

## Chapter 5

### SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, emic data of Matthew's Gospel was discussed. A narratological analysis was done from the so-called "natives' point of view" (ideological perspective), featured in the spatial settings of Matthew's intention of Jesus' inclusive ministry. The purpose of an "emic" reading is to investigate the macro-social world, while that of an "etic" reading is to look into the micro-social world (see Chapter 3). This study has indicated that, firstly, Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry (God's will regarding salvation for all nations) started in Galilee and was completed with his death on the cross in Jerusalem. Secondly, there were antagonists who disrupted Jesus' inclusive ministry in Matthew's narrative. The reason for this disruption was that these antagonists (the elite and religious leaders) believed Jesus' inclusive ministry to be a mission, which would destroy the hierarchical structure of their society. An emic reading therefore clearly indicates that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' ministry included all people in accordance with God's will regarding salvation as the new social identity in Christ.

In this chapter, the social scientific data of Matthew's Gospel is investigated, based on the results of the preceding emic study. The narrator of the Gospel first depicts how Jesus was prepared for his inclusive ministry through his baptism (discussed in 4.2.4.2.1.1), which could be understood as a ritual, which transformed Jesus' status so that he could embark upon his ministry to include all people in God's kingdom. This notion is discussed in section 5.2. In Section 5.3, Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' inclusive ministry is examined from the perspective of micro-narrative social scientific theories. Section 5.4 focuses on the second "transformation ritual" of Jesus, his death. This second ritual helps us to understand the completion of Jesus' inclusive ministry through his death on the cross. Finally, in Section 5.5 the discussion is concluded with a social scientific analysis as an "etic" reading of the text.

## 5.2 Jesus' baptism as ritual of transformation

In this section, Matthew's depiction of the baptism of Jesus is discussed as a ritual<sup>1</sup>. Social scientific theory argues that the most important function of a ritual is to transform a person's status by taking the subject across the boundary lines of society (Hanson 1994:154; McVann 1994:180). Baptism was one of the ritual rites of status transformation in ancient Israel (Wedderburn 1987:363-371; McVann 1991a:151; Hanson 1994:154; Van Eck 1995:288; see Hartman 1997:3-8). Jesus' status was therefore changed through the baptism ritual. In the narrative in Matthew, Jesus' baptism and his temptation are combined as a status transformation ritual (Stein 1996:102).

Before one can discuss the ritual of Jesus' baptism in Matthew's narrative, it is helpful to set out some theoretical views about rituals. Any ritual has two important aspects, namely the ritual process, and certain ritual elements (Van Eck 1995:179-184). According to Turner (1969; cf Gorman 1994:26), there are three basic steps in a ritual process. Step one is the separation in place and time of selected individuals from the larger society, for instance, when children are prepared for baptism they are separated from all other children. Step two is the "liminal" (margin/boundary/threshold) phase. The term "liminal" indicates that in this phase the participants are on the margin of society. Hence, people separated from their everyday lives and familiar world cross a threshold (to undergo a transformation) to a new state and status. During this period, they are required to give up their previous life, their personal identities and their relationship with others in the society, and the ritual transformation occurs. Turner (1969:94-165; see Hanson 1994: 115) argues that the "liminal" phase has three aspects, namely 1) communication of the sacral; 2) a recombination and inversions of traditional sacral images and symbols; and 3) authority between social categories (elders over initiands) and *communitas*. Step three of the ritual process is the aggregation of the participants to the larger group. They rejoin society or their own community with their new status. By then, their function has come to differ from what it was before the ritual took place, and they have a new status, as required by a new role in their society.

According to Van Eck (1995:183; Turner 1969:130-151), the ritual process as explained above also involves ritual elements (*liminality-communitas*). These elements are the *initiands*, the *ritual elders* and certain *ritual symbols*. The term “initiands” indicates a group or individuals who experience the status-transformation ritual so as to learn their new roles and status in the society (see Davies 1995:63). These initiands are charged (instructed) and inducted into the ritual by the ritual elders. The ritual elders are not limited by any boundaries for the ritual charge (see Malina 1986a:143-153; McVann 1991a:151-157). However, other people are not charged like the ritual elders. According to Turner (1969:94-130), culture is a system of ritual symbols. Through a culture, values are expressed, mediated and affirmed. Hence, ritual symbols are “sacred objects”, such as skulls, rings, candles and books (see Van Eck 1995:183). A ritual symbol is like a tool used in the ritual processing of the initiands during the liminality phase.

According to McVann (1988:96-97; 1991a:151-157), studies of the Bible focusing on rituals are done on the basis of cultural-anthropological theory. In the case of Jesus’ baptism in the course of a ritual status transformation, he became the ambassador of God’s will to include all people in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus’ baptism can be explored by means of ritual theory using a cultural-anthropological perspective. Mathew’s interpretation of the baptism of ritual status transformation indicated that the society was not egalitarian during Jesus’ ministry.

In the ritual process of Jesus’ baptism in Matthew’s narrative, he came to the Jordan River as well as the people of his own village and with other people from Jerusalem<sup>2</sup> and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan to be baptized by John (Mt 3:5). All of them came and repented of their sins<sup>3</sup> (Mt 3:6). The narrator indicates that the crowds were in a liminal state because they had separated themselves from their own community and ordinary social world to come to John the Baptist to repent. They expected a status transformation, from sinfulness to purity (Mt 3:6, 11). Baptism signifies death to a whole way of life (cf Rom 6:3). Jesus had separated himself from a place. He left Nazareth (his home town; see Mt 2:23) and went to the Jordan River. The narrator in Matthew is completely silent about how Jesus was brought

up and educated. But later in the Gospel he informs us that Jesus was “the carpenter’s son” (Mt 13:55). Only here in the Gospels do we discover that Jesus’ father is called a carpenter. It implies that Jesus took up the trade of his father, to do so was amongst one of the customs of most people in the ancient world (Neyrey 1998:103). Now, however, Jesus was separated from his family. The second step in the ritual process is liminality-communitas. He came from Nazareth and entered from the margins. It means that Jesus was not of elite class, he was from the artisan class. Most people of Nazareth were not of elite classes (see Chapter 4.2.4.2.1.1). He came from outside and threatened the power centre of society (Carter 2000:107). The narrator shows how Jesus had deserted his former life in Nazareth. During his sojourn and experience at Jordan, he obviously became a “nobody” (Van Eck 1995:288). However, Jesus enjoyed *communitas* with John to be baptized in the Jordan River. After Jesus was baptized the voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17). Jesus was also isolated in a lonely place for a period of forty days when he was tempted by Satan (Mt 4:1-11). The forty-day period of Jesus’ temptation can be regarded as the typological equivalent of Israel’s forty years of wandering in the desert<sup>4</sup>. Israel was tempted by hunger (Exod 16:2-8) and succumbed to idolatry (Exod 32), similar to Jesus’ temptation (Allison 1993:165-166). The final step of the ritual process is aggregation. Jesus was alone and subjected to temptation by Satan in the desert. During the temptation, Jesus confirmed his loyalty to God. After these events, Jesus moved to Galilee and started his inclusive ministry by proclaiming “the kingdom of heaven is near” (Mt 4:17). The narrator clearly indicates that Jesus’ status had been changed as he was no longer a carpenter, but he became the ambassador of the Kingdom of God for the inclusive mission for all nations.

As can be seen from the above, Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus’ baptism was a ritual transformation of status from the perspective of a cross-cultural theory on rituals. Before describing Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist, the narrator in Matthew had already informed his readers on several occasions about Messianic signs connected with Jesus. The narrator tells the reader that Jesus’ birth included the fulfillment of his Messianic mission (Mt 1:23; 2:6, 15,18; see Hartman 1997:24). Jesus was indeed imbued with the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:18,20)

and he would save his people from their sins (inclusion) (Mt 1:21). All the above statements prove that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God and that he came to save God's people in Matthew's narrative. Moreover, Jesus' baptism differed from that of other people. People came to the Jordan River, confessing their sins and they were baptized by John the Baptist (Mt 3:6) (Carter 2000:96). However, when Jesus was baptized, it is evident of his transformation to his divine Sonship. Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' baptism not only confirmed his transformation to divine Sonship, but it is also the narrator's signal that the Son performed his Father's will of an inclusive ministry for God's people after the status transformation of the ritual of baptism.

How did the ritual of baptism transform Jesus' status? John the Baptist preached about repentance to the crowd and he told them that they needed to repent of their sins in order for them to enter the Kingdom of God. After Jesus was baptized by John, Jesus also preached the need for repentance to the crowd. Both Jesus and John the Baptist called on sinners to repent (McVann 1991b:432). According to Perlewitz (1988:23), repentance was one of the signs of God's promise and activity on behalf of the Israelites in the past generations. It implied that the Israelites needed to remember God's faithfulness of the past. However, repentance is no longer only for Israelites (Mt 4:17-25). Therefore, the baptism, as ritual transformation of Jesus' status, was the sign of *his inclusive mission* on behalf of all nations (my emphasis). It is clear that Matthew's depiction of Jesus' baptism is the ritual transformation of his status allowing him to embark on his inclusive ministry for all kinds of people, who came from different social classes. Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry is reflected in the context of his inclusively structured community.

### **5.2.1 Jesus as minister of inclusivity**

We have seen that in Palestine, in the first century CE, the Israelite society was strongly stratified (see Chapter 3.3). The people of Israel believed they were the holy people of God. God commanded the Israelites, saying: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2). According to Neyrey (1988:82), the Israelites believe that they were the special

sacred nation of God and were built upon this code of holiness. In the light of this code they distinguished themselves from all the other people (cf Lev 10:10). This perception of holiness also caused stratification in their society. Religious leaders and the elite classes, especially, had many privileges, but lower-class people had no power or privileges. In other words, Israelite society was hierarchically structured and not egalitarian (see Vledder 1997:98; cf Bryant 1983:366).

Social patterns and religious ritual systems supported the hierarchical structure of Israelite society. Religious rituals established boundaries in that society. They distinguished symbols signifying the clean and unclean, the holy and unholy, man and woman, purity and impurity. A pure man needed to carefully avoid contact with all that was unclean, such as sinners, lepers, the blind and the lame, prostitutes and tax-collectors. Those who were labelled as sinners and as unclean were marginalized by their society. These details indicate that first-century Israelite society excluded the lower classes from power and privileges and that there was a strong hierarchical structure.

The above argument indicates that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society. The urban elite and religious leaders tried to maintain the hierarchical structure of society. The narrator depicted that Jesus wanted to include all classes of people in the kingdom of God through salvation. Hence, in Matthew's narrative, conflict arose between Jesus and the religious leaders because Jesus' ministry was inclusive all of people (see Ellis 1994:108-109; Van Aarde 2001:184). However, the narrator's purpose of Jesus' inclusive ministry did not lead to an egalitarian structured society (Elliott 2003:75-90; see Chapter 1). We now return to our main argument, that the narrator's interpretation of Jesus had an inclusive ministry, it is reflected in the context of Matthew's community.

Jesus was a patron for people from all different classes. When the religious leaders labeled low-class people as social and religious outcasts (see Van Aarde 2001:154), Jesus was the patron of lower-class people. Van Aarde (2001:136) argues that children (Mt 18:3; 19:13-15), according to the Gospel of Matthew, formed part of the lowest classes in the social stratification of first-century Herodian Palestine. Jesus said the kingdom of God belonged to

such children who came from the lower class (Mt 19:14). Hence, Matthew's perspective of Jesus' ministry is that it was to found a new family, a family of God as the new social identity in Christ (Mt 23:9) (cf Schaberg 1987:77; Van Aarde 2001:154). This means that Jesus was using his inclusive ministry as a "divine begetting" (Schaberg 1987:77). Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry is that one should obtain a new social identity with faith in Christ. This means that the social identity changed and that therefore transposes non-Israelite and Israelite who have obtained a state of the member of Matthew's Christian community. In the next section, we look at Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' inclusive ministry so as to obtain the new identity from the perspective of social scientific theories.

### **5.3 Jesus' inclusive ministry**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

In the above section, it was argued that Matthew's perspective of Jesus was an inclusive minister within a hierarchical structured society. During his ministry, he performed many miracles, such as healing, teaching and driving out demons, including all types and conditions of people. It has already been argued that Jesus' inclusive ministry was completed by his death on the cross in Jerusalem (see Chapter 4). This section looks at Matthew's intention of Jesus' inclusive ministry from the perspective of social scientific theories. Section 5.3.2 looks at how Jesus transgressed the purity system in his day and how Jesus' ministry included unclean people such as social lower-class people. In Section 5.3.3, Jesus' healing of sickness is discussed. The focus of this discussion is Jesus' inclusive ministry for unclean people. In Section 5.3.4 Jesus' inclusive ministry is discussed from the perspective of honour and shame. In this section, aspects such as labeling and deviance, patronage and clientism are examined. Finally, in Section 5.3.5, the concept of kinship in Jesus' inclusive ministry is examined.

All of these social scientific theories are useful in understanding Matthew's dominant perspective of his inclusive community through Jesus' inclusive ministry to all kinds of people. In each section, the relevance of the specific social scientific theory is explained,

followed by a textual application. However, it is not an exegetical purpose but it is only considering Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry through social scientific models. Of course, the result of this investigation tells us that the Matthean community was an inclusively structured society.

### **5.3.2 Purity and pollution**

The social scientific theory of purity and pollution was suggested by Mary Douglas (1966). Her work has had an impact on Biblical scholarship, and her observations on purity and pollution are a key to an understanding of the symbolic universe of the ancient Biblical world. Purity and pollution are ways in which societies classify and arrange their respective worlds (Douglas 1966:13-14; see Van Eck 1995:196). Purity and pollution are distinguished by lines and boundaries. According to Neyrey (1996:80-104), something, a person or a place, can be labeled "unclean", "common" or "polluted". For instance, with regards to food, the Israelites were prohibited from eating the flesh of certain animals (Lev 11), but the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" did not only apply to food. According to Sprinkle (2000:637), "uncleanness is due to skin disease, bodily discharges, touching unclean things" (cf Num 5:2). For instance, in the case of illnesses, the sick person was unclean and all who touched him or her would become unclean as well (Mt 9:25). Sprinkle's (2000:637-657) view of what distinguished purity from pollution was based on the Israelite traditional laws. Clearly, rules relating to purity and pollution were connected to people's activities and the statement of objects. In terms of these Israel rules, persons and objects were thus declared sacred/profane, clean/unclean or pure/polluted<sup>5</sup> (Neyrey 1990:54-55; 1996:82; see Van Eck 1995:196). The social function of such labels and their relationships were controlled by their social group (Douglas 1966:18-22). This means that the labeling of persons and objects in terms of purity and pollution was done and maintained by the group. The group had power in a general system of purity to include or exclude persons and objects as the moral code of their societal structure as dictated (Douglas 1968:339). The specific rules of purity and norms were given by the group.

The term purity is best understood as the opposite of the meaning of dirt (Douglas 1966:34-35). The above implies that purity is out of place in the classification system when it is not in the original place or in a perfect situation (Malina 1993:153). According to Van Eck (1995:196), “dirt is the wrong thing that appears at the wrong time in the wrong place.” An example of the wrong place is Gentile territory. Jesus chose the wrong time when he healed a sickness on the Sabbath, and he did the wrong thing when he shared meals with unclean sinners (these examples are examined in this section).

Neyrey (1996:91) said that in the first century Judea, “one can gain a sense of the basic cultural lines whereby second temple Israel classified and located persons, times, places, and things.” These classifications can be expressed as a map of places, persons, things or times. Such maps can be compiled from an endless list of things in Israelite, Greek, and Christian literature (Neyrey 1996:91). In these maps it is indicated how cleanness and uncleanness in the first century Christian life were defined in relation to food and table fellowship, bodily emissions and agricultural customs. These arguments imply that the life of the Mediterranean society was not egalitarian structured in the first century. We can look at maps of places, persons, things and times based on Neyrey’s (1996: 92) and Van Eck’s (1995:198) work:

### **Map of places**

There are ten degrees of holiness:

1. The *land of Israel* is holier than any other land...
2. The *walled cities* (of the land of Israel) are still more holy...
3. The area *within the walls* (of Jerusalem) is still more holy ...
4. The *Temple Mount* is still more holy...
5. The *rampart* is still more holy...
6. The *court of the women* is still more holy...
7. The *court of the Israelites* is still more holy. ...
8. The *court of the priests* is still more holy. ...
9. *Between the porch and the altar* is still more holy...

10. The *sanctuary* is still more holy. ...
11. The *Holy of Holies* is still more holy

(*m Kelim* 1.6-9; Neyrey 1991:278-279; cf Reinstorf 2002:165).

The map of *places* clearly indicates that the Gentile people were not regarded as the people of God. Israelite males older than 20 years were seen as holy and they were the centre of holiness. The heart of the temple is the holiest place and holiness is measured in terms of proximity to the centre of the temple (Van Eck 1995: 200; see Elliott 1991:103-104)

### **Map of *persons***

“A list of the persons who may hear the scroll of Esther: priests, Levites, Israelites, converts, freed slaves, disqualified priests, netzins (temple slaves), mamzers (bastards), eunuchs, those with damaged testicles, those without a penis” (*t Meg* 2.7; see Jeremias 1969:271-272; cf Neyrey 1991:279).

The distinction between the elite and non-elite status of *persons* in the map above is clear. In the tradition of the Israelites, the simple classification of the population was in terms of degrees of purity deriving from their proximity to the Jerusalem temple (Malina 1993:159). The above implies that the temple of Jerusalem was a holy place and the people who were close to the temple were more pure than those who stayed far from it. This was a central concern in the second temple Israelite period. This Jewish tradition was reflected in New Testament times (Malina 1993:159). Another map of persons can be drawn up on the basis of marriage, as this also determined a person’s status (see Malina 1981:110-113, 131-133; Van Eck 1995:201).

A map of *persons* clearly indicates that Israelite society had a hierarchical structure. People were ranked in different levels, as stratification defined the community (Jeremias 1969:271-272; see Malina 1993:159-162). In terms of the map of persons, the Israelites were hierarchically constituted as a block of people in Israelite society. This block was probably

classified in terms of a map of uncleanness. According to Van Eck (1995:201), there was a basic distinction of uncleanness between persons who were observant of their law and those who were not. Even observant Israelites were classified:

As the group of Essenes (who considered the present priesthood of the temple to be impure and invalid), the Pharisees (with their own interpretation of the purity lines and boundaries as advocated by the temple system), and the scribes (who were charged with the promotion of the Torah and its dominance in all aspects of life). Moreover, full-Israelites who are non-observant may further be classified.

Persons who were full Israelites but who did not observe the Law were placed in a different category. For instance, tax-collectors and prostitutes were not regarded as being holy. The physically disabled were also deemed unclean and not allowed to enter the temple.

### **Map of things**

There are things which convey uncleanness by contact (e.g., a dead creeping thing, male semen). They are exceeded by carrion.... They are exceeded by him that has connection with menstruant ... They are exceeded by the issue of him that has a flux, by his spittle, his semen, and his urine. ... They are exceeded by (the uncleanness of) what is ridden upon (by him that has a flux).... (the uncleanness of) what is ridden upon (by him that has a flux) is exceeded by what he lies upon...(the uncleanness of) what he lies upon is exceeded by the uncleanness of him that has a flux.

(*m Kelim* 1.3; see Neyrey 1996:92)

The uncleanness of things relates to having contact with dirt, for example a dead person's body, or eating with public sinners (tax-collectors and prostitutes) and sick persons. A person became unclean when he touched such unclean persons or objects. A person who touched a

human corpse made himself unclean for seven days (Num 19:11). Similarly, whoever touched an unclean person, a contaminated chair, the bedding of a menstruating woman, or a man with an unnatural genital flow, was deemed unclean until evening (Lev 15:4-11, 19-24). Objects that came into contact with a carcass became impure (Lev 15:32), though certain objects—springs, cisterns, plant seeds—were immune from impurity by touch (Lev 11:36-38). Water in an unclean vessel was rendered ritually unclean (Lev 11:33-34).

Israelite tradition did not allow a person to touch unclean people and objects. A person who touched unclean persons or objects would become unclean as well. Hence, a priest was not allowed at the burial of any corpse except that of an immediate relative such as a mother, father, brother, daughter, or son (Lev 21:10-12). If a priest touched the corpse, he would be excluded from his duties in the sanctuary. The high priest was not allowed to be in the same room as a corpse, even that of a close relative (Lev 21:11-12).

### **Map of times**

According to Van Eck (1995:202), the “Israelites had both a lunar and solar calendar to differentiate days and seasons by means of which they identified days of pilgrimage, sacrifice, fasting and Sabbath.” The classified times are listed as follows (times are collected in the section of the Mishnah called *Mode*): Sabbath, the Fusion of Sabbath Limit, the Feast of Passover, the Shekel Dues, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles, festival days, the Feast of New Year, days of fasting, the Scroll of Esther, Feast of Purim, mid-festival days, The Festal offering (see Danby 1933:i; cf Van Eck 1995:202-203; Neyrey 1996:92). All of the above were the most holy times. Therefore, Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath brought him in conflict with the Pharisees (cf Mt 12:9-13).

The maps listed above clearly indicate that the requirement of purity entailed an exact classification of persons, places, times and things. If something was out of place, it became unclean. This means that in Israelite tradition there were strong purity concerns and clear lines and boundaries. Hence, purity meant maintaining the lines and borders of life on the basis of the purity system of their society. It is helpful to understand the conflict between Jesus and

the Pharisees about these purity systems of their tradition in Matthew's narrative. Neyrey (1988:63-91) analyses the model of purity for a "symbolic interpretation" of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. The maps of places, persons, things, and times help us to understand the purity boundaries of their society. The religious leaders (Pharisees) had social strategies for their group and for other societies. Neyrey's (1991:271-303) analysis focuses on purity boundaries in the social and physical sense in the case of Luke-Acts. Neyrey concludes that the religious leaders tried to maintain their purity system, but Jesus established new maps of purity, and therefore new boundaries and new rules for unclean people. From a religious leader's perspective, a person who was clean was included in their society, but a person who was unclean was excluded (see Neyrey 1996:81). However, Jesus' perspective of inclusiveness did not distinguish between persons who were clean or unclean within social stratification. It is hence possible to look at Jesus' inclusive ministry in the Gospel of Matthew using the theory of purity and pollution.

According to the Israelite purity system, Jesus needed to avoid all contact with uncleanness and to respect the lines and the boundaries of observance as outlined in the maps of places, things, persons and times in the purity system. However, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus crossed the lines and boundaries of the Israelite purity system in the Gospel of Matthew. With maps of places, persons, things and times, one can list Jesus' transgressions of the purity rules for his inclusive ministry:

**Maps of persons:**

- Jesus came into contact with many unclean people: Mt 4:23-25; 8:2, 5, 14, 16, 28-34; 9:1-2, 9-10, 32; 12:22; 14:14; 15:29-31; 17:15; 19:2; 20:30; 21:14; 27:11, 38.
- Jesus touched unclean people: Mt 8:3, 15; 9:27-31; 20:34.
- Jesus was touched by unclean people: Mt 9:20; 14:36.
- Jesus touched a corpse: Mt 9:25.
- Jesus made contact with the demon-possessed: Mt 8:28-34; 9:32-34.
- Jesus came into contact with the Gentiles: Mt 8:5; 15:22-28.

**Maps of places:**

When Jesus went to the Gentile territories, he crossed the boundary of Judea and went into a world which was considered an unclean place. According to the Jewish purity tradition, only the land of Judea was a pure place. Gentile territory was an unclean place, and Jesus made contact with Gentiles there: Mt 4:23-25; 8:28-34; 11:21-22; 15:21-28 (see Patte 1987:124; Hare 1993:96; Carter 2000:115).

**Maps of things:**

- Jesus shared meals with unclean sinners and many tax collectors: Mt 9:9-13.
- Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands before they ate: Mt 15:1-20.
- Jesus had no regard for the surface of the body: Mt 8:1-4.

**Maps of time:**

- Jesus attacked the time of fasting: Mt 4:1-11.
- Jesus' disciples plucked grain on the Sabbath: Mt 12:1-8.
- Jesus healed on the Sabbath: Mt 12:10-13

The examples mentioned above clearly indicate Matthew's perspective of how Jesus transgressed the purity maps of persons, places, things and times. However, there is no clear indication of how Matthew interpreted the purity law system of his day.

The narrator informs the reader that Jesus' ministry began in the right place (the synagogue), with the right people (those who attended the synagogue as observant Israelites) and by doing the right things (teaching) (Mt 4:23-25). The synagogue was the right place in Israelite society for normality as it was their place for communal and religious activity (Carter 2000:123). Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' teaching was probably supported by the scribes in the synagogue, as it was the place that they mainly used for teaching (cf Van Eck 1995:298). It is not clear whether Jesus healed sick people at the synagogue or at some other place in Galilee. However, the narrator describes how many sick people came to Jesus from

Syria, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region of the Jordan (Mt 4:23-24) (this is discussed later in this section). We can see that Jesus transgressed the purity system when he healed sick people in the synagogue. These healings of Jesus challenged the temple purity system. As there was no temple in Galilee, the synagogue was an extension of the function of the temple in that area. Jesus also transgressed the lines and boundaries of the purity system. Jesus made contact with unclean people who were sick and who came to him from the Gentile world (Syria). As we know, according to the purity system, the demon-possessed and the paralysed were unclean persons. It is clear that Jesus transgressed the purity system by including unclean people such as the sick and Gentiles. The narrator also confirms that Jesus was really conducting an inclusive ministry of salvation (God's will) for all people.

Matthew's depiction of Jesus' contact with unclean persons is now discussed. The following verses indicate that Jesus had contact with unclean persons: Mt 4:23-25; 8:2, 5, 14, 16, 28-34; 9:1-2, 9-10, 32; 12:22-33; 14:14; 15:29-31; 17:15; 19:2; 20:30; 21:14; 27:11, 38. Jesus healed a man with leprosy (Mt 8:1-4, 28-34; 9:32; 12:22-33; 15:22). According to the Jewish purity system, the leprous man was unclean and whoever touched him became unclean as well (Lev 13:47-59; 14:33-57; Sprinkle 2000:637-638). Because the leprous man was unclean, he could not become a member of the community (Pilch 1981:111). People avoided contact with lepers and isolated them from social and cultic life (Lev 13:44-46; Num 5:2). However, Jesus touched the leprous man and healed him. Jesus cleaned the leprous man and sent him to the local priest. This implies that Jesus challenged the priest about the authority of the purity system. Jesus had more authority over the interpretation of the purity system than the religious leaders, thus this resulted in conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders (see Gnilka 1997:266-289).

Another example is the story of how Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute (Mt 12:22-33). From the religious leaders' (Pharisees) perspective, Jesus' power to drive out the demon was not the power of God, nor did it happen with God's authority. They claimed that Jesus cast out demons only through Beelzebul, the ruler of demons (Mt 12:24). However, Jesus told the religious leaders that he did this through the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:28).

This conflict indicates Jesus had authority to heal demon-possessed persons and he also included unclean persons, unlike the religious leaders who excluded unclean people.

Jesus touched unclean people (Mt 8:3, 15; 9:27-31; 20:29-34). Amongst these was the leprous man referred to earlier (Mt 8:3), a woman with a fever (Mt 8:15), two blind men (Mt 9:27-31), and two blind men's eyes (Mt 20:34). Jesus was regularly in contact with sick people<sup>6</sup> and people with diseases. According to Israel's purity system, priests and Levites could not touch an unclean body (see Neyrey 1991:287; Vledder 1997:177). As a woman, Peter's mother-in-law held a subordinate position in her society. Because she was also ill, she was deemed unclean (Vledder 1997:184). Jesus was concerned with her social position and physical situation. She was in an unclean state and situation, but Jesus touched her and healed her illness. He healed Peter's mother-in-law by teaching as well. At that time, women were of low status, but Jesus included women, even sick ones. In performing such actions, Jesus ignored religious and social boundaries. The same happened with the healing of blind men on two occasions, as described in Matthew 9:27-31 and 20:29-34. Both passages depict Jesus as the son of David. Thereby the narrator informs the readers of Jesus' Messianic mission status to include unclean persons such as blind men (Davies 1993:79). Two blind men were seated beside the road (Mt 20:30). Carter (2000:409) concludes that their not being inside and part of the city indicates social marginality. Matthew's narrative depicted Jesus touching these unclean blind men and helped to rejoin their society.

Jesus even touched the corpse of a dead girl (Mt 9:25). A dead person's body was also unclean according to the purity system. However, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched the dead girl's body. Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus did not only have the authority for an inclusive ministry for all levels of the social hierarchy; his inclusive ministry was not limited, even by death (see Davies & Allison 1988:24; Vledder 1997:216). Jesus was also touched by unclean people (cf Mt 9:20; 14:36). The woman who had been bleeding for twelve years was regarded as unclean (Mt 9:20) (see Sprinkle 2000:638). In terms of the boundaries imposed by the purity system, the unclean woman was excluded from their society and God's salvation. Jesus was the one who reached out across

these boundaries and included the unclean woman. Thus, Jesus said to her: “Your faith has healed you” (Mt 9:22).

Jesus made contact with the demon-possessed (Mt 8:28-34; 9:32-34). Jesus met two demoniacs, who were also regarded as unclean persons. Nearby there was also a herd of pigs (unclean animals) (Mt 8:30). The demon-possessed people were social and religious outcasts in their society. They were living in graves outside the city and were feared by the pure members of society (Lenski 1966:281). Jesus drove out the demons and transferred those who were formerly possessed from their erstwhile unclean position to a position of purity. The narrator depicts Jesus as identifying himself with the unclean class (see Chapter 3), and “liberating them from their unclean state in order to be reintegrated into their society” (Vledder 1997:196). Jesus healed a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk (Mt 9:32-34). The narrator emphasizes the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (Pharisees) following this healing. In verse 34, the Pharisees said it was by the prince of demons that Jesus drove out the demons. One might assume that the religious leaders (Pharisees) identified themselves as upper class and thus could not live at peace with Jesus, who himself identified with and had a good relationship with the lower classes (Vledder 1997:223). The religious leaders were spokespersons for the upper class and Jesus was a spokesperson for the lower classes. The upper class could not accept that lower-class people had a right to be equal to the upper class. Hence, upper class people tried to exclude people from the lower class. However, Jesus tried to include lower-class people, such as the sick, demon-possessed and unclean people in society. The upper class pressurized Jesus to maintain the boundaries of the purity system, but Jesus crossed those boundaries to include unclean people. The above discussion shows us that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society. Matthew’s perspective of Jesus’ healing ministry was that it included people who came from different social stratification.

Jesus also made contact with the Gentiles (Mt 8:5-13; 15:22-28). The narratives in Matthew 8:5-13 and 15:22-28 show that Jesus had contact with both an upper-class centurion and a lower-class Canaanite woman. Jesus healed the centurion’s servant<sup>7</sup> in Capernaum. On a

social level, the centurion belonged to the retainer class (Lenski 1966:180; see Chapter 3). He was one of the political elite of society in Israel. However, the centurion was a Gentile and thus regarded as unclean in that society. Moreover, he had a paralysed slave, which added to his problems. Thus the centurion was doubly marginalized in terms of the Israelite purity system (Vledder 1997:180). The centurion acknowledged the status distinction between Israelites and Gentiles, according to the purity system of cleanness and uncleanness.

The narrator tells the readers that there were no limitations to *Jesus' inclusive ministry* (see Patte 1987:114; my emphasis). In the micro-narrative of how Jesus healed the Canaanite woman's daughter, the narrator also indicates Jesus' inclusive ministry to Gentiles (Mt 15:22-28). A person who came from Canaan is specifically identified by geographical titles in the Matthew Gospel and will serve as Matthew's concept of 'outside'. 'Canaanites' were sometimes called the most extreme outsiders or as Israel's enemies in the Old Testament (Jackson 2002:60). The Canaanite woman was also marginalized in more than one way in the Israelite purity system, somewhat similar to the centurion. She was a Gentile and therefore had the status of an outsider, the possibility that she was a prostitute<sup>8</sup>, and her daughter was demon-possessed (Love 2002:11). She wanted her daughter, who suffered from demon-possession, to be healed, but the purity system's boundaries separated her from Jesus (Love 2002:17). Jesus first rejected her request (Mt 15:24), when the Gentile woman requested the core value of God's mercy upon her (Mt 15:27), Jesus extended his mercy to this Gentile woman. The narrator informs the readers that Jesus' inclusive ministry was not limited to the Israelites, but it was extended to the Gentiles (this is discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.4.2). The map of persons according to the purity system in Matthew indicates that Jesus crossed the purity boundaries for a ministry inclusive of all people. The upper elite class (the religious leaders) obstructed Jesus' inclusive ministry by excluding the lower class of unclean people in their society. By implication, the elite class tried to maintain their stratification by referring to social privilege.

The narrator also informs the readers that Jesus went to unclean places, for example the Gentiles' territory (cf Mt 4:23-25; 8:28-34; 11:21-22; 15:21-28). The only geographical area

the narrator mentions in Matthew 4:23-25 is Syria. This point of view has been debated by Matthean scholars. On the one hand, Tyre and Sidon were geographically part of Syria. Matthew's reference to Syria was in a limited sense, as is understood by Mark's reference to "the surrounding region of Galilee" (τὴν περιχώρον τῆς Γαλιλαίας) (Mk 1:28) (Davies & Allison 1988:417 n 9; Cousland 2002:55-56). Cousland (2002:56; Trilling [1964] 1968:135) said that probably "Matthew mentions Galilee (upper Galilee?) together with Syria to the north, and then repeats the mention of Galilee (Lower Galilee?) in conjunction with the regions further south." According to this point of view, Matthew refers to Syria as a part of northern Galilee.

Another view is that the narrator indicates Syria as the place of provenance of Jesus' preaching. The narrator only mentions Syria in relation to the sick people who were brought from there to Jesus (Mt 4:24) (see Cousland 2002:57; Draper 1999:29; Jeremias 1982:35). However, Jesus visited the region of Tyre and Sidon (cf Mt 15:21) (Cousland 2002:57). This indicates that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry spread to the Gentile world, which was regarded as an unclean place in the Israelite purity system. Therefore, the view that Syria was a place of provenance of the Gospel is more acceptable than that of Syria as a part of northern Galilee.

According to Josephus (*JW* 3.56-58), the country of the Gadarenes had Syrian and Israelite inhabitants. The narrator mentions Jesus as he met two demoniacs, who were at the lowest level of society, as Gadarenes, and he drove out their demons (Mt 8:28-34). Jesus also met the Canaanite woman (see above) in the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt 15:21). As indicated before, Jesus went to the Gentiles' country to include Gentiles in his ministry. It is also clear that Jesus transgressed the boundaries of the purity system of his day.

The map of things in the Gospel of Matthew indicates that Jesus shared meals with unclean sinners and many tax collectors<sup>9</sup> (Mt 9:9-13), that Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands before they ate (Mt 15:1-20), and that Jesus was not concerned about the surface of the body (Mt 8:1-4). Earlier we discussed how Jesus had no concerns regarding unclean bodies. Next, we shall look at Matthew's interpretation of how Jesus ate his meals with unclean people, and how the disciples broke a purity law by not washing their hands before they ate. It is important to note how Jesus shared his meals with unclean sinners because by doing so, he

broke the rules of the purity system and was in conflict with the Pharisees. The Pharisees criticised Jesus for his sharing meals with tax-collectors and sinners. This conflict was due to Jesus' sharing of meals with unclean people. For a pure person to share a meal with unclean people, was regarded as unclean in the purity system. The Pharisees found it unacceptable to share a meal with people of the unclean level. This implies that the Pharisees supported the existing imperial hierarchy. They opposed Jesus' ministry of inclusion and breaking down the hierarchical structure in Matthew's interpretation (Carter 2000:220). In the first place, the social position of tax-collectors was so low that they were commonly disregarded in their society, and they were grouped with prostitutes and other sinners,<sup>10</sup> and were at the same level as pagans (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:82; see Malina 1993:28-53; Gnllka 1997:103). In the view of Israelites, "they were literally engaged in robbery, for some of them helped their superiors to mulct the public, no doubt, part of what they collected, stuck to their own fingers" (Vledder 1997:207). Hence, by sharing meals with unclean sinners, Jesus broke ritual purity rules. Secondly, one needs to look at the form of the sinners. The term "sinners" was not commonly used for people of the first-century Israelite society, but it was used to describe fallen members of their community (see Sanders 1983b:7-8). The Greek word ἁμαρτωλῶν is translated into English as 'sinner'. The word *hamaltōloi* stands for the Hebrew word *resha'im* and is best translated in English as 'the wicked' (Sanders 1977:142, 203,342-5; 1983:8). The sinners were probably lower-class people (this is discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.4.3).

Jesus was also in conflict with some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law about the elders' tradition of washing their hands before a meal (Mt 15:1-20)<sup>11</sup>. This practice originated with the requirement that priests should wash their hands before entering the Tent of Meeting (Exod 30:19-21). This did not have anything to do with conveying uncleanness to others (Carter 2000:315-316). However, in the Pharisees' view, Jesus' disciples broke the purity system rule about washing one's hands before a meal (cf Meier:1979:100-104). Jesus answered: "What goes into a man's mouth does not make him unclean, but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean'" (Mt 15:11). This implied that the Pharisees were only concerned with the surface (the washing of hands, pots, cups and vessels). They

honoured God only with their lips, but their hearts did not respect God at all (Mt 15:8). Jesus said the danger did not come from outside, it came from inside (Mt 15:17-20). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus and the Pharisees and the teachers of Law held different perspectives with regard to the concept of clean/unclean. Here, we can see that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry took place with unclean people within an unegalitarian structured society, while the religious leaders excluded them.

Finally, one can look at the "maps of time." The narrator describes how Jesus crossed the purity map of time during his ministry in Matthew's interpretation. Jesus' disciples plucked grain on the Sabbath (Mt 12:1-8) and Jesus healed on the Sabbath (Mt 12:10-13). We have already seen that according to the purity system, the "Sabbath day" was a holy time. The observance of the Sabbath was important in the Israelite purity system. The term Sabbath day implied that the people of Israel were distinctly different from, privileged beyond, and separated from the Gentiles (*Jub* 2:17-22; 1 Macc 1:43, 46; 2:29-41; Josephus, *Ant* 14:241-46, 258, 263-64; Philo, *Abr* 28-30; *De Dec* 96-101; see Carter 2000:263). The day of the Sabbath began with God's rest on the seventh day after the creation of the world (Gen 2:2-31). In the narrative in Matthew 12:1-8 the Pharisees complained that the disciples' actions had contravened God's covenant prohibitions against work on the Sabbath (Mt 12:2). However, the Pharisees were not targeting the disciples in the conflict but were targeting Jesus. According to the narrator, the Pharisees referred to Jesus twice in the same verse (through the pronouns αὐτῷ "him" and σου "your") (Mt 12:2). The Pharisees believed Jesus supported the disciples' action of working on the Sabbath. In the view of the Pharisees, if Jesus allowed such actions by the disciples, he could not have the authority of God (see Carter 2000:265). They insisted that Jesus had broken God's covenant prohibitions against work on the Sabbath.

The Matthew perspective of the Pharisees' other complaint was that Jesus healed on the Sabbath day (Mt 12:10-13). From the perspective of the Pharisees, Jesus' healing ministry had broken the Sabbath law (in the purity time system) as well. The conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (Pharisees and Scribes) was not only about the Sabbath law itself in Matthew's narrative. They doubted whether Jesus' authority to conduct his ministry came

from God. Moreover, they understood that Jesus' new inclusive ministry for people at all levels challenged the elite classes (religious leaders) and this challenge could subject their traditional stratification level to change, if equality to each other was implied (see Carter 2000:268). The Pharisees would not accept Jesus' inclusive ministry, because it implied change to the social hierarchy in Matthew's narrative. Jesus said to the Pharisees "the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Mt 12:8), and added that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath (Mt 12:12). The narrator clearly indicates Jesus' new interpretation of the Sabbath law (Matthew's interpretation), namely that to feed the hungry and to heal the sick is God's will.

To summarize: The purity law was important to the elite, such as the religious leaders in the first century Israelite society. According to Neyrey (1991:282 cf Van Eck 1995:296), the purity law instituted a system, order and classification in that society. Matthew's intention of his inclusive community reflected the ministry that Jesus transgressed as the purity law. This meant that Jesus ignored social standing and his ministry nullified the purity system. Hence, the elite understood Jesus' ministry as a challenge to their society. This resulted in conflict between Jesus and the Israelite religious leaders (Neyrey 1996:93). Jesus crossed the boundaries of the purity law and the Israelite religious leaders complained about it. In other words, Jesus' ministry was inclusive of the unclean as lower-class persons whilst the religious leaders excluded these people. From the above discussion, we can clearly see, from the perspective of the theory of purity and pollution, how the narrator indicates that Jesus' ministry was inclusive of unclean people, but that the religious leaders were not like him.

### **5.3.3 Sickness and healing<sup>12</sup>**

The main focus of Matthew's Gospel is sickness and healing. This means that Jesus' healings and exorcisms were at the centre of his ministry in Matthew's designation of narrative (see Theissen 1998:281). It is especially evident in Matthew Chapters 8 to 9, and these chapters depict the highlights of Jesus' healing ministry (Thompson 1971:366; Wainwright 2001a:74; see Vledder 1997). However, it is not easy to understand the Biblical healing stories from a

modern perspective. Hence, modern scholars have developed two kinds of methods to approach healing stories. The biomedical model aims to aid the understanding of diseases and cures in terms of the professional sector of modern Western medicine. This model has been useful in understanding the healing narratives. This means that the model, applied to the Biblical healing stories, is not helpful in understanding the original meaning of healing narratives (Guijarro 2000:102-112; see Van Eck 1995:188). Scholars have also developed a “medical anthropology” (cultural anthropology) (Worsley 1982:315-348; Young 1982:257-283). This model uses a cross-cultural focus in order to understand the narrative of illness and of healing in the Bible (Pilch 1991:182). It has been useful for a better understanding of healing stories involving Jesus. For instance, blindness in the Bible has not only been interpreted as blindness in a literary sense, but also in a metaphorical sense (see Pilch 1991:181). For this reason, modern scholars have developed a scientific perspective called “medical materialism (cross-cultural anthropology)”<sup>13</sup> for the interpretation of healing stories in the Bible.

According to Pilch (2000:41), the key to understanding sickness and health in the first-century Mediterranean society is that “human sickness, as a personal and social reality, and its therapy is inextricably bound to language and signification. The biomedical model depends upon an empiricist theory of language which believes that the order of words should reflect and reveal the order of things.” For instance, a word like “leprosy” should reflect and reveal as a matter of empirical fact how the world is constituted as well as its functions (Pilch 2000:41; Van Eck 1995:190). However, according to Pilch (2000:41; see White 1986; Van Aarde 2000b:223-224), the use of the word “leprosy” in the Bible does not reflect the order of medical things. Hence, the relationship of disease to culture is two-dimensional as is *words and things*. This is decoded in order to understand the healing episodes.

Therefore, in the medical anthropology model, there is a connection between *words* and *things*. For instance, the *word* “leprosy” is understood as a repulsive skin condition, the *thing* of “leprosy” is a part of the body in a certain condition, and the human experience of “leprosy” is uncleanness (Van Eck 1995:190). It indicates that *words, things, and human*

*meaning* are important in order to understand disease in culture. Human sickness in Biblical society is linked to a deep semantic and value structure (Good and Good 1981:175, 177; Pilch 2000:42).

Next we need to look at how modern culture understands the healing of human diseases, because modern views differ from those of the first-century Mediterranean culture. In modern culture, the term “leprosy” indicates only a disease. A medical doctor examines the diseased person. He decodes the symptoms to determine the nature of the disease. If necessary, the symptoms have to be reported and the bodily disorder or disease would be tested or checked. The above indicates that the disease has to be identified (explained) and that a medical doctor must intervene in the disease process to eradicate or halt it (Pilch 2000: 42-45; Van Eck 1995:191). In the first-century Mediterranean culture, an illness like leprosy would not be understood in the same way as it is understood in modern culture. According to Pilch (2000:45), this kind of illness has to be understood through the medical anthropological model devised by Biblical scholars. The medical anthropological model has two basic assumptions in its approach to illness:

First, all illness realities are fundamentally semantic. Sickness becomes a human experience and an object of therapeutic attention when it becomes meaningful. Physicians make sickness meaningful by identifying the disease that fits the symptoms. Laypeople make sickness meaningful in a very subjective way drawing upon a wide range of knowledge and ultimately constructing an illness. Thus illness realities will differ widely from individual to individual within a society, culture, or ethnic group. Second, all healings are a fundamentally hermeneutic or interpretive activity. The patient’s symptoms and identified illness represent personal and group values and conceptualizations and are not simply biological reality. The illness reality is completely subjective, a patch of personal biography.

(Pilch 2000:45; see Lewis 1981:156)

Therefore, an illness was not an important biological reality as such, but the patient's symptoms were identified with personal and group values in the first-century Mediterranean societies. Matthew's interpretation of when Jesus went to the home of a man known as Simon the Leper in Bethany (Mt 26:6), was that he shared his views that he was willing to associate himself with lepers. Simon did not receive any support and was not included in their society.

All illness in the first-century Mediterranean world needs to be interpreted through medical anthropological models. The cross-cultural anthropological studies provide a variety of values for a modern reader (society) to understand the Bible's healing narrative (Kluckholm & Strodtbeck 1961; Papajohn & Spiegel 1975; Pilch 1991:184-190; Van Eck 1995:188).

The health care system in the first-century Mediterranean world can be divided into the professional, popular and folk sectors. The *professional sector* included trained and accredited healers in a health care system. In the New Testament, the Greek word *ιατρος* (physician) (Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31) can be assumed to identify a professional healer. However, professional healers in the modern sense did not exist in the first-century Mediterranean world. Pilch (2000:62-63) believes that Jesus quoted the popular proverb "those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" in reference to himself, but it does not provide evidence that Jesus identified himself as a professional physician.

The *popular sector* included non-specialists for health and health maintenance. Those in this sector only had knowledge about health as a culturally defined norm. Sickness was regarded as a deviant condition, and they first observed, defined, and treated this deviant condition. The popular sector of the health care system included several levels, like the individual, family, social networks and community beliefs and practices<sup>14</sup> (Pilch 2000:64-68).

The *folk sector* blended into both the professional and popular sectors at times. Jesus was a folk-healer and his "licence to practise" was tacitly granted and acknowledged by each individual sick person as well as the local community (Van Eck 1995:194). However, Jesus could not acquire any Jewish official authority to heal. When he was in the Jerusalem temple, the religious leaders asked him: "By what authority are you doing these things?" (Mt 21:23). This indicates that Jesus did not have legitimacy or any public official authority. In Jesus'

time, power (authority) was necessary to do certain things. However, Jesus also had power over evil spirits and demons. Jesus used this power for the purpose of restoring the society to the correct order (Neyrey 1991:192-200).

The social value of health was that health or well-being exemplified good fortune, whilst illness was a determinant factor which identified human misfortunes (Worsley 1982:330; Pilch 1991:182; Van Eck 1995:188; see Love 2002). According to Pilch (1991:183), “the theory of cultural variations in value determine the identification of human misfortunes like illness, the appropriate and inappropriate responses to it, as well as the expected outcomes of treatment if indeed treatment is available”. The idea of good fortune and misfortune is not a modern one, but it is frequently found in other cultures. Therefore, the cross-cultural model is useful for an understanding of the Bible’s healing narrative. One can look at Pilch’s (1991:184-190; see Van Eck 1995:188) theory of cultural variations in values:

*Activity*: People in contemporary societies usually emphasise *doing* over being and becoming. For those who make being-in-becoming their primary choice, the goal is to develop all aspects of their life as an integrated whole. For the first-century Mediterranean societies, *being*, as a primary value, was also a way of spontaneous expression of impulses and desires. For instance, having a sickness was *being* unclean, the unclean person desired to become clean. Hence, in Matthew 8:1-4, Jesus restored a leper from an unclean state of being to a clean one.

*Relationship*: In contemporary societies people prefer to be highly *individualistic*. The perspectives of individual goals have primacy over the goals of either the collateral group (equals, other citizens, friends or kin) or the lineal group (superiors, leaders, or the government). However, in the first-century Mediterranean society, *collateral* relationships were not common, group goals were preferable to individual goals. People’s relationships to one another were based on the goals of the laterally extended group. In Matthew 9:1-8, we read that some men brought a paralyzed man to Jesus. In the first-century Mediterranean

societies the group was more important than the individual, with lateral or horizontal relationships between the individual and his/her kin and neighbours. Jesus healed unclean and lower-class people as he found this to be inclusive in his religious movement. Lineal relationships of groups were also a primary value orientation in the Mediterranean world. The behaviour of people in the Mediterranean world followed some hierarchical perspective or vertical dimension. The social stratification ranged from the elite to the lower class (see Chapter 3). Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' healing ministry was concerned with lower-class people within the hierarchical structured society.

*Time:* People in contemporary societies are definitely future-oriented. The future is always considered to be bigger and better, and no one wants to be regarded as old-fashioned by holding on to old things. Peasant societies are primarily oriented toward the *present* time. Peasants worry about the crop or the flock today, from day to day. Tomorrow is part of the rather widely perceived tomorrow. Jesus' exhortation not to worry about what to eat, drink or wear is focused on the present-time orientation of the peasant (Mt 6:25-34). Also, when Jesus fed the crowd, he first told the disciples to give them something to eat (Mt 14:16). This implies that the crowd was a present reality and that feeding them was necessary at the present moment.

*Humanity and nature:* People in contemporary societies are nearly unanimously convinced that nature exists to be mastered and to be put to the service of human beings. The first-century Mediterranean society felt there was little a human being could do to counteract the forces of nature. Humankind had no power over nature. When Jesus drove out a demon, the crowd was amazed: "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (Mt 9:33). When Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples were amazed: "Even the winds and the waves obey him" (Mt 8:27). In Matthew's narrative, only Jesus has power over nature. The fact that a human being in this culture could take command of nature or be immune to its effects was seen as wondrous and awesome.

*Human nature*: Most people in contemporary societies believe that human nature is either good or is a mixture of good and evil, which requires control and effort, but which can also serve as an excuse for occasional human lapses. Jesus' statements reflect the belief in the first-century Mediterranean society that *human nature is a mixture of good and evil propensities*. Jesus judged good behaviour (Mt 12:33). Jesus urged his followers to “do good”; and he acknowledged that good people brought about good things out of the good stored up in themselves, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in himself (Mt 12:35).

All of the above indicate value-orientations in the first-century Mediterranean society. “Health is a state of complete well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Pilch 1991:189).

Therefore a medical anthropological model promotes modern Biblical scholars' understanding about healing stories in the Bible. Illness refers to a social and personal perception of certain socially disvalued states and can include a wide range of misfortunes. Illness was a disvalued state in Jesus' day. For that reason, the religious leaders excluded illness. However, Jesus, as the folk sector healer, healed many people who were labeled unclean (who had a disease, like being possessed by unclean spirits, evil spirits or demons) and he helped to render them acceptable in society.

It is clear that a central function of Jesus' healing ministry was to lead those whose life had lost cultural meaning and restore them back to the proper purpose and direction of life. Hence, Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' healing ministry also included helping people who had been excluded as unclean to be readmitted to their own societies. Let us look at Jesus' inclusive ministry for diseased people of a hierarchical structured society through healing in the Gospel of Matthew.

The following is a taxonomy of the different episodes in Matthew pertaining to ill persons who were healed by Jesus:

- Matthew 4:24: People with many kinds of illness and demon-possession.
- Matthew 8:1-4: A man who was leprous.
- Matthew 8:5-13: The centurion's paralysed servant.
- Matthew 8:14-15: Simon's mother-in-law in bed with a fever.
- Matthew 8:28-34: Two demon-possessed men.
- Matthew 9:2-8: A man who was paralysed.
- Matthew 9:18-20 and 23-26: A young girl who was dying.
- Matthew 9:20-22: A woman who had been bleeding for twelve years.
- Matthew 9:27-31: Two blind men.
- Matthew 9:32-33: A deaf man with demon-possession.
- Matthew 12:9-13: A man who had a withered hand.
- Matthew 12:22: A demon-possessed, deaf and blind man.
- Matthew 14:14: A sick man among the crowd.
- Matthew 15:21-28: A Canaanite woman's demon-possessed daughter.
- Matthew 15:29-31: The lame, the blind and the crippled.
- Matthew 17:14-18: A boy who suffered lunacy and seizures.
- Matthew 19:2: Many sicknesses were healed.
- Matthew 20:29-34: Two men who were blind.
- Matthew 21:14: The blind and the lame who came to Jesus.

These passages of healing stories in the Gospel of Matthew can be divided into three categories: Firstly, there were people who had different illnesses (Mt 4:24; 8:1-4, 5-13, 14-15; 9:1-8, 18-20 and 23-26, 20-22; 12:9-13; 14:14; 15:29-31; 17:14-18; 19:2; 20:29-31; 21:14). Secondly, there were those who were possessed by unclean spirits/demons (Mt 8:28-34; 15:21-28). Finally, some suffered from both illnesses and possession by spirits (Mt 9:32-33; 12:22) (see Pilch 1986:104).

According to Pilch (1986:104), these stories about Jesus' healing relate to boundaries. Human concerns about bodily boundaries replicated concerns about social boundaries

(Douglas 1966:113). This implies that an ill person was not accepted by his society, because such a person was labeled unclean in a society that was not an egalitarian community. However, Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry broke down these social boundaries for sick and demon-possessed people in the new social identity in Christ. Let us look at the three categories of Jesus' inclusive healing ministry in Matthew's interpretation. Above, the taxonomy of the different healings and exorcisms of Jesus was discussed. Firstly, we shall look at Jesus' healing of illness. Secondly, we shall consider the exorcisms he conducted, and finally investigate how he healed those who were both ill and demon-possessed (double outcasts).

#### **5.3.3.1 Jesus' inclusive ministry of healing illness: Matthew 8:1-4**

This story does not attempt to historicize a man with leprosy, but the story depicts the First Evangelist in the context of his community that followed Jesus' ministry (Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:177). In Matthew 4:24 and 19:2, the narrator informs us that Jesus' healing ministry is not limited. He healed every as well as any disease (θεραπεύων πάντων νόσων) (cf Mt 4:23; 19:2; 9:35). His healing ministry included people with any kind of disease as the social identity in Christ. The above verses indicate that the purpose of Jesus' healing ministry was to include all kinds of people. For the purposes of this study, only one example of Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive healing ministry is investigated.

In Matthew 8:1-4, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus healed a leprosy man. Leprosy was a social disease in Jesus' day (Matthew's community). The narrator does not elaborate on the condition of the leprosy man. In the ancient world, whoever suffered from skin diseases had to leave his home, family and occupation, and live in exile at or beyond the borders of the town or community (Holman 1999:285-287). This implies that Israelite lepers did not only suffer physically but also suffered primarily at social and religious levels. According to Leviticus 13:45-46, "the person with such an infectious disease (leprosy) must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'unclean! unclean!' As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live

outside the camp.” Moreover, this kind of person was not only isolated from his family and friends, but was also excluded from public worship (Hare 1996:33-34; see Vledder 1997:177). If anyone touched a leper he would be temporarily unclean and require ritual cleansing. Hence, the leper asked Jesus to cleanse him from this disease (see Davies 1995:69). He did not ask for the healing of his disease. This indicates that the leper hoped to become clean in a ritual sense, to return to his family and worship with others.

The narrator informs the reader that the leprous man acknowledged Jesus’ authority. The leper addressed Jesus as κύριε, which indicates that the leper knew about Jesus’ power of healing. According to Van Aarde (1994:61-62; Luz 2001:6), the narrator in Matthew uses the name κύριε as an indication of Jesus’ divine authority. Jesus has the authority to cleanse unclean, diseased people. He stretched out one hand<sup>15</sup> and touched the leprous man and said: “I am willing, be clean” (Mt 8:3). This not only healed the leper, but made him ritually clean as well.

After the healing, Jesus commanded the cured leper to go to the priest. In the case of a man like this, the priest expected to assume the traditional role of a patron whose support meets physical needs (Holman 1999:285). Jesus’ command indicates his challenge to the priest regarding the purity system. The priest had the authority to keep the leper isolated from society or to allow him back into society. However, the priest could not accept Jesus’ authority to cleanse a leprous man. This would have caused conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (Mt 9:3).

The healing of the leper depicted by the narrator in Matthew 8:1-4 not only relates to his body; he was also freed from his label as a leper and was enabled to return to his society from his isolated situation. Therefore, the story of how Jesus healed the leper with a divine authority is an indication of his inclusive ministry. Jesus is the one who would define the boundaries of the new community, the new household of God as the social identity has been changed in Christ (Van Eck 1995:317). In the next section, we shall look at Matthew’s intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus’ inclusive ministry from the social model of honour and shame.

#### **5.3.4 Honour and shame**

*Honour* and *shame* were pivotal values of the first-century Mediterranean world (Malina

1993:32-33; Van Eck 1995:165; Moxnes 1996:19). Honour is the general, abstract word for worth, value, prestige and reputation which an individual claims and which is acknowledged by others (Neyrey 1998:15). According to Schneider (1972:169; see Domeris 1993:284), the Greek words for “honour”, τιμή and δόξα, refer to the price or value of something. It indicates the esteem in which someone is held. Honour is also the *public* recognition of a person’s social standing and rightful place in society (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:26; Moxnes 1996:20). Pitt-rivers (1977:1) defines honour as follows: “Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride.” Hence, honour is the public nature of respect and reputation. A person’s claims to honour are generally observed and evaluated by the village or neighbourhood according to a local code of what is honourable (Dupont 1989:10-12). A person’s honour is a process of evaluation and acknowledgement in public.

How do individuals acquire honour and esteem? According to an anthropological point of view, a person acquires honour in two ways. It is either ascribed to him or her or achieved (see Hellerman 2000:217). Firstly, ascribed honour refers to the granting of respect, and is given to a person by members of basic institutions like the family or society condition. For instance, being born into a honourable family makes one honourable. Families themselves had certain ratings in the eyes of their neighbours in the first-century Mediterranean society. One’s status was determined by the reputation and wealth of the family into which one was born. The children born into a family automatically acquired the public evaluation of that family. The parents’ social position was carried over to their children. Hence, this kind of honour is not based on something the individual has done (Malina 1993:33).

Secondly, achieved honour is a socially recognized claim and worth, which an individual earned by his or her merits from social interaction as “challenge-riposte” (Neyrey 1998:16; Hellerman 2000:219). As with other commodities in the first-century Mediterranean society, there was a limited quantity of honour. For a person to achieve honour, it meant that someone else would have had to lose it. In ancient society, people achieved honour through competing

with others for this limited social commodity<sup>16</sup>. For that reason, everyone had to be on the alert to defend one's individual or family honour.

When someone obtains honour, he simultaneously challenges someone else's honour, as honour is a limited commodity. The challenge was always made in a public place. According to Malina and Neyrey (1991a:29; see Malina 1993:30), "every social interaction that takes place outside one's family or one's circle of friends is perceived as a challenge to honour, a mutual attempt to acquire honour from one's social equal<sup>17</sup>." Generally, the game consists of four phases: 1) a claim (often implied by action or gesture) of worth and value (honour); 2) a challenge to that claim or refusal to acknowledge the claim; 3) a riposte or defence of the claim; and 4) a public verdict of success awarded either to the claimant or the challenger (Neyrey 1998:20; see Hellerman 2000:219). For instance, the Israelite leaders challenged the authority of Jesus discussed in more details later in this Section.

*Shame* is defined as the reverse of honour, as the loss of respect, regard, worth and value in the eyes of others. According to Malina (1981:44), "a shameless person is one who does not recognize the rules of human interaction, who does not recognize social boundaries". This means that in the first-century Mediterranean world, prostitutes, for instance, belonged to the class of the shameless because they were not respected, nor were they exclusive in any way. The individual did not only have personal honour; he or she also bore responsibility for the corporate honour of the family or group (see Van Aarde 1994:262). A woman with a good reputation symbolized the positive shame aspect of corporate honour for her family or group. It was regarded as positive shame because a man's honour also related to the sexual purity of his mother, wife, daughters and sisters (Malina & Neyrey 1991a:44). Hence, the concept of shame was not only negative; it clearly had a positive meaning as well when seen in the context of a shame-regarding person (Neyrey 1998:30). If a family or group lost its honour, it was given a label of dishonour.

We shall look at the labeling of honour and shame. "The Mediterranean world has traditionally been a conflict-ridden world" (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:98). Conflict features in various stories in Matthew's Gospel. It is helpful to understand conflict in the Gospel stories

in the context of *labeling and deviance* (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:99; Van Eck 1995:184). However, Malina and Neyrey (1991b:98) said “Mediterranean conflict has always been over practical means to some end, not over the ends themselves.” The conflict was about practical means (in no way did it imply doubts over ends) as the dimension of realizing a goal or implementing a stage of behaviour. Hence, conflicts helps the reader to realize the traditional values of Israel and conflicts in a situation (social structures), either new or revitalized ones, were intended to facilitate proper obedience to the God of Israel in Matthew’s Gospel.

According to the Synoptic tradition, people were constantly labelled, in both a positive and negative sense. Jesus was labelled positively with the description *Messiah* (Mt 16:16) and in a negative way as “King of Jews” (Mt 27:39). Some members of the religious leader were labelled negatively as a “brood of vipers” (Mt 12:34). Labelling could help to get a better understanding to identify a person and his/her personality with his/her behaviour or aspects of his/her character (Malina & Neyrey 1988: 35; Van Eck 1995:185). A person’s label can be perceived as positive or negative in society. A positive label for someone by society would be an honour for him, and for his family and group as well. By contrast, a negative label by society resulted in shame, or a *stigma*. Labels were powerful social weapons (see Van Eck 1995:185). Labels such as “sinner”, “unclean”, “demon-possessed”, and “tax-collectors” indicated beings “out of place” in a negative way (shame).

The term “*deviance*” refers to a person’s behaviour or condition as being radically out of social place. Therefore deviants are designated negative levels by their society. If society judges a person’s behaviour or situation negatively, it labels him or her as deviant, thereby causing prejudice against him or her (see Malina & Neyrey 1991b:100). A person labelled deviant in a social system was ranked as an outcast. Being labelled deviant brought shame to a person’s family and group as well as the person himself/herself. Matthew’s intention of his inclusive community structure depicted through Jesus focused in his inclusive ministry on all kinds of people who were labeled as deviant. However, the attention of the Israelite leaders was exclusively based on labelling people as unclean.

Now we turn to the concepts of “honour” and “shame” in social realities, including gender

relations and other power relations, like those between patron and client. The terms “honour” and “shame” are changeable concepts. In other words, they are expressions of social and cultural relations (Moxnes 1996:26).

According to Baroja (1966:79-137; 1992:91-102), honour and shame in society are linked in a dialectical relationship. This perspective is based on the conflicts between different groups and classes in the form of struggle over the definition of honour and shame (Moxnes 1996:27). This struggle not only takes place between different groups and classes, but could also manifest as a dyadic conflict between persons of equal status (in colleague contracts or horizontal dyadic relations), and those between persons of unequal status, in what is called *patron-client contracts* (Forster 1961:1178; Van Eck 1995:169). Hence, a person labelled as a shameful person (of unequal status) should be protected against the risks of being sold, killed or beaten. In Matthew’s Gospel, people like tax-collectors, sinners and the unclean needed to be protected by someone, a person. Blok (1969:366) defines the concept patron as follows:

Patronage is a model or analytical construct which the social scientist applies in order to understand and explain a range of apparent different social relationships: father-son, God-man, saint-devotee, godfather-godchild, lord-vassal, landlord-tenant, politician-voter, professor-assistant, and so forth. All those different sets of social relationships can thus be considered from one particular point of view, which may render them comprehensible.

Therefore, what a patron-client relationship essentially entails is endowing and outfitting economic, political or religious institutional arrangements with the overarching quality of kinship. Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus’ ministry provided patronage for the shameless people like women, sinners and social outcasts.

We have discussed the model of honour and shame with labelling and deviance, as well as patronage and clientism. These models are clearly useful to understand Matthew’s intention

of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' ministry. These models can be applied to the text of Matthew. Firstly, the focus is challenge and riposte. The Israelite leaders regarded Jesus as a shameless person with no honour. One can look at Jesus' inclusive ministry in conflict with the Israelite leaders through the perspective of challenge and riposte. Secondly, the model of labelling and deviance, will be applied to Jesus' inclusive ministry. Finally, patronage and clientism is discussed, looking into how Jesus, as an inclusive minister, redefined the patron-client relationship.

#### **5.3.4.1 Challenge and riposte theory and Jesus' inclusive ministry: Matthew 12:9-14**

This story does not really connect the historical Jesus. It is Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' meal with the tax collectors and sinners in the context of his community (cf Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:195-196). Jesus is an inclusive minister of God's will for the salvation of all people in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus healed a man with a shrivelled hand on the Sabbath day. His inclusive healing ministry was challenged by the Israelite leader and this resulted in conflict between Jesus and the Israelite leaders about his authority to heal on the Sabbath day. The narrator informs the reader that Jesus' inclusive ministry was not limited to any time, and could even take place on the Sabbath day. We shall look at Jesus' riposte to the challenge in the text (Mt 12:9-14).

#### ***Jesus' claim to honour***

Jesus' claim to a high position of honour was not sanctioned by Israelite officials such as the Israelite leaders. According to Matthew (Mt 21:23), the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Jesus and asked by what authority he taught the crowd in the temple. It was simply assumed that Jesus' authority was not acknowledged by the Israelite community. According to the Israelite society, Jesus was not a honourable man, because his ministry was directed to unclean people like sinners, the sick and demon-possessed people (see the above sections). Therefore, in the mind of the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus was a shameful person.

By contrast, the narrator presents Jesus' authority as the assertion of divine authority. A

person's claim of divine authority represented a correspondingly profound claim of honour in the first-century Israelite Palestine (see Hellerman 2000:219). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus had great honour. When he was baptized, a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son" (Mt 3:17). This implies that Jesus is the anointed Son of God. Moreover, his ministry indeed earned honour from the crowd (Mt 9:6; 13:54-55).

### *The challenge of the Pharisees*

Jesus entered the synagogue (Mt 12:9). The pronoun αὐτῶν (their)<sup>18</sup> implies the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders (cf Mt 6:2, 5; 10:17) (Carter 2000:267). This conflict was created because of the challenge to Jesus' authority to conduct an inclusive ministry. The indicative verb ἐπηρώτησαν (their questioned) should be interpreted as referring to the Pharisees<sup>19</sup> (presumably from 12:14 and 12:2-8 the Pharisees) (Gundry 1994:225; Carter 2000:267). The Pharisees came to Jesus and challenged his authority to heal on the Sabbath day<sup>20</sup>. The problem is that from the Pharisees' point of view, Jesus was working on the Sabbath day when he healed people. The Pharisees of Jesus' opponents obviously already knew that Jesus will heal on the Sabbath, but they only asked in order to have a legal ground for accusing him.

The representatives of the Pharisees (they) asked Jesus: "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" (Mt 12:10). According to Rabbinic law, medical help was allowed on the Sabbath day if someone was on the brink of death (see *m Yoma* 8:6; *Mek Exod* 22.2; 23.13). However, the healing of a man's withered hand could wait until after the Sabbath day<sup>21</sup>. Hence, the narrator tells the reader that the Pharisees were "looking for a reason to accuse Jesus" (ὡς κατηγορήσωσιν αὐτοῦ). The Pharisees were challenging Jesus' divine authority to conduct his inclusive healing ministry on the Sabbath day.

This kind of interpersonal behaviour of honour-shame in societies where honour and shame are important concepts emphasises confrontation. We can therefore clearly see the traditional challenge-riposte scenario in society in Matthew 12:9-14. The proper challenge (by the Pharisees) to someone's honour can only take place among equals (see Van Eck 1995:332; cf Malina

1993:35). The Pharisees were publicly challenging Jesus in the presence of a multitude in the Synagogue. The honour of Jesus was challenged in two respects. Firstly, a man with a shrivelled hand, who was previously labelled by the Pharisees as being a sinner, was declared healed by Jesus, that is, he was no longer unclean. Secondly, Jesus healed him on the Sabbath day, thereby breaking the law of the Sabbath. The challenge of the Pharisees is that the death sentence was given to Jesus and thus they were able to realize their goal (Luz 2001:188).

### *Jesus' riposte*

Jesus immediately responded in a way that forced his challengers to verbally defend their own honour. Jesus said to them: "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Mt 12:11-12). Jesus answered the Pharisees directly with a parable about sheep. The act of healing on the Sabbath was accepted in the same accord as pulling an animal out of a pit or ditch (see Hagner 1993:333). The narrator informs the reader that in Jesus' mind, human beings are more important than even the law of the Sabbath (Meier 1979:85; see Davies 1993:94; cf the similar argument in Luke 14:5; 13:15). Jesus said it was not unlawful to do good on the Sabbath. Carter (2000:268) maintains that *to do good* implies bestowing mercy, to benefit another, to love (Mt 5:44; 7:12), to feed the hungry and heal the sick. This verbal response clearly indicates that Jesus' focus in his ministry was to include all the unclean and social outcasts as in the new social identity within Christ (see Meier 1979:86). The focal point of Jesus' response is that even those who are unclean are valuable in the Kingdom of God.

### *The implicit public verdict*

Jesus challenges not the Sabbath law itself but the interpretation of the law. The narrator informs the reader that the Pharisees could not respond in order to defend their own honour against Jesus' verbal challenge. Moreover, the Pharisees went out of the Synagogue, even though it was their official religious centre. The Pharisees depended upon the populace for the

public affirmation of their claim to honour in the Synagogue. However, they did not respond to Jesus' challenge and stepped out of their place. Jesus had successfully defended his honour against the challenge of the Pharisees.

The narrator informs us that Matthew's intention of his inclusively structured community depicted through Jesus' healing on the Sabbath day was also an indication of his role as an inclusive minister. According to Israelite tradition, the Pharisees claimed more honour, than Jesus as the official ambassador of the Kingdom of God, but Jesus' acquired honour is not limited to any place, like the Synagogue, and its boundaries and limits, but transcends those for the sake of his inclusive ministry in terms of God's will.

#### **5.3.4.2 Labelling and deviance: Matthew 15:21-28**

According to Jackson (2002:21; see Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:212-213), "this story does not attempt to historicize the Canaanite Woman herself, but to set the story told by the First Evangelist in the context of first-century communities that followed Jesus' teaching and actions. Some of the narratives in Matthew's Gospel record a conflict situation. As we have seen, there was conflict between Jesus and the Israelite leaders (see especially Chapter 4). Another significant conflict was that between Israelites and Gentile Christians in the Matthean community (it is still debated by Matthean scholars; see Chapter 3; Gundry 1994). The micro-narrative of Jesus' healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter reflects the conflict between the Israelites and the followers of Jesus who were previously Gentiles<sup>22</sup> (see Patte 1987:220).

In the view of the Israelites, the woman was identified as a social outcast (Levine 2001a:71; Jackson 2002:60). This means that she was of *ascribed deviant status* (such ascribed characteristics included age, sex, birth, physical features and genealogy), based on having been labeled a Gentile (a social labeling given her by Jesus) and demon possession (the social labeling given to the Canaanite woman's daughter). Mark's term of 'Syrophoenician' changed to 'Canaanite' by Matthew (Jackson 2002:10). Matthew's use of the word is for the purpose of heightening the religious opposition between Israel and Gentiles (Harrisville 1966:280-281; Jackson 2002:84). Moreover, according to Love (2002:11), the possibility that the

Canaanite<sup>23</sup> woman was a prostitute also affected her status (Ringe 1985:7; Corley 1993:166), as did her daughter's misfortune of being demon-possessed. Because she had been labeled a Gentile, a prostitute and the mother of a demon-possessed daughter, she was cut off from her household and kinship in society (Mt 15:21, 22). Jesus also compared Gentiles, like the Canaanite woman, to dogs<sup>24</sup> (Mt 15:26). By contrast, Jesus used positive labelling ("children of the house") to describe the Israelites. This clearly confirms that the Israelites were labelled positively, but the Gentiles were negatively labelled. She gave Jesus an honourable labelling as "Lord" and "Son of David" (Mt 15:22).

The Canaanite woman was defined as radically out of social place, as deviant (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:100). Her deviant status is designated by a negative label (see above). In the case of the Canaanite woman, the publicly approved deviance-processing agencies were Israelites and a large society. These agencies registered deviance by defining, classifying and labelling types of behaviour or conditions, which were deemed to be "out of bounds." To declare someone deviant could include three activities: denunciation, retrospective interpretation and a status degradation ritual (Malina & Neyrey 1991b:104). Let us apply this theory to the issue of the Canaanite woman, using the three steps of *Denunciation*, *Retrospective interpretation* and *Status Degradation Ritual*.

### ***Denunciation***

The Israelites regarded Gentiles as outcasts in their society. The denunciation of Gentiles in Matthew's Gospel is exemplified by the community as: "and when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans" (Mt 6:7), "for the pagans run after all these things" (Mt 6:32), "do not go among the Gentiles" (Mt 10:5) and "treat him as you would a pagan or a tax-collector" (Mt 18:17). These verses contain all the denunciation by the narrator of Matthew's Gospel. However, they do not provide evidence that the Matthean community excluded Gentiles (as discussed in Chapter 3, there were Gentile members in Matthew's community). They only tell us about the social denunciation of Gentiles in Jesus' time. One can analyse the denunciation of the Canaanite woman through the model developed by Garfinkel (1956:420-424)<sup>25</sup>.

The *trait* used to describe the Canaanite woman was that of a dog (Mt 15:27). She is referred to as a bitch, and even as a κυνάρια “little bitch” or puppy. The use of the diminutive form is even more offensive and insulting (Josephus, *Con Ap* 2.85; see Love 2002:16-17). The word “dog” was used in connection to Gentiles and it was sometimes likened to the unclean dogs that roamed the streets (Hagner 1995:442; see Jackson 2002:54). When Jesus called her a dog, he did not refer to her as a private individual. Jesus identified her as having been denounced, with his disciples as the grantors of shame. She accepted Jesus calling her a dog. As we have seen, this denunciation was supported by the core values of the Israelite group.

### ***Retrospective interpretation***

This entails affirming a deviant’s behaviour of her past life through the lenses of her newly acquired deviant status. The Canaanite woman was successfully declared a deviant, and people knew she was the subject of condemnation as a deviant. The disciples also knew about her past life as a deviant (as seen above, she was a Gentile, and the mother of a demon-possessed<sup>26</sup> daughter). It is clear that she was deemed an “outsider” by the members of society. According to the elements of retrospective<sup>27</sup> interpretation, the Canaanite woman had been subject to *condemnation* (Malina & Neyrey 1991:106). She was condemned by the populace at large, as well as local and regional officials of the Jewish authority. Moreover, female gender was paradoxically a strength and weakness in Israel society (Anderson 2001:39). Jesus’ condemnation of her restored honour to him, but she acquired shame as a deviant in the public view (that of the disciples).

### ***Status degradation ritual***

Garfinkel (1956: 420-424) believes this is a ritual process of the activity of retrospective interpretation in which the work of imputational specialists culminates. According to Malina and Neyrey (1991:107), “status degradation rituals publicly categorize, recast, and assign a moral character to deviant actors.” It implies that a deviant’s old identity is changed and his or

her old status is degraded. In the case of the Canaanite woman, Jesus granted her request to heal her daughter. Jesus included both men and women in his healing ministry (Wainwright 2001b:129; see Humphries-Brood 2001:143). Since her daughter was no longer demon-possessed, it meant that she was no longer an outsider. She had the new social identity with faith in Christ. The Canaanite woman's ritual status was changed by Jesus' authority.<sup>28</sup>

To summarize, the Canaanite woman was labelled negatively by the Israelite community. She was a Gentile and her daughter was possessed by a demon. This means that the society gave her a doubly negative label. She fell outside the scope of their social norm and authority. However, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus' inclusive ministry accepted negatively labelled (out of place) people as well (Wainwright 2001b:133-134). Of course, Jesus' inclusive ministry to negatively labelled people was not in line with the social norms of his day, but his authority to conduct that ministry was, according to God's will, to provide salvation for all people as the new identity in faith (see O'Day 2001:125). This Canaanite women's inclusive story is reflected in the context of Matthew's inclusively structured community situation (Jackson 2002:141).

#### **5.3.4.3 Patronage and clientism? Matthew 9:9-13**

The narrator of Matthew's Gospel informs the reader that Jesus' inclusive ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem caused conflict between the elite (the religious leaders) and non-elite classes<sup>29</sup>. The contrast in the social relationship affected all areas of power, in the political, economic and religious spheres. Matthew's narrative portrays the contrast between the centre and the periphery in patron-client relations.

We have also seen the social stratification of the Matthean community depicted in Matthew's narrative world (see Chapter 3). This shows that in the first-century Mediterranean world there were unequal relations, privilege and pyramids of power in the social system (Elliott 1996:148). This is useful for a better understanding of the narrative about Jesus' meal with the tax-collectors and "sinners". This story attempts to historicize that Jesus ate with the tax collectors and sinners, as well as to set the story told by the First Evangelist in the contest

of the first-century communities that followed Jesus' teaching and actions (see Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:183). The tax-collectors and "sinners" did not belong to privileged classes in Jesus' time and Matthew's time. The tax-collectors belonged to the retainer class, but some of them had political and economic power (Carter 2000:18). Some tax-collectors became rich, but many clearly did not (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:82). It was difficult for tax-collectors to "repent" because it was not easy to make restitution to their victims (see Maccoby 1988:142-144). This analysis indicates that they were very unpopular and were social outcasts<sup>30</sup> (see Lk 18:11). Like Gentiles, sinners who disobeyed God's will were social outcasts. According to Dunn's (1990:61-88) argument, the concept "sinner" distinguishes a "faithful" Israelite from an "unfaithful" one. However, Corley (1993:24-79) points out that tax-collectors and prostitutes were linked in Greco-Roman meal practices. Hence, the "sinners" probably included women labelled as "prostitutes" or "slaves" (see Mt 21:31-32). It is indicated that the tax-collectors and sinners were social outcasts and they had no link with the elite of their society (see Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:82; Vledder 1997:206). This confirms that the tax-collectors and sinners as clients needed their lives to be protected.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, (perhaps Peter's house? Mt 8:14; Luz 2001:33; see Carter 2000:219), many unclean tax-collectors and other crude 'sinners' came and ate with him<sup>31</sup> (Mt 9:10). The Pharisees, members of the elite group of religious leaders who opposed Jesus, saw this (Kingsbury 1988b:17-23). Luz (2001:33) says that such meal practice was not kept as a secret in a small place, such as Capernaum. The Pharisees were probably waiting to see Jesus' action. Jesus was a teacher, a person of honour. However, the religious leaders referred to Jesus in a derogatory manner (see Mt 12:38; 17:24; 19:16; 22:16). It was regarded as shameful that Jesus ate with shameful people. Here, the narrator is trying to sketch the distinction between the group of religious leaders as the elite and the group of tax-collectors and sinners as the lower class.

While Jesus is having a meal with the tax-collectors and sinners, he is the patron in the micro-narrative. Next, we shall look at the relationship between patron and client. As we have discussed above, the tax-collectors and sinners were a particularly degraded and despised

group of people in Israelite society. Prostitutes transgressed the boundaries of holiness and did not maintain the politics of purity (Van Aarde 1994:262). Therefore, the people of these classes needed protection by patronage.

The fact that Jesus had a meal with the tax-collectors and sinners gave rise to a serious conflict between him and the Israelite leaders, because they saw it as a disgrace to eat with shameful, unclean people. According to the table fellowship culture, Israelites were not allowed to have a meal at the same table with Gentiles (Hagner 1993:238). However, Jesus and his disciples were sitting at the same table as the tax-collectors and sinners. The Pharisees challenged Jesus by asking his disciples: “Why does your teacher eat with social outcasts?” (Mt 9:11). Then Jesus directly challenged the Pharisees: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice’. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mt 9:12-13). Jesus regarded his ministry as a merciful one: healing, forgiving, exorcising and sharing meals with social outcasts. By contrast, the Pharisees regarded this as disgraceful and unclean. This is a clear indication that Jesus’ ministry included the tax-collectors and sinners. Jesus was especially a patron of the unclean tax-collectors and sinners (social outcasts), who stood in an unequal relationship with the religious leaders (the elite class). Jesus came to call such outcast persons to be the new social identity of the kingdom of God in Christ.

To summarise, we have seen that the social system was unequal due to the contrast between the centre and the periphery. The religious leaders were at the centre of the Israelite society but the tax-collectors and sinners, as social outcasts, were on the periphery. According to the narrator, the Pharisees excluded the tax-collectors and sinners. Hence, they later became clients. This means that they were an outside society. By being a patron of the tax collectors and sinners, Jesus put them on an equal footing with the centre (the religious leaders, the elite). Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus’ patronage ministry was intended to include all people in the kingdom of God. He abrogated the general boundaries of the center-periphery contrast through his inclusive ministry.

### 5.3.5 Kinship

Four basic institutions (or structures), namely kinship, economics, politics and religion, are common to any society (Malina 1986b:152). The basic norm of kinship is to keep human biological interactions and outcomes with meaning and value (Malina 1993:117). It has been debated which of these institutions determines the others<sup>32</sup>. Malina (1986b: 153) argued that these four institutions have maintained primacy over others in both past and present society. Later, Malina (1988:8) elaborated on this view, explaining that religion, politics, and economics are determined by the kinship institution. The peasant family and the village community (of such families) were fundamentally the centre of life of the ancient agrarian society in the first-century Mediterranean world (Polanyi 1977:46; Horsley 1989:5; Van Eck 1995:208). Thus kinship was the dominant social institution in the first-century Mediterranean world.

The family structure in the Bible was generally patriarchal. There were two ways which enabled one to become a family in the ancient Near Eastern world. Human relationships are established by being born of certain parents or through births resulting from the union of two human beings (Malina 1993:118). The conjugal family, composed of a husband(s), wife (or wives) and children, is called the nuclear family. Kinship could be extended beyond the conjugal family bond. In other words, the conjugal family bond is the nuclear family, but the extended family bond includes a relative beyond the immediate conjugal family. All of these relate to biological family relations.

However, the spiritual family is mentioned in Matthew. Matthew 23:37 says: “How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.” This clearly indicates that Matthew’s understanding of Jesus’ inclusive ministry was intended for all people, according to God’s will to provide salvation for all people. Carter’s (2000:463) point of view is that the image of a bird’s wings indicates God’s mercy. It was Jesus’ desire to include all Jerusalem’s children as God’s new people through faith. Moreover, Elliott (2003:82-82) believes that Schüssler Fiorenza’s (1993:220) view of anti-patriarchal and egalitarian interpretation in Matthew 23:8-10 (those who followed Jesus

instead received a new familial community as “new ‘kinship’ of equal discipleship” and of a “new ‘family’ where fathers are excluded”) is not acceptable. The source of Matthew 23:8-10 expresses “a limited ‘egalitarian’ ideology”, which immediately acknowledges that this egalitarian ideology was in tension with social reality and that the Matthean Gospel on the whole reveals a movement towards “institutional hierarchy” (Elliott 2003:83; cf Duling 1995b:165-166). Next, we look at fictive kinship (brother-and sisterhood in Christ) in the Gospel of Matthew (see Penn 2002:152).

### **5.3.5.1 Matthew 12:46-50**

When Jesus was talking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers and sisters were standing outside, waiting to speak to him<sup>33</sup> (Mt 12:46). Matthew understood this story to be a form of historicizing Jesus’ original teaching, but this is a set story presented in the context of the Matthean community (Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:199). They were his conjugal family (see Mt 13:53-58). Someone (perhaps one of his disciples) told Jesus that his mother and brothers were standing outside<sup>34</sup>. Jesus responded to the question of the identity of his family. Jesus challenged the conventional patriarchal household based on kinship and centred around the husband/father. In his answer Jesus said, that to be related to him one must become a family member of the kingdom of God, which was something far more significant than mere blood relationships (Hagner 1993:358). According to Carter (2000:279), “the new household is not based on birth, ethnicity, or gender; it is open to anyone who commits to Jesus and obeys his teaching of God’s will.” Moreover, the key point is Jesus’ gesture, ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τοὺς μαθητάς, “(stretched out his hand toward his disciples).” This indicated that the disciples were the true family of Jesus (Hagner 1993:359; see Davies & Allison 1991:364; see Luz 2001:225). The kingdom of God and its demands thus takes priority over human relationships as Jesus called his disciples to sacrifice their ties with their family (Keener 1997:235). The use of the phrase “brother and sister” (Mt 12:50) indicates that women were included in his family (Carter 2000:279). According to Israelite perspective, women were not allowed to be equal in status with men in the religious community. However,

Jesus identifies that his circle includes women. The term “brother” in Israel is one who belongs to the nation of Israel. It also refers to a member of the Matthean Christian community as the new social identity in Christ (cf Luz 2001:225). This, to a great degree, confirms that Jesus’ ministry was inclusive of all people, as he called upon on his disciples to sacrifice their family ties (cf Mt 4:22; 8:21; Hagner 1993:360).

### **5.3.6 Summary**

In terms of a social scientific reading of the Matthew narrative, the narrator clearly informs us that Jesus’ ministry is inclusive of all people with regard to the rules of purity and pollution. We saw that in Jesus’ time, the purity lines and boundaries were clearly confirmed by Israelite traditions. The polluted person was cast out of his society, but Jesus transgressed the purity rule to include unclean people in the Kingdom of God.

The narrator informs the reader that Jesus’ healing ministry was aimed at including the sick. The leprous man whom Jesus healed in Matthew 8:1-4 (see Section 5.3.3.1) had been cast out from society because of his unclean disease. Hence, Jesus’ healing ministry was not only directed at the leprous man’s disease; it healed his social status as well. In the view of the Israelite leaders, the leprous man had to be excluded because of his unclean status, but Jesus included him in the Kingdom of God. It has been clearly indicated that the Israelite leaders excluded social outcasts, but Jesus’ ministry included them.

The narrator also informs us how Jesus’ inclusive ministry pertained to the concepts of honour and shame. The Jewish leaders (Pharisees) challenged Jesus because he healed a man with a shrivelled hand on the Sabbath day (section 5.3.4.1). Jesus’ healing ministry was not limited to any special times and included the Sabbath day. The Israelite leaders were more interested in observing the Sabbath law to exclude those with an unclean sickness, but Jesus saw it as more important to do good (to include those with an unclean sickness) on the Sabbath day. The Israelites had the official authority, but Jesus had the authority of God’s will to include social outcasts in the Kingdom of God.

It is even possible to say that Jesus redefined the common understanding of labelling and

deviance in his day. As seen in Section 5.3.4.2, the Canaanite woman was labelled unclean (she had a demon-possessed daughter) and Gentile. From the perspective of the Israelite leaders, she was doubly negatively labelled and a double social outcast. Jesus also included this negatively labelled Gentile woman in the kingdom of God. Jesus changed this negative labelling to a positive one.

In Section 5.3.4.3, patronage and client theory was discussed as a means to a better understanding of Jesus' inclusive ministry. The tax-collectors and sinners were clients, but Jesus was a patron. The elite (including the Israelites leaders) stood by the Israelite tradition. They excluded tax-collectors and sinners. However, Jesus, as an inclusive minister, was a patron for the tax collectors and sinners and included them. With his inclusive ministry, Jesus thus acted to award equal status to the Israelite leaders and social outcasts as fictive kin in God's household (see Van Eck 1995:341). Social stratification is clearly indicated in Matthew's Gospel, but Jesus was a patron to the lower classes of people by including them in his ministry.

Finally, Jesus also defined the new household's relationship with society. His ministry did not focus on biological or conjugal family on earth. Jesus' inclusive ministry was aimed at making people members of the family of the kingdom of God. The members of the new household must be understood as being in fictive kinship. People who were unclean in the view of the Israelite religious leaders and regarded as social outcasts were included in the kingdom of God through Jesus' ministry.

To summarize: the application of social scientific theories to Matthew shows how the narrator depicts Jesus' inclusive ministry to all levels of people. They have changed the new social identity in Christ. In other words, it also indicates that Jesus' inclusive ministry is God's will for salvation. Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry brought him into conflict with Israelite religious leaders. However, Jesus had the authority to conduct his inclusive ministry for the kingdom of God. Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' ministry indicated that the context of his community (Matthew's) was an inclusively structured group. Matthew's community was clearly not one with an egalitarian society structure, but had a

hierarchical structure. The religious leaders (some of them enjoyed very high status) were ranked with the elite. They excluded religious and social outcasts. However, Jesus included a number of the lower classes such as religious and social outcasts. Jesus conducted his inclusive ministry for fictive kinship as God's will for salvation. Hence, the structure of the Matthean community became one that was inclusive of all people.

#### **5.4 The second ritual of status transformation**

As was discussed in Section 5.2, Jesus' ritual status transformation through his baptism started his inclusive ministry in Matthew's interpretation. A ritual is comprised of the ritual process-separation, liminality-communitas and aggregation, and the ritual elements (the initiand, ritual elder(s) and the ritual elements).

McVan (1988:97; see Van Eck 1995:358) believes that the process of Jesus' ritual separation started during his arrest. However, the narrator informs the readers that the second ritual of status transformation (the process of separation) was when he completed his inclusive ministry, as stated in Matthew 26:6-13. According to Matthew's interpretation, this was when Jesus was separated from the large crowd (Mt 26:6). Jesus was in Bethany with only his disciples. After that, Judas Iscariot was contemplating his betrayal of Jesus (Mt 26:14-16). Jesus ate the Passover meal with his twelve disciples (Mt 26:20-29), which indicated a further separation from the crowd than the meal in Bethany. After the Passover meal, they went to the Mount of Olives (Mt 26:30-46). During the night, Jesus was arrested by the chief priests and the elders of the people (Mt 26:47). The narrator clearly depicts the ritual process of separation of Jesus, firstly from the large crowd and finally from the disciples.

With Jesus' arrest, he reached the state of liminality-communitas in the ritual process. Even Peter denied that he knew Jesus (Mt 26:47). During the process of liminality-communitas, in Matthew's depiction, Jesus was under the control of the religious leaders. Before he was arrested, he had the authority to conduct his inclusive ministry as God's official patron for social and religious outcasts. During his inclusive ministry, he was with his disciples and with the crowd but now he was lonely and was the model initiand (McVan 1988:98). With Jesus'

trial it is clear that the high priest, the chief priests and the elders were the ritual elders of Jesus' second ritual of status transformation. Jesus was handed over to Pilate, who was a Gentile. This dishonoured him even further.

The climax of Jesus' ritual was the crucifixion. His death was also the climax of his state of liminality-communitas. In the narrative of the Passover meal, Jesus took bread and said: "Take, eat; this is my body." He took the cup, saying: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:26,28). The broken bread refers to Jesus' body. It indicates the violence of his death by crucifixion (Carter 2000:506). The Israelites understood blood as life (Lev 17:14). Jesus was therefore giving his life (blood) for the forgiveness of sins. It was a significant point when Jesus completed his inclusive ministry as God's will of salvation for all nations. It took place on the cross, with the pouring out of his blood and the breaking of his body (Mt 27:50). Jesus' body and blood were a ransom for the people (Mt 20:28). Matthew's interpretation states that Jesus died on the cross and his inclusive ministry was completed.

The next step of Jesus' ritual process was aggregation, which the religious leaders believed had been agreed when they succeeded in removing Jesus from their society. However, the proven was not over. The narrator depicts Jesus' aggregation as follows: after Jesus died on the cross, the Roman centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus confessed that Jesus was truly the Son of God (Mt 27:54). It confirmed that Jesus had an official inclusive ministry with God's authority for the salvation of all people in Matthew's narrative. Jesus' aggregation also took place during his resurrection (Mt 28:1-10). The religious leaders, who were the ritual elders, had not succeeded in removing Jesus. The authority of the Israelite community was not stronger than the official authority of the kingdom of God. Finally, Jesus' aggregation took place when he went back to Galilee (Mt 28: 16). The Matthean community was located somewhere in Galilee, but it moved to Antioch at a later stage. In Galilee, Jesus commanded his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:18-19). Jesus now had all authority in heaven and on earth, for he had the authority to continue the inclusive ministry for all nations

according to God's will. The disciples then went to the mount in Galilee, where Jesus ordered them to gather "new" Israelites. This implies that a mission was put forth into the world after Jesus' resurrection from the dead (cf Van Aarde 1998:21). Jesus' inclusive ministry would be continued through the community of his disciples. Hence, the Matthean community was an inclusive group for all people.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The preceding social scientific analysis of Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry has shown that through the ritual status transformation of Jesus through his baptism, he became the inclusive minister of the kingdom of God for the salvation of all people. Hence, the baptism story of Jesus indicates his ritual transformation for his inclusive ministry. In other words, Jesus was an ambassador of the kingdom of God, which included religious and social outcasts as they have a new social identity in Christ.

Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry of inclusion resulted in conflict with religious leaders. The focus of his ministry was religious and social outcasts. By contrast, the religious leaders excluded religious and social outcasts. Because the religious leaders were from the privileged level (the lower class had no privileges), the religious leaders tried to keep their privilege and high social positions within the hierarchical structure. After Jesus' healing, the religious and social outcasts rejoined their society. It has been shown that the first-century Mediterranean world was not an egalitarian-society, but a stratified society with a hierarchical structure.

Matthew's intention of his inclusively structured community depicted through Jesus' inclusive ministry, with the official authority of God, took place within this hierarchically structured society. Applying social scientific theories in the study of Jesus' inclusive ministry yielded the following results: according to the cultural anthropological perspective, Israelite society was divided in terms of purity and pollution. The religious leaders excluded unclean people, but Jesus violated the purity system to include unclean people. The narrator shows that Jesus' inclusive ministry with regard to time, place, persons or things excluded the

boundaries of the purity system.

The healing ministry of Jesus also led to conflict with the religious leaders. Jesus suffered in order to include unclean, sick people, but religious leaders did not include unclean sickness in their society. The main conflict resulting from Jesus' healing ministry pertained to his authority to heal. The religious leaders could not accept Jesus' authority to heal. However, Jesus' healing power had the authority of God as salvation for all nations. The religious leaders did not understand that the kingdom of God does not respect the exclusive boundaries of Jewish law (Garland 1993:107; Levine 2001a:72).

On the Sabbath day, Jesus healed a man with a shrivelled hand. The religious leaders challenged Jesus' authority to conduct his inclusive ministry because they regarded the law of the Sabbath as more important than the healing ministry. This means that the functioning of the law supported the hierarchically structured society. Jesus regarded human beings as more important than the law of the Sabbath, as the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8). Jesus' inclusive ministry was not limited by the Sabbath day.

Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' ministry also included negatively labelled people, social outcasts. Moreover, Jesus was a patron for tax-collectors and sinners. They were the lowest classes of their society. The existence of patron-client relationships is another indication that the first-century Israelite society was hierarchically structured. Jesus protected negatively labelled people. The patron-client relationship took the form of fictive kinship in God's new household. Hence, Jesus' inclusive ministry established a new Israelite community based on faith, as "whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50).

It has been indicated that the Matthean community was not an "egalitarian" one, but had a hierarchical structure. Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry was (at a pre-paschal level) promoted to look like an "egalitarian" society<sup>35</sup>, but the religious leaders did not accept that. In other words, Jesus probably had an "egalitarian" mindset, but the religious leaders had their minds set on a hierarchical society. The historical Jesus' ministry was inclusive and the community of his disciples (at a post-paschal level) was also an inclusive

structure, even though it could not operate in an “egalitarian” community.

Matthew’s depiction of the second ritual of status transformation of Jesus with completion of his inclusive ministry, Jesus’ arrest, trial and crucifixion signified the end of his inclusive ministry. This ministry no longer took place through healing, labelling, patronage and so on. Jesus’ death on the cross completed his inclusive ministry, but it had an effect on the past, present and future by means of the clients’ faith. For that reason, Jesus’ inclusive ministry was completed when he died on the cross.

Matthew’s intention of his inclusively structured community depicted that Jesus’ inclusive ministry was for all people within the hierarchically structured society in the first-century Mediterranean world.

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<sup>1</sup> Most parts of Jesus’ baptism story include Jesus’ sayings (Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:163-167).

<sup>2</sup> Matthew does not say “all the people of Jerusalem” (Mk 1:5) came out to be baptized by John, instead he probably recognizes Jerusalem as the center of opposition (the Israelite leaders) to Jesus’ inclusive ministry (Hagner 1993:49).

<sup>3</sup> Luz (1989:169) notes that “according to verse 6, the confession of sin is tied to the baptism of John. But in Matthew the expression of John’s baptism as “baptism . . . for the forgiveness of sin” (Mk 1:4) is missing. This designation has fallen victim to the new formulation of the proclamation of the Baptist in verse 2. The question is whether Matthew wants to distinguish between the baptism of John as a mere sign of repentance and Christian baptism, which grants forgiveness of sins. The ancient church has attributed to the baptism of John only rarely does the character of an effective baptism ask for forgiveness. The opposite opinion finally prevailed. Modern exegesis has Matthew in general make a clear distinction between the baptism of John and Christian baptism. Since the mention of the confession of sins at the baptism of John in verse 6 does suggest that forgiveness is also conveyed by this baptism and since Matthew nowhere else connects the forgiveness of sins explicitly with Christian baptism, it appears to me that this distinction is not justified.

<sup>4</sup> Fasting forty days and forty nights is also found in the Old Testament as both Moses (Exod 34:28) and Elijah (1Kgs 19:8) fasted for forty days and nights. The recalling of Moses and Elijah makes it clear that Jesus’ fasting is extraordinary; but the circumstances are too different to interpret Jesus typologically as the new Moses (Luz 1989:186). By contrast, Gundry (1982:53-59) believes that Jesus typologically is the new Moses.

<sup>5</sup> The terms “holy”, “clean” and “pure” are positive labels, and the terms “profane”, “unclean” and “polluted” are negative ones.

<sup>6</sup> There is a distinction in anthropology between disease and illness. A disease is regarded as a socially disvalued condition of individuality in society. Illness is considered to be a social matter, not a biomedical one (cf Pilch 1986:102).

<sup>7</sup> The Greek word *παῖς* can be translated as “servant” or “boy”. According to Gundry (1994:112), the more correct translation of the term *παῖς* is servant (see Harrington 1991:113; Vledder 1997:197 n 46).

<sup>8</sup> According to the Matthean text, there is no indication that she was a prostitute.

<sup>9</sup> Recently, Maccoby (2001:60-63) argued that the tax-collectors themselves were not unclean. They were like all other Israelites in the impurity system. According to him, the problem regarding tax-collectors was a moral one, and not related to the ritual system.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Van Aarde (1994:262), “in the first-century Mediterranean society certain families and institutions were ascribed to be irretrievably shameful, like prostitutes and tax-collectors. Holiness was associated with divine order, and exclusivistic particularism. Prostitutes transgressed these boundaries and did not retain the politics of purity. They respected no lines of exclusiveness”.

<sup>11</sup> There was no Biblical instruction that people should wash their hands before a meal. The tradition came from the Pharisees, who believed Israel was a nation of priests who served God, and therefore the temple purity rule could be extended to everyday life (see Carter 2000:315-316; Neusner 1973:73-84).

<sup>12</sup> I will define some important terms related to healing. “*Sickness* is a term used to label real human experiences of disease and/or illness. *Disease* is not a reality but rather an explanatory concept that describes abnormalities in the structure and/or function of human organs and organ system. *Illness* is not a reality but an explanatory concept that describes the human perception, experience, and interpretation of certain socially disvalued states including, but not limited to, disease” (Pilch 2000:24-25; see Worsely 1982:327).

<sup>13</sup> The anthropological term “medical materialism” is used “for the tendency to utilize modern, Western, scientific medical concepts and models to interpret apparent health concerns in all cultures of all times without regarding cultural differences” (Pilch 1991:182). However, it is still not adequate to interpret biblical documents about sickness and healing. The main problem is that the difference in culture and language results in a gap between the first-century Mediterranean world and the modern world.

<sup>14</sup> According to Van Eck (1995:194), “many individuals in the gospels are reported to have different kinds of illnesses, and in most of the cases the families were also affected. The consequences of healings, therefore, affected this wider group as well. In terms of institutions, people were always checked out by others, because a person lived in a continual dependence upon the opinion of others, including the judgement of whether or not one is ill.”

<sup>15</sup> “Stretching out a hand” is a common expression and this gesture is openly used in connection with the miracle worker in a healing narrative (Luz 2001:6).

<sup>16</sup> This kind of competition included “civic benefaction, military exploits, athletic games, aesthetic competitions in drama and poetry” (Neyrey 1998:16).

<sup>17</sup> According to Moxnes (1996:20), “a proper challenge can take place only among people who are equal or almost equal in honour. A challenge always implies recognition of the honour of the other person; hence, to challenge an inferior or somebody without honour brings shame and humiliation to the challenger.”

<sup>18</sup> “Their synagogue,” generally means a synagogue of the Israelites. However, here it was probably the synagogue of the Pharisees (Luz 2001:187; Hagner 1993:333).

<sup>19</sup> The narrator mentioned the combination of Jesus’ opponents in groups of two. However, only the Pharisees appear in both pericopes in Matthew 12:1-37 and 9:32-34.

<sup>20</sup> Carter (2000:263) notes that according to Carter (2000:263), “the temporal setting on the Sabbath evokes three dimensions: 1. The Sabbath celebrated deliverance from Egypt (Deut 5:12-15). 2. The Sabbath recalls God’s covenant with Israel (Exod 31:16; Jer 17:19-27; Ezek 20:12; Neh 9:13-14). Sabbath observance distinctly expressed Jewish privilege from the Gentiles. 3. The Sabbath recalls creation, especially God’s rest on the seventh day (Gen 2:2-31).”

<sup>21</sup> However, it is not certain whether it was an accepted practice on the Sabbath to rescue a sheep which had fallen into a pit. The Covenanters at Qumran did not allow it (CD 11:13-14).

<sup>22</sup> The narrative preceded structure of Matthew 15:21-28 is important with two pericopes, Matthew 15:1-9 and 10-20. It focuses on keeping the Law, in particular the purity laws. In Matthew 15:1-9 Jesus’ debates with the Pharisees and the scribes about the relation between word and deed, pure and impure, and internal and external sources of defilement. In Matthew 15:10-20 is Jesus’ additional teaching to his disciples on the same subject. The narrator depicts that immediately after these discussions, Jesus healed the Canaanite woman’s daughter. It is good evidence that Jesus’ inclusive ministry was designed by the narrator.

<sup>23</sup> In Matthew the woman is identified as a Canaanite. According to biblical tradition, the Canaanites were the identified enemies of Israel (Levenson 1985:243-260; O'Day 2001:115).

<sup>24</sup> Israelites commonly used 'dogs' as an epithet for Gentiles (O'Day 2001:122).

<sup>25</sup> Garfinkel's model includes four aspects aimed at understanding how denunciation took place: (1) the denouncer; (2) a perpetrator whose identity is to be transformed; (3) some trait, behaviour, or even that serves as a reason for the transformation of identity; and (4) witnesses who will denounce the perpetrator in a person's new identity.

<sup>26</sup> A cultural-anthropological point of view of demon possession is that a culture determines demon possession and the human attaching to all that goes on in the world around them (Garrett 1989:6). For this reason, a demon possessed person was regarded as a social outcast by Israelites.

<sup>27</sup> Five elements determine the successful outcome of retrospective interpretation: (1) *Responsibility affirmed* - this indicates that the deviant will be assigned responsibility for the deviant action; (2) *Victim(s) affirmed* - the deviant causes harm to his parents, friends and the sick. (3) *Injury affirmed* - the deviant's actions result in injury and harm. Therefore, those actions are certainly deviant and immoral. (4) *Condemnation* - the victim is condemned by all concerned, including the local society's officials. The person responsible for the condemnation gets honour through it, but the deviant is shamed by the public attention. (5) *Appeal authority* - the condemnation and the deviant label will be justified by appeal to some higher order norm: God's will, and the good of the people, the honour of the nation (Malina & Neyrey 1991:106-107).

<sup>28</sup> The story of the Canaanite woman converting to Judaism, not Christianity (Overman 1990:5:5; Saldarini 1991:38-60). This is because the author of Matthew's Gospel was indeed faithful to Judaism. However, Clark's (1980:1-8) view does not accept this.

<sup>29</sup> According to Luz (1987:158), the conflict between Jesus and the Israelite leaders was a transposition of the conflict between Matthew and the Israelite leaders after 70 CE.

<sup>30</sup> Cicero links them with beggars, thieves and robbers (*De Off* 150-151).

<sup>31</sup> Luz's point of view is that Matthew's community was not in favour of table fellowship with the Gentiles.

<sup>32</sup> The argument is that these four institutions must be regarded as maintaining primacy over the others. Some regard kinship as the main institution (Heilbroner 1972:37; Finley 1973:50; Carney 1975:149; Polanyi 1977:46; Ohnuki-Tierny 1981:16; Malina 1986b:153; Smith 1989:23; Horsley 1989:5). Some other scholars believe that kinship and politics were the main social institutions in the first-century Mediterranean society (Pilch 1988:61; Oakman 1991:35).

<sup>33</sup> The narrator omits the strong Markan statement that Jesus' family wanted to take their "crazy" family member home. (Mk 3:21).

<sup>34</sup> The narrator did not mention the location of, nor to whom, the house belonged.

<sup>35</sup> Jesus' inclusive ministry of meal practice (also healing) with the lower rungs of the social ladder or on the social periphery looks as if he promoted an "egalitarian" society. However, according to Ellite (2003:83-84), meal practice is only an example of inclusiveness and not of social leveling or abolishment of social and economic inequity.