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Henry PATTARUMADATHIL, *Your Father in Heaven. Discipleship in Matthew as a Process of Becoming Children of God* (Analecta Biblica 172; Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico; Roma 2008) 251 pp. ISBN 978-88-7653-172-9. € 28,00

This book, a revised version of the author's dissertation defended at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome on 19 May 2007, substantiates its thesis – that discipleship is a process of becoming children of God – by showing how this process is spelled out in the passages which refer to God as the Father of the disciples in Matthew. The book has the following layout: After the "Preface" (5-6) is placed the "Table of Contents" (7-10). The "General Introduction" (11-20) acquaints the reader with the state of the question, focus of the study, methodology and itinerary of the study. The study itself is then articulated in four chapters: the first three chapters are analytical, whereas chapter four, the final one, is a summary.

The determination of the first three chapters is based on the distribution of twenty-one passages where God is referred to as the Father of the disciples in Matthew. The first chapter, "The Father and Children at the Centre of the Sermon on the Mount," (21-94) focuses on the text unit Matt 6,1-18, the centre of the Sermon on the Mount, in which ten of these passages are found (Matt 6,1.4.6[twice].8.9.14.15.18[twice]). In the beginning of this chapter, with the help of a comparative statistical survey, the author strives to verify the uniqueness of the use of the term "father" for God in Matthew and its theological implication. This is followed by a detailed inquiry into Jesus' teaching on the righteousness of the disciples and the three ways of putting it into practice – almsgiving, prayer, fasting – given in this unit.

The second chapter is called "The Father and Children in the Rest of the Sermon on the Mount" (95-139) and presents an analysis of the remaining "father passages" from the Sermon of the Mount (Matt 5,16.45.48; 6,26.32; 7,11) in their immediate contexts. Attention is also paid to Matt 7,21, where, for the first time in the gospel, Jesus presents God as his Father.

In chapter three, "The Father and Children in the Other Great Discourses in Matthew," (141-177) the residual five "father" passages in Matthew's gospel, which all occur in the Grand Discourses, are examined: two in the Mission Discourse (Matt 10,20.29), one in the Parable Discourse (Matt 13,43), one in the Community Discourse (Matt 18,14), one in the Final Discourse (Matt 23,9).

Finally chapter four, "Becoming the Children through the Son," (179-202) succinctly discusses Matthew's presentation of Jesus' mediatory role in the disciples' becoming children of God. The "General Conclusion" (203-209) proposes a short reflection on the dynamic of discipleship today. The last pages of the book contain "Abbreviations" (211-215), "Bibliography" (217-238), "Author Index" (239-243) and "Scriptural Index (Selected)" (245-251).

Concerning methodology it is possible to say that the author of this study reads the gospel and interprets it while keeping in mind the faith-purpose of the evangelist

(cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dei Verbum* § 8.17.19; THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* [Rome 1993] 91-92.107-108). In the interpretation of the text, the OT is frequently referred to and occasional reference is also made to other Jewish writings, which undoubtedly influenced the author of the gospel. The redactional hypotheses and conclusions are avoided, except where it is relevant; the particular characteristics of the Matthean text are underlined in comparison with the two Synoptic gospels. The author of the study therefore is following a synchronic approach, reading Matthew's Gospel in its final form. The text is interpreted considering its grammatical, syntactic and semantic particularities.

In reference to subject matter, originality and limits of the present study it can be stated that its focus is not so much on the actual portrayal of the disciples as on the ideal of discipleship as it has been presented in Matthew.

This study views the life of the disciples in two stages: their life in the present (the earthly stage), and in the future (the kingdom stage). By hearing the message of Jesus and responding to it positively, they receive the grace to enter the family of Jesus in the world and thus are initiated into the process of becoming children of God. By presenting discipleship as a process, this study also underlines the importance of ethical practice in the life of the disciples. To progress in their journey the disciples have to do the will of the Father, which has been revealed through the life and teachings of Jesus. The author of this study strives to show that in the gospel of Matthew the Father-children relationship is a privilege of the disciples of Jesus, the Son.

There are several studies on Matthew's Gospel which have highlighted the filial identity of the disciples (H. FRANKEMÖLLE, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi. Studien zur Form und Traditionsgeschichte des Evangeliums nach Matthäus* [Münster 1974]; J. D. KINGSBURY, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* [Minneapolis 1975]), but this subject matter was not the centre of these studies. As far as we know, no treatise has been elaborated about the disciples' filial identity and which shows discipleship in Matthew as a process of becoming children of God. The originality and benefit of the present study consists in this.

Finally, it is possible to formulate the following overall valuation: The present study is a good, careful and systematic elaboration of the chosen theme and it is characterized by accuracy and thoroughness. Its author has used extensive literature in his inquiry. This study is really an excellent contribution in biblical scholarly research to the theme "Discipleship in Matthew's Gospel".