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**BOOK REVIEW**

**Paulachan P. Kochappilly**, *Life in Christ: Eastern Perspectives on Christian Ethics*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2010. Pages: xvi+273. ISBN: 978-81-89958-34-3

Dr. Paulachan Kochappilly CMI (henceforth P.P.) is the author of books and many articles in the fields of Ethics and Syro-Malabar liturgy. This present work is a collection of essays published in different journals and books in a span of more than ten years. P.P. claims that this collection will disclose the progress of his thought and articulation on the subjects. He agrees that there are repetitions of ideas in the present book. The author wants to develop an Eastern perspective of Christian ethics from Theological, Christological, Pneumatological, Biblical, Liturgical, Ecclesial and Contextual aspects. This is indeed an ambitious as well as daring endeavour. It also sheds light on the strengths and weakness of the work.

The scholar says that he has tried to delve into the Syro-Malabar liturgical celebration. His zealous enthusiasm and persistent adherence to the Eastern liturgy are reflected in every articulation. The author follows the style of the Eastern tradition, which is profuse in verbose phrases and synonymous expressions. It discloses the inner energy and transparency of his heart.

The work is divided into nine chapters. Chapter I deals with celebration of life in Christ, which is a delightful theme of the author. First, P.P. points out six features of celebration, articulated as who, what, where, when, why and how. I find it very attractive. "Celebration can be a remembrance or a performance or both; it can be a commemoration and blessing; it can be memory (better remembrance) and feast; it can be a remembrance, a revival, and a renewal; it can be a commingling of past and future in the present" (p. 2). "Celebration is creative, liberative and transformative" (p. 2). The author enjoys a wonderful, intuitive and experiential knowledge of the concept of celebration. According to him "Christian ethics is the study of the way of celebration of life, revealed in Christ, supported by human reason and reflected in the liturgical celebration in the Church..." (p. 6). I find this

working definition pregnant with insight and mystical bend – the very essence of the Eastern spirituality.

Every word of this definition is explained then in chapter I.

Chapter II, “Christ-centred Ethics and the Celebration of the Divine Liturgy,” tries to establish that Christian ethics is Christ-centred and the celebration of the Qurbana is a life in Christ and a Christ like life. Thus he concludes the chapter: “Christian ethics indicates and involves a moving and living in Christ and a living like Christ” (p. 69).

Next the author deals with the theme “Trinitarian Foundation of Christian Ethics and the Syro-Malabar Qurbana.” Christian ethics is basically Trinitarian in character. The Syro-Malabar Qurbana celebrates this Trinitarian mystery. Trinitarian life is a life of celebration and life for celebration; it is a call to celebration. Here comes into focus the communitarian perspective of Christian ethics, which is a call to holiness.

In chapter IV P.P. dwells on the theme “Christian Ethics as Walking the Way of Love, Light, and Life in the Holy Spirit.” He illustrates the ideas of walking freely (knowingly, willingly and justly), and fully (faithfully, fruitfully and joyfully). As conclusion he says: “This walking with the Spirit commences, continues and culminates in the celebration of the communion – communion with the Father in Christ through the Spirit” (p. 143).

In “Cross and Christian Ethics,” (chapter V), the author argues that the cross is the source of Christian ethics, the strength and style of Christian ethics. Chapter VI is a beautiful and inspiring presentation of the ecclesial character of Christian ethics in the light of celebration of the liturgy. The author entitles chapter VII as “Ethos-Eucharist-Ethics, Source-Submit-Support of Christian life.” According to him Christian ethos refers to the Christian community, which presupposes celebration and is based on personal and collective commitments. “Christian ethos becomes vibrant and transparent in the celebration of the Eucharist, which, in turn motivates the participants to commit themselves to the command of Christ in the Church for the life of the world” (p. 222).

In chapter VIII P.P. presents “Walking the Way of Peace.” He highlights it in three successive stages: seeing the way of peace, making the way of peace and celebrating the way of peace. The author introduces Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as those who were committed to make the path for peace. Mystical celebration, global celebration and liturgical celebration will accelerate the walking on the way of peace. The last chapter deals with

celebration of life in Christ. P.P. finds in it the focus of Christian ethics for the third millennium. As conclusion the author asserts: "Christian ethics fosters liberty and responsibility, creativity and loyalty, objectivity and subjectivity, universality and particularity, reasonability and credibility: in ethics there is divinity and humanity" (page 273).

This reviewer appreciates the author's gift of playing with words, as well as his graceful insights and mystical intuitions. I am inclined to call this work *Life in Christ* the *magnum opus* of P.P. He not only shows his erudition in Eastern liturgy, but also in the Indian terminology. This fleshy language may win him admirers if he uses it in giving lectures. I hope that the author may make it more simple, concise and precise in literary works.

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