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BOOK REVIEW

Kuncheria Pathil, *Hermeneutics of Vatican II*, (Jeevadhara Book Series 1), Bengaluru: Dharmaram Publications, 2023, Pages: vi+285, ISBN: 978-93-92996-41-2

This book is a hermeneutical study on Vatican II, and the main contributors are Kuncheria Pathil, Vincent Kundukulam, Martin Sebastian Kallungal, Errol D' Lima, Michael Amaladoss, Felix Wilfred, Dominic Veliath, Antony Kalliath, George M. Soares Prabhu, Jacob Kavungal, Anto Karokaran, and Paul Putheanangady. All the articles are republications of those already published in the Jeevadhara magazine.

The first article as an introduction is written by Kuncheria Pathil. He presents the Vatican II Council as a great intervention of the Holy Spirit. One of the master keys of Vatican II is relationality. In the approach of relationality, the method of council was not 'either/or', but 'both/and'. He says that Vatican II is a great synthesis of polarities; between immanent and historical, unity and plurality, charismatic and institutional, Church and world. This council shifts the focus from Church to the world which is dynamic. Pathil criticizes the conclusion that even after 50 years, Church is unable to fully achieve the values of Vatican council. The second article, *Introducing the Science of Hermeneutics* written by Vincent Kundukulam is a philosophical study on the hermeneutics of the Vatican II Council. He explains the etymology, Greek beginning, old trajectory in the Catholic Church and modern trends with detailed explanations of Schleimacher, Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Ricoeur Socio-Critical hermeneutics. He identifies certain basic presuppositions for fruitful Hermeneutics: all human understanding is historically and linguistically conditioned and it is interpretive; interpretation through the hermeneutical circle; Respect for the tradition and the interpreter; praxis-based hermeneutics. He concludes with questions on psychological methodological, technological and pluralistic barriers to hermeneutics in the future.

The third article, *Hermeneutical Key for the Interpretation of the Texts for Vatican II*, written by Martin Sebastian Kallungal says that hermeneutical keys to understand the Council are the spirit of the council i.e., minds of the council fathers and the working of the Holy Spirit, the style of the Council, the reception of the Council and integral exigency. The fourth article titled *Vatican II: Call for Renewal in the Church* is written by Kuncheria Pathil and it has two parts and first is about the significant contributions of Vatican II and openness to the world, recognizing the prophetic call, Church as mystery and people of God, Episcopal collegiality and the conciliar structure of the Church. The second part is about six challenges Church faces today: the failure to establish the teachings of Vatican II; the pyramidal structure of the Church, lack of inculturation, laity participation in Church administration, the participation of laity in the being and mission of the Church, ecumenism, and option for the poor.

The fifth article, *Kingdom of God, Church and World: A Vatican II Perspective* written by Errol D' Lima speaks of new understanding of *the kingdom of God* as a universal reality with eternal and temporal perspectives; *the Church* as an institution willed by God the Father, inaugurated by Jesus for the redemption of humanity against the traditional monolithic and juridical understanding and *on world* as the creation of God against the traditional understanding of the world as an obstacle to the realization of the Kingdom of God. He also speaks of the salient aspects of *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* which are the Church as a sacrament, people of God, hierarchy, laity and collegiality, salvation outside the Church, interreligious dialogue, addressing religious pluralism and mission as human formation. The sixth article, *Renewing Patterns of Worship* written by Michel Amaladoss evaluates the hope raised by the council, its achievements, perspectives for the future, and creative practice. Amaladoss is speaking about the handedness of the liturgical renewal and the role of central authority to keep the traditional worship pattern. The seventh article, *Merging of Borders: Pastoral Relationship of the Church to the World* written by Felix Wilfred speaks of the pastoral relationship of the Church with world. This article has four parts. The first section is about the temptations against pastoral praxis; reluctance to change, the temptation of power and careerism, and *castism*. The second part is about the five principles of pastoral vision; the thirst for truth and mystery, developing the right orientation to the world, dialogue and participation, the hierarchy of truth, and option for the poor. The third section is about the five areas of pastoral contribution of Church;

politics, economy, culture, peace building and ecology. The fourth part is about what the Church can learn from the world: transparency and accountability, the yearning for growing participation, the thirst for justice and the practice of human rights, greater freedom of expression, and the cause of women and their legitimate place and rights.

The eighth article, *Theology of the Role of Laity in Vatican II* written by Kuncheria Pathil, narrates the ecclesiological vision of Vatican II i.e., *people of God model* to facilitate lay participation in the Church. Theology of the role of laity in Vatican II is focused on the equal status of laity in the community, the priestly and prophetic call of laity, the secular quality of laity's mission and the mutual support of laity and clergy. The ninth article, *The Implication of Lumen Gentium: A New Way of being Church* written by Dominic Veliath speaks of a new way of being church beyond its traditional and hierarchical statures. The article says that the document articulated the Church in her relatedness; relatedness to other religious people, poor people and to the world in general. Veliath says that theology of *Lumen Gentium* follows both/and theology, rather than either/or theology, which encompasses polarity between immutable and historical, unity and plurality, charismatic and institutional and Church and world.

The tenth article, *Being Missional in the Meeting of Religions* speaks of the theological and missiological understanding of the Church in relationship with other religion on the background of the declaration in *Nostra Aetate*. It also speaks of the context of formation the text, the new avenues that the Church encounters and the theological shifts; shifts from normative to narrative, *eschaton* to *eschatos*, private talk to public truth. The eleventh article, *Theology of the Local Church* written by Kuncheria Pathil speaks theology of the importance of the local Church and its communion with the universal Church. This article has three parts. The first part is the historical development of ecclesiology, the second part is the rediscovery of the ecclesiology of communion and third part is theology of the local Church. The third part is explaining what the local Church is, how does a Church become local, diversity and unity of the local Church, role of bishop and its communion with universal Church. The twelfth article, *The Church as Mission: A Reflection on Mt 5:13-16* written George M. Soares Prabhu gives an exegetical study on above passage on gospel of Mathew other than great commission (Mt 28:16-20). Mt 5:13-16 is the crucial part of Sermon on the Mount, and it is considered as the Christian righteousness (Dharma). It is commandment for the Christian community to become the salt of the earth and light of the world, so

that humanity will be led to glorify God. This is the mission of the Church in today's world. The thirteenth article, *Mission without the Church* written by Jacob Kavungal speaks that the mission of the Church is not the increase of the membership in the Church rather render visibility to the kingdom and to convert people to the kingdom. The fourteenth article, *Individual Conversions or Evangelization of Churches?* written by Anto Karorkaran speaks of the need of a paradigm shift from individual conversion to evangelization of culture. Sometimes we convert individual to monolithic Christian culture which alienates them from their society and culture. The Church should provide people with the opportunity to experience Jesus in their culture through evangelization. The fifteenth article, *Salvation and Evangelization*, written by Paul Puthanangady speaks of the relation between salvation and evangelization and the possibility of salvation outside the visible boundary of the Church. Puthenangady says that according to the Gospel, salvation is a humanization process which should take place already in this world; it is not a state of life or the next life. Besides it is not a religion; salvation is the result of response that each human being makes to God. The last article, *Church and Churches in Vatican II: A Case for Rethinking* written by Kuncheria Pathil, speaks of rethinking the ecclesial status of the other Churches. This article has four parts which elaborately speak of ecclesiology: A historical overview, the Ecclesiology of Vatican II, the ecclesiological status of other Churches in Vatican II, and a call for rethinking and reinterpretation.

This book provides us with a comprehensive view of the Vatican Council. As an ecclesiologist, Kuncheria Pathil gives importance to the ecclesiology of the Vatican II Council. An article on external factors such as the influence of other Churches, social changes, secular ideologies, etc., on the council could have been included in the volume. However, the book is a great help to the readers in understanding the Council's teachings and contribute to its ongoing hermeneutical process.

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