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Van Aarde, Andries, 1994 — God-with-us: The dominant perspective in Matthew's story and other essays

Pretoria: University of Pretoria. (*HTS* Suppl 5.) 326 Pages. Price: R65,00.

Reviewer: Dr W R Domeris

The present volume is the fifth in the supplementary series of *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* and is dedicated to Willem Vorster. The volume had its origins in research done in the early 1980's by Van Aarde as pioneering work into the narrative analysis of Matthew's Gospel. Now completely revised and updated that research forms the substance of part one. Part two is a series of six essays previously published as individual articles and here brought together to form a complement to the earlier narrative analysis. All in all this represents a solid study on the Gospel of Matthew by one of South Africa's foremost New Testament scholars.

Van Aarde has entitled the volume *God-with-us* because he believes this is the dominant theme within the Gospel. He begins with an overview of Matthean research with a particular focus on the variety of models of interpretation, stressing in particular the growing interest in the Matthean community, and the complexity of Matthew's structure. The second chapter develops the ideological/theological perspective in Matthew's story, stressing the place of the narrator, character delineation and the use of titles for Jesus. This leads on to chapter three, the names of Jesus in Matthew's story from a critical view of traditional titular Christology to an examination of the narrative function of the titles (e.g. it is the crowds who call Jesus Son of David) and the using of irony (e.g. the enemies of Jesus). Chapter four looks at John the Baptist and begins the development of the God-with-us theme. Other characters (the Jewish leaders) are considered in the following chapters. Chapter 8 returns to the narrator in perspective, this time on the temporal and topographic levels in Matthew's story. Van Aarde draws attention to the pre-paschal sequences and the unifying factor of the God-with-us theme. The Emmanuelship is demonstrated in Jesus' concern for the outcasts of his time and is continued in his instructions to his disciples to go out and to make disciples of all peoples.

Ongoing plot of the present Gospel and the open end of the second plot is further developed in chapter 9 and the summary. Van Aarde concludes with the challenge to continue the plot in outreach to the underprivileged in the encouragement that God is with us until the *parousia*.

Part two consists of approximately half the book and deals with issues like the beatitude (arguing for the beatitude as a literary type or *Gattung*), the feeding miracle (the use of historical criticism and the faith perspective), the miracle of the silver coin (the society of a miracle), the wedding feast (macro and microtexts). The final two chapters look at the textual evidence concerning the separation of Judaism and Christianity (the contribution of the Jewish Christian's resurrected faith) and the infancy narrative of Matthew (dis-

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playing the God who sides with the outcast and endangered women and child).

Van Aarde's studies are compelling reading, taking one into the heart of the Gospel and leaving an explicit challenge to all readers of the Gospel to enter into the plot of Matthew and become a part of the process of becoming God-with-us in contemporary society.