism spirit contained in it. That is why it is necessary to build the concept of atonement that Jesus did and implement it to the youth. The research method used is a qualitative case study, namely the implementation to the youth of the Ministry of Refreshment, Bekasi. The results showed that the atonement made by Jesus brought a mandate to the younger generation of the Refresh Ministry to glorify God and spread this atonement to others who have not reconciled. This value inculcation carries out a discipleship model that balances teaching and encounter.

**Keywords:** Hilasmos, Katallage, Atonement, Millennial Generations, Group Counseling.



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**How to Cite:** Anggi Maringan Hasiholan, Andreas Budi Setyobekti, Robert Paul Trisna. 2021. The Concept of Paul's Katallage and Hilasmos: Internalization Through Group Counseling for Millennials. *Bisma*, 5 (3): pp. 252-258, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v5i3>

## Introduction

Jesus Christ's atonement is an essential and fundamental part of Christianity. This is the fence that sets Christianity apart from other religions and beliefs. In general, the meaning of redemption is God's love that does not want humans to perish but to gain eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The sacrifice of Jesus is a way for reconciliation between God and humans. Who are at odds due to sin that has entered the world due to the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden? The fall that damaged the imago Dei in man can be reversed by the sacrifice made by Jesus Christ (Tambunan & Setyobekti, 2021). VanGemeran asserts that this reconciliation is God's act which removes all barriers and allows an individual to approach God for reconciliation (VanGemeran, 2016).

Evangelicals emphasize the ontological and epistemological need of God, Jesus Christ. The Presence Motive, concerning Jesus Christ, includes the New. That is why Randa stated that redemption is a human need that humans themselves do not realize. Humans are also sometimes confused about how to get the salvation that Jesus Christ has done confused because many roads are considered passable (Randa, 2020). This situation departs from the postmodern era, which relativizes everything. Everything, including salvation, is termed "many roads lead to Rome."

In simple terms, postmodernism is a style of thinking that has penetrated all sides of human life, including theology and the church. In theology, this term was first used by Bernard Iddings Bell in 1939, who was trying to respond to the failure of secular modernism and the return of religion in human life (Aritonang, 2018). Modernism has failed to provide space for humans to have an opinion. That is why Sinaga in Jan Aritonang's writing states that several traits indicate a postmodern thinking style. Namely, a suspicious attitude towards modern (something that is considered the truth), counter culture (condemning what has been considered the highest culture), re-enchantment (giving an excellent opportunity for new and fresh ways of thinking to understand God's immanence). Free oneself from the supremacy of reason, and open oneself to the reality of human experience that must be upheld, as well as the insight of pluralism and pluriformity to be raised and praised (Riemer, 2009).

Pluralism and relativism are inevitable in this postmodern era. Some see it as a negative situation, but on the other hand, it is an opportunity for the internalization of the Christian faith to be more encouraged. This Spirit has echoed by Race, who revealed a tripolar typology related to religions (religion), namely exclusive, inclusive, and pluralist. This way of thinking makes absolute truth a fallacy. The truth that Jesus is the only person who saves humanity is a fallacy that needs to be rejected. That is why it becomes necessary to build the atonement concept done by Jesus relevant to postmodern thinking styles.

The Apostle Paul, in his theology, gives a central position on the salvation wrought by Jesus. According to him, this is a person's entrance to get a share in the kingdom of God. Atonement is not only restoration from the misfortunes of sin, but the liberation of the world, the redemption of all creation that groans, and the atonement between heaven and earth. Ridderbos affirmed that the atonement would inform the congregation of its place and duty in the world, setting the sights on the Lord's coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the renewal of all things (Ridderbos, 2015). To get this salvation, one must come to it by faith. This is called Justification.

In addition to the word justification, Paul also uses the word atonement to describe the new relationship that humans experience due to Jesus' death and resurrection. In Romans 5:9-10, these two words are paralleled (justified by His blood by being reconciled to God by the death of His Son). The same is found in 2 Corinthians 3:9 and 5:18. These two words are not drastically different words that must be distinguished sharply. Well, these two words are viewed from different areas of life. If Justification is forensic concept, then reconciliation (Yun: Katallage) is more general in nature, which means the restoration of relations between the two parties.

This concept has been rejected in several writings, such as by [biblicaltheology.org](http://www.biblicaltheology.org), which states that the conception now before us belongs to the commercial realm. Of course, behind these two lies a more basic forensic mode of viewing the work of Christ, which fits with Paul's idea of truth. Therefore, it would be appropriate to speak of forensics and the forensic-commercial representations of Christ's purposeful saving work by the apostles. We must remember that the reduction of slavery as a consequence of guilt or debt was quite common (<http://www.biblicaltheology.org/pcrd>). Not only that, because justifications always highlight other themes that are considered unimportant and are under Justification, it is crucial to building a comprehensive understanding of reconciliation. In the 16th century, the concept of atonement was challenged by theologians such as Faustus and Laelius Socinus, who sparked the views held by the Unitarians. Both reject the idea of atonement as an offering that satisfies others. They recognize the three offices of Christ but, in practice, assume that Jesus' ministry while on earth shows His position as a prophet, not as a priest who sacrificed himself for the forgiveness of sins. The position of faith was obtained by Jesus when he was glorified in Heaven (Erickson, 2003).

From the explanation above, the purpose of this paper is to find the implications of the theology of atonement with terms of atonement that can apply to today's ecclesiology. Refresh Ministry is a youth community in Bekasi with 200 people. As a millennial generation living in the postmodern era, following theology teaching with Bible Study classes is boring and irrelevant. That is why the implementation of the

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concept of atonement carried out by Jesus must use a relevant discipleship model but does not reduce the essence of the teaching conveyed.

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. The approach used in operational research is through a problem-solving cycle consisting of (i) measuring the magnitude of the problem, (ii) finding the cause of the problem, (iii) developing solutions, (iv) implementing interventions/programs, and (v) program evaluation (Siswanto, 2019). This research was conducted from March 2021 to September 2021, located in Refresh Ministry Community. The author uses history books with ISBN and relevant journals with ISSN. That is why the writing of this research is included in library research. According to Paul's Theology, the concept of atonement, which has been systematized, is then taught to Refresh youths through discipleship classes and spiritual experiences. Implementation was carried out for two months. The data analysis in this article uses a case study research method. Case studies are conducted to accurately interpret the characteristics of the object under study. Jacobs asserts that case studies are often used to investigate small social units such as clubs, schools, families, youth communities, or particular "gangs" (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). Data was collected by interviewing key informants and selected based on predetermined criteria, namely the pastor as a program maker or church leader, several church administrators, and some congregations who received services from the church and with survey polling-data analysis using NVIVO application.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Paul's Concept of the Atonement**

Paul based the concept of atonement on the death of Jesus Christ. This reconciliation is entirely God's work because man cannot reconcile himself to God. Man can only be reconciled to God through divine actions (Ladd, 1999). Romans 5:10 says that while we were still enemies, we were reconciled by the blood of the Son of God. The same concept appears in Ephesians and Colossians. Paul uses the term hilasterion to refer to the means of propitiation (Rom. 3:25). This term departs from worship cults, especially victims of propitiation. Greenwood quoting from C.H. Dodd, argues convincingly that the root meaning of the word in Koine Greek means (i) God's grace and forgiveness; (ii) redemption, namely the removal of defilements that make people who are not worthy to receive God's grace but get a restoration of a relationship with God. Dodd's view is reflected in the NEB translation (For God designed him to be the means of expiating sin by his sacrifice death, effective through faith. God meant by this to demonstrate his justice because, in his forbearance, he had overlooked the sins of the past - to demonstrate his justice now in the present, showing that he is both himself just and stifles any man who puts his faith in Jesus) (Greenwood, 1906).

Grammatically, Hilasterion can be either a masculine adjective or a neutral noun. If it is an adjective, Christ is the agent or object of the atonement; if it is a noun, it is the locus of God's mercy and forgiveness. Hilasterion is related to hileos and hilaskesthai (Greek) and to the Latin iram avertere (to prevent anger) and ex irato mitem reddere (to make light of anger) (Trench, 2007). Paul uses the language of deep substitution atonement to describe the results rather than the modus operandi of Christ's work. Therefore, it is generally assumed that there must have been something that could have shed blood in the ancient world, namely the victim (NIV, NRSV: "sacrifice of atonement"). Friberg and Miller affirm that this Hilasterion speaks of how the forgiven sin has atoning power, bringing about reconciliation; substantially the means of forgiveness with a focus on the place where sins are forgiven through the blood of the atoning sacrifice placed there the place of forgiveness (Friberg et al., 2005). Although this word was written only once by Paul, it does not mean that it is not found in other letters (see 1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Cor. 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:16; Eph. 5:2).

Lyonnet, quoted by Cerfaux, draws the implications of the hilasterion as an intercession made by Jesus Christ for humans to the intercession made by believers in a world that does not yet believe in God (Cerfaux, 1959). It is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom 3:9-10). This concept also

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leads to reconciliation in that Romans is a crucial subtext and has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. In the chapter's opening, Paul presents his case that both Jews and Gentiles sin and have failed to live up to God's standard of righteousness, concluding: 'We have accused that Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin. So, humankind must be reconciled to God and faith within. Moreover, Jesus Christ is the only thing that can restore that vertical relationship that brings humans to a horizontal relationship (Wilson, 2017).

Paul uses a second word for atonement, namely *katallage*, from the socio-community area. The verb *katallasso* is used in the Bible six times in Romans 5:10; 1 Corinthians 7:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, 20. The noun *katallage* is used four times in Romans 5:11; 11:15; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 (Jacobs, 1998). According to Guthrie, Paul shows two characteristics of this term, namely (i) atonement which is contrasted with enmity, and (ii) atonement is considered as a reality that is accomplished by Christ's death. Regarding these two characteristics, Guthrie explained that: "The enmity in question is not only the enmity of man against God but also the enmity of God's wrath against sin. This is supported by the statements about God's wrath in Romans 1:18; 2:5,8; 3:5; 4:15... This means that Christ's atoning work is essential. No one can face that wrath unless God Himself intervenes. The second feature is considered a reality that Christ's death worked out. It is not just a change in the attitude of the sinner. If that were the case, then the death of Christ would not be necessary. There is absolutely nothing to say that in the NT, the death of Christ so impressed His enemies that they removed their sense of enmity (Guthrie, 2008).

The passive sense of *katallassesthai* appears in 2 Corinthians 5:20 (cf. 1 Cor. 7:11). All attempts to replace the primary meaning of *katallage* with a secondary one are based on a prior determination to deny the reality of God's wrath against sinners, not on unbiased exegesis. *Katallage* relates to all the languages of Scripture that describe sin as a state of enmity with God (Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:15; Jas. 4:4), and sinners as enemies of God alienated from him (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21), which describes Christ on the cross as peacemaker and as a peacemaker between God and man (Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20), and with all invitations such as: "Make peace with God" (2 Cor 5:20).

## **Implications of the Concept of Atonement for Youth Refresh Ministry**

### **A. Theological Discipleship Model at Refresh Ministry**

Instilling the value of truth in Refresh youth is carried out with a discipleship model that balances encounter and teaching. Discipleship is one process that can make Christians experience spiritual maturity. According to Chan, discipleship is the process of bringing people into a restored relationship with God and nurturing them to full maturity in Christ through an intentional growth plan so that they too can multiply this whole process to others (Chan, 2014). Discipleship combines inculcating the values and teachings of the Christian faith and providing media to help discipleship participants experience a personal encounter with God and understand the fundamentals of the teaching conveyed. This section includes teaching and training classes in small groups known as cell groups (*komsel*). The inculcation of Christian values and teachings is very necessary to strengthen faith and reject the influence of existing heresies such as those found in the era of postmodernism (Butarbutar, 2018). Meanwhile, in the encounter with God, the discipleship program is a recovery retreat and private, quiet Time to care for the personal encounter. This recovery retreat was able to help participants to experience a breakthrough from attachment as a result of a personal encounter with God (Sumiwi & Reniyana, 2018).

The mentoring process relates to commercial activities and public worship, inculcating Christian values and personal encounters with God. In addition to these two things, there is a mentoring process for each discipleship participant carried out by a spiritual mentor, who has spiritual growth that is more mature than the mentor. Especially in the mentoring process, each mentor will faithfully defend the mentees in their prayers. J Lee explained that the prayers of active mentors could help young people grow spiritually in the postmodern era (Lee, 2012). This action aligns with research presented by the *Bilangan Research Center (BRC)*, which provides seven dimensions of congregational spiritual growth. These dimensions are the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith, exclusivity (appreciation of the uniqueness of the Christian faith), external practice (corporate/communal worship activities), spiritual experience, personal practice (personal relationship with God), understanding the meaning of life, and aspects of evangelism & discipleship.

Youth Refresh Ministry uses the model of reconciliation education carried out by Budiarti by carrying out three stages. First, the awareness stage. At this stage, the youth of Refresh Ministry are made aware that their identity is to become agents of reconciliation, starting from the realization that they must first reconcile. The awareness stage is a stage to make students understand the significance of peace and the power of peace. At this stage, the youth of Refresh Ministry did contemplative with quiet Time and prayer together. The second, the stage of appreciation. Students will direct to love, yearn, and yearn for peace naturally in this stage. They need to gain experience in a comfortable feeling when being a peacemaker and live together in peace. It is necessary to integrate real-life with meetings with the community at this stage. The third, the implementation stage. This stage focuses on action in response to the learning process in real life. At this stage, the model built in action reflects when you have done it (Budiarti, 2018). From the three stages above, it can be made as to the following table:

**Table 1. Stages of Atonement Discipleship to Youth**

Stage	Model
Awareness stage	Contemplative models and problem-posing models
Appreciation stage	Integration model (with ecclesiastical calendar) and role-playing model
Implementation stage	Action-reflection model

### **B. Implications of Christ's Atonement for Youth Refresh Ministry**

The Atonement that Jesus did was to cover all aspects of human life—starting from a restored relationship with God to get the salvation that Jesus has done. Furthermore, this atonement brings the task of bringing all creation back to worship Him. Naugle emphasizes this, who states that "God created the entire universe for His glory. Familiar passages such as Romans 1:20 each tell us that the heavens reveal the glory of God and that His eternal power and divine nature manifest in the things He creates." (Naugle, 2012). This understanding leads to the actions of the Refresh youths who know their purpose in life. According to the Refresh youth, their purpose in life is to carry out the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. This is the ultimate goal after being saved. This is not wrong, but if we look at the redemption that Jesus gave, the goal of a believer's life is to live to glorify God. This concept was finally accepted and applied by the youth Refresh Ministry in all aspects of their lives.

Atonement with Christ allows believers to experience faith growth and come to know God more. Graham stated that through the reconciliation with Christ, we are called and empowered to live by the Spirit in righteousness (Graham, 2009). The knowledge of God taught in *konsel* and Refresh Ministry worship is knowledge of God (*gnosis*) and knowledge gained through experience (*ginosko*). Understanding the recognition gained through experience is an essential part of attention. Refresh Ministry conducts *konsel* every week where the concept of the event is varied. One of them is "time-sharing." Sharing Time is a place for young people to share their life experiences for the past 1 or 2 weeks. After the testimony is delivered, mentors will ask the person concerned and other participants about the implications of the testimony.

Paul mentioned that the message of the atonement in Christ had been entrusted to him to continue to preach to all people (2 Cor. 5:19). Sidjabat explained that to be at peace with oneself and peace with everyone, humans must first be reconciled to God through Christ because God's love in Christ Jesus can enable humans to become peacemakers (Sidjabat, 2018). The concept of making peace with oneself do through a retreat encounter carried out in small groups by filling out the form provided by the Refresh Ministry administrator regarding a list of things that make a person unable to make peace with oneself. After filling out the form provided, the youths will pray for each other to receive the atonement that God has provided. Furthermore, the youth of the Refresh Ministry are agents of change that God sent to bring peace to the marketplace where they work. That is why young people must provide grades or report cards for the influence or achievements they have made in work or school. To find out how they live when they are outside the church building. This process is, of course, carried out together with the appointed mentor.



## Conclusion

The concept of atonement that Jesus Christ wrought on humans touches all aspects of life created by God. This brings restoration to the universe to glorify God. Refresh Ministry youth already know the purpose of their lives: glorifying God, which is reflected in life bringing peace to the environment where God has placed them. Neither the home environment nor the marketplace where they work or school. In addition, the atonement brings a deep knowledge of Christ through life experiences. Especially the problems that occur due to the Covid-19 pandemic and relativism thinking patterns due to the postmodern era. Refresh Ministry youth can understand and apply the concept of the atonement of Jesus according to Paul (*Katallage and Hilasmos*) because they follow discipleship that balances teaching and encounter. Classes building to understand design must be fun so that the Refresh youth do not feel bored discussing theological matters. Meanwhile, the meeting was carried out through a retreat encounter, shared quiet Time, a place for personal testimony, assistance from selected spiritual mentors, and a personal report card written by oneself to assess the level of implementation of the concept of reconciliation in everyday life.

## Acknowledgment

We want to thank all those who have helped make this research possible. Especially for the Refresh Ministry, which has provided an opportunity for internalization treatment of peace teaching. Thank you also to STT Bethel Indonesia, Jakarta, for funding this research.

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**Article Information (Supplementary)**

**Conflict of Interest Disclosures:**

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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**First Publication Right:** BISMA The Journal of Counseling

<http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/bisma.v5i3>

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**Word Count:**

