

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem statement

Since a half-century ago several studies have focused on the nature of Matthew's community (see Sim 2001:268-269). According to Van Aarde (1994:11-13), these endeavours consist of redactional-critical (as the revised edition of the Markan Gospel) work with regard to the theology of Matthew's Gospel. This study includes the "contextuality" of the Gospel. Redactional criticism shows that the author's design portrays his community as the "true Israel" which replaces the "false Israel" of Judaism (Trilling 1964:96-97). God's faithfulness to his promises (in the Old Testament) has remained through history and his promises have been fulfilled in Jesus and in the community (Frankemölle 1974:118-119, 142, 219-220, 319-321, 358, 384-400). The community (who are called to faithfulness) with regard to Jesus' normative interpretation of God's will, in contrast with Pharisaic Israelism and Hellenistic antinomianism (Hummel 1966:66-75). Van Aarde (1994:11; cf Nickle 1981:112-113) puts it as follows: "a redactional treatment of the Gospel of Mark with an apologetic function ('outward') and an instructive function ('inward') [is] to help the Matthean community in its debate with Judaism that Jesus was the Messiah, and as instruction to the Matthean community regarding the Israelite origins of their faith and the ethical implications of being a Christian." The author creates, by means of his communication, a correlation between the disciples and readers who associate themselves with the disciples. The theological issue of the correlation between the disciples in the Gospel of Matthew and Christians in the community concerns the "historicizing" and "idealizing" tendencies reflected in the Gospel of Matthew (Luz 1971:141-171). A "salvation historical"¹ reflection indicates the stages of the "pre-history of the Messiah", the "history and calling of Israel" and the "calling of the Gentiles" (Van Aarde 1994:12; cf Walker 1967:114-115). From this perspective, Kingsbury's (1969) study of the parable discourse in Matthew 13 points out some of the problems in Matthew's community, for example materialism, secularism, spiritual laziness, apostasy and lawlessness.

Findings of these kinds of scholarly work have been increasing to the extent that it is thought that Matthew had to deal with serious problems in his community. These matters are linked to the concept of “contextuality” that is the nature of the historical background against which Matthew wrote his Gospel (Van Aarde 1994:13). The debate concerns itself with whether the Gospel was written after the separation of the Matthean community and the synagogue and the nature of the analogy between the mission and the Israelites (the so-called “Israelite-particularistic mission - see Mt 10:5-6), that is the pre-paschal temporal level, and the mission to the Gentiles (the so-called “Gentile-universalistic mission on the post-paschal temporal level - see Mt 28:19) (cf Van Aarde 1994:13).

The same questions still present a challenge to Matthean scholars². Some scholars’ understandings of the nature of Matthew’s community are that it could have been, for instance, “Jewish-Christian”³ (Saldarini 1994:1), “sectarian”⁴ (Stanton 1992:93-98; see Luomanen 2002:107-130), of a “mixed state”⁵ (Gundry 1994:5-10; see Loumanen 1988:469-480; Smith 1963:149-168), or “egalitarian”⁶ (Krentz 1977:333-341; White 1986:75-76; Overman 1990:114; Stanton 1992:104; Saldarini 1994:48; 2001:159; Sim 1998:139-140; Duling 1997:124-139; Elliott 2002:75-91; 2003:173-210; see Crossan⁷ 1994:71-74; 1991:263-264; Levine 2001a:71; Deutsch 2001:112).

One of the topics that has been argued extensively is that the Matthean community is an egalitarian-structured society. According to Stanton (1994:98-104), this community was sectarian and consisted of a group of members in conflict with their parent body in the Israelite community. Consequently, Matthew’s sectarian community had not established institutional leadership roles during the time when it may have been egalitarian. In contrast, Sim (1998:139) suggested different ways of viewing Matthew’s community as an egalitarian group. Sim’s (1998:139; cf Saldarini 1994:106) point of view is that the “new sectarian movement of Matthew’s community denounces hierarchical structure and presents themselves as an egalitarian group opposed to the hierarchy of the parent body.” The evidence of the Matthean community’s egalitarian structure shows that the Matthean Jesus⁸ denounces the religious leaders (the scribes and Pharisees) for their hypocrisy and love of public acclaim in

Matthew 23:4-8 (especially verse 8: “but you are not to be called ‘Rabbi’ for you have only one master and you are all brothers”), and implies that Jesus instructed his disciples not to follow the religious leaders’ defiant example (see Mt 23:4-8). Hence, Jesus’ followers were not called leaders in the same way as Jesus was. They had only one God and one teacher (Jesus) and all other community members were brothers and sisters (Krentz 1977:334-336; White 1986:75). Krentz’s (1977:333-341) view of the Matthean community is that it is an egalitarian and inclusively structured society. The term “inclusive” denotes that this community was a mixed group who confessed Jesus and did not discriminate amongst their members based on their social background. This includes statements about sinners, men and women including those who were social and religious outcasts⁹ (see Krentz 1977:337). Krentz’s egalitarian perspective does not differ greatly from the afore-mentioned scholars’ views.

Corley (2002:7 n2; 1998:291 n 3, 4) refers critically to such a scholarly view, which is built upon an egalitarian theory modeled after Jesus’ egalitarian stance in various New Testament texts. The focus of this theory is that the followers of Jesus form a “new family of God.” Jesus instructed his followers to leave their homes, families and possessions. Corley, however, differs that Jesus historically rejected the conventional patriarchy and its hierarchical, male-dominated kinship structure for a “new family of God.” Also according to Elliott (2002:76), this new family organization could not abandon patriarchy as the central societal core value of the day and represented paradoxically both a patriarchal and an egalitarian structure.

However, Matthean scholars depict community members as equal (see Overman 1990:114, 124). The question therefore remains whether it is acceptable to say that the Matthean community as the “new Israel” was an egalitarian structured society; that is, did the Matthean community lack a hierarchical structure?

1.2 Research gaps

Regarding the current debate, the following questions can be asked. Firstly, is the term “egalitarian” applicable to the Matthean community as an ancient advanced agrarian society¹⁰

in the first century Mediterranean world?

The term “egalitarian” is derived from the modern political and philosophical situation beginning with America and France. The declaration of the independence of America had contained that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable right, that among these are life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” In the same period in France, the result of the French revolution drove out the notion of equality or egalitarianism as all human beings were equal in the governmental policies of all states and social parties of all institutions of the modern world (see Elliott 2002:75). The issue of equality was also supported by modern religious movements as the equality of all persons and their reality in the ecclesiastical as well as the civil sphere.

“Egalitarian”¹¹ is defined as meaning “asserting, resulting from, or characterized by belief in the equality of all people, as in political, economic, or social life” (Flexner 1987:623; see Elliott 2003:174). Fairchild (1977:107A) says that a sociological definition of “equality” is “similarity of social status, rights, responsibilities, opportunities; an ideal principle realizable so far as social structure is concerned, but conflicting with the results of the principles of liberty and competition, which lead to social selection, gradation, and inequality. There is equal opportunity to become equal. Equality is a goal of social capillarity; the elite are not interested.” Elliott’s (2002:76; see Halsey 1989:261-262) observation of the definition of “egalitarian” is, 1) that according to context, the denotation of “equal” and “equality” is either exact samenesses, on the one hand, or similarity, on the other hand, 2) an equality determined not by mathematical exactness or even similarity, but by some other social or cultural standard of measurement, 3) that “equality” has meaning with reference to some quality such as age, talents, strength, social rank or station, economic class, political or legal status, or rights, responsibilities or opportunity,” and 4) that social scientific term of equality is discussed as “the basic equality of membership in a society in the eighteenth century” and “to include political rights in the nineteenth century and certain social rights in twentieth century”

Some texts of the New Testament (Mt 20:12; Mk 14:46, 59; Lk 6:34) refer to Greek family terminology for “equal,” “equality,” “equitable,” “equality.” However, it is not a sense of

mathematical equality but rather the sense of “proportional equality” (Elliott 2002:78). It looks like an explicit vocabulary of equality. The lifestyle of the New Testament’s world was not mathematically equal. Moreover, modern society is also not a mathematically egalitarian structured society.

All of the above discussions indicate that the notion of equality or egalitarianism requires further clarification and specification, for example, whether the term “men” in Matthew (cf Mt 19:26) implicitly includes slaves and women. This conviction concerning human equality eventually has animated and shaped the governmental policies of all the states, and the social policies of all institutions of the modern world after the French Revolution. “The egalitarian approach favours social changes that would eliminate structures that perpetuate inequality. These could include measures such as a widening of political participation through democratization, great social and democratic control over the market, and the elimination of unequal access to the best education” (Horner and Westacott 2000:173).

As we have seen above, some recent studies on the Matthean community claim that two thousand years ago the Matthean community was an “egalitarian structured society” and a “discipleship of equals”. However, according to Elliott (2003:205), the notion of egalitarianism, being a motive of modern political and social movements, is not the one found in an advanced ancient agrarian society such as that of Matthew. According to social scientific discussion, the concept of equality for all human society did not arise until the 18th century with its altered economic, social and political conditions (Elliott 2002:76). The ancient agrarian society was unequally structured, with naturally occurring, physically dominant males versus inferior females, and socially superior parents versus inferior children; freeborn versus slaves; natives versus aliens. In other words, it was a hierarchically structured society.

Embedded in such a context, Matthew’s community was also a socially stratified¹² structured group alongside the cultural patterns of the first century. It consisted of a mixed state with both “Israelites”¹³ and Gentile members (Gundry 1994:5-10; see Van Aarde 1998:16, 21) existing within a hierarchical structure. The first century Mediterranean world

was a hierarchically commonly structured agrarian society. These agrarian societies formed a gap between those who belonged to the ruling class and those who had little or no access to any ruling class (Lenski, Lenski and Nolan 1991:195-196; see Duling 2002:520-575). The Matthean community was also one of these agrarian societies in the first century Mediterranean world and as such, a huge gap existed between rulers and subordinates within a set of hierarchical structures (cf Saldarini 1988:20-27, 39-45; Vledder 1997:98; see Duling 1992:101; 1993:650-651; Rohrbaugh 1993a:383). Therefore, it would be difficult to argue that the Matthean community was egalitarian in structure or nature.

The second issue of the gap in research is that some recent studies of an “egalitarian” theory are engaged on the historical Jesus studies. The question is if the historical Jesus’ religious movement was egalitarian or not? Schüssler Fiorenza’s ([1983] 1994; see Corley 1998:292) work makes a groundbreaking claim that the Jesus’ movement was remembered primarily as “discipleship of equality.” The historical Jesus scholar’s debating focus of egalitarianism is “discipleship is equality,” and “family equality” (Crossan 1994:71-74; 1991:263-264; Horsley 1987:209-245; Theissen and Merz 1998:219-225). According to Horsley (1987:231-245), Jesus and his disciples of the earliest post-resurrection community was an egalitarian family structured group. He stated the following as evidence: 1) Jesus’ teaching and ministry broke the traditional patriarchal structure society, and that the basic form of societal relations was in term of kinship and the social structure of patriarchy in the first century of Israel. The father was the head of the family in this social structure. Horsley (1987:233) believed that the gospel tradition of Jesus’ teaching and ministry was indeed to challenge the patriarchal family structure. He gave evidence of a crisis of the breakdown of fundamental society in Matthew 10:34-36 (Lk 12:51-53). Jesus’ teaching of these verses (“a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law”) indicated that the core of social relations of the patriarchal family structure was completely broken down by Jesus’ teaching, and secondly, that Jesus’ followers out of new communities were not hierarchically structured groups (Horsley 1987:240-245). Jesus exhorted his followers to ignore the traditional hierarchies but to maintain egalitarian social

relations as “whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Mt 23:12; cf 18:4; Lk 14:11; 18:14). These arguments are the basis of the historical Jesus’ scholars’ egalitarianism aspects.

Currently, these kinds of Jesus’ teaching of egalitarian aspects have been more clearly discussed (see Elliott 2002:78-83). Let us deal with some of these aspects of the egalitarian teachings of Jesus. First, Jesus’ invitation to discipleship involved a call of abandonment of one’s biological family, one’s property and possessions, and occupation. The Bible references are one’s biological family (see Mark 1:16-20; Lk 9:59/Mt 8:21-22; Lk 24:26/Mt 10:37; Lk 9:60/Mt 8:22; Lk 14:26/Mt 10:37; Lk 14:26/Mt 10:37), the renunciation of one’s property and possessions (Mk 6:7-13/Mt 10:1-15/Lk 9:1-6; Mk 10:17-31/Mt 19:16-30/Lk 18:18-30; Mk 14:5/Mt 26:8-9/Jn 12:4-6; Lk 6:29-30/Mt 5:39-42; Lk 12:33-34/Mt 6:19-21), and occupations (Mk 1:16-20/Mt 4:18-22; Mk 2:13-17/Mt 9:9-13/Lk 5:27-32). This view has been discussed by Theissen (1978:10-15; 1992:60-93). Theissen believed that the disciples left their homes and families, their possessions and their occupations and followed the life of discipleship under two aspects. The life of discipleship was the renunciation of religious and sociological reasons. The religious reason is that they try to encounter holiness. The sociological reason is to avoid a crisis in Jewish-Palestine. It seems that Jesus’ teaching to his disciples of the abandonment of their biological family is the institution of the family and its patriarchal structure. However, Jesus’ teaching declares the biological family to be of secondary significance or indifference in the light of the imminent commencement of God’s reign (Guijarro Oporto 2001:237). Moreover, Jesus’ disciples had to leave their family temporarily in order to accompany Jesus. Some of the disciples returned to their homes and families (Peter, Mk 1:29; Levi, Mk 2:15) (probably also James and John Matthew 20:20).

Secondly, the egalitarian theorists related the renunciation of conflict within biological families (Mk 13:12/Mt 10:21/Lk 21:16; Lk 12:51-53/Mt 10:34-36). These verses seem to support egalitarianism or the rejection of their families. However, it is not an indication of the renunciation of the family or its patriarchal structure, but rather a prioritizing of their loyalty to God (Elliott 2002:79). By contrast interpretation of Luz (2001:90), Matthew 10:21 and

10:34-36 are the experiences of the mission of Israel.¹⁴

Thirdly, Jesus' saying of the egalitarianism is the homelessness of the Son of Man (Mt 8:20/Lk 9:58; GosThom 86). According to Crossan (1994:148; cf Theissen 1978:10-11), it has "symbolized the egalitarian message of the Kingdom, where all are equal, and no place is dominant and neither is any person, family, or village." However, it is not easy to accept that home is not called a geographical place to an inferred equality of person, families, or villages (Elliott 2002:79; Morris 1992:201). Hence, the homeless warned his prospective disciple that his ministry must suffer before his exaltation.

Fourthly, women were made equal to men through the interpretation of divorce (Lk 16:18; cf Mk 10:2-9; Mt 19:9). Crossan's (1994:150) claim is that "women have exactly the same right as men have in marriage. Adultery can be committed against the wife's right just as well as against a husband's." However, this teaching of Jesus is not bearing of egalitarian theory between husband and wife. The divorce was not only the husband and wife's decision in ancient time; it also protected the two-origin families of the spouses from inter-family conflict and social shame, thus maintaining inter-family integrity, domestic harmony, and the honour of both families (Elliott 2002:80). Moreover, divorce was never taken as indicating a general equality of husbands and wives and in Palestinian Israel, husbands were super-ordinate and wives subordinate (see Elliott 2000:550-599).

Fifthly, in Matthew 18:1-4, it is mentioned "leader as servant." Crossan (1994:166) also suggests that "consistent with Jesus' egalitarian vision and program for the Kingdom of God, leadership roles within it must be completely antithetical to modes of rule, command, and leadership in the Roman Empire or any other standard kingdom of earth." Crossan (1993:71-74) believes that Jesus' vision was a radical egalitarianism. Schüssler Fiorenza (1993:176) says that sevenfold transmission of a Jesus-saying in the synoptic tradition, which states that the first and the leaders should be last and slaves, indicating that Jesus was remembered as having radically questioned social and religious hierarchical and patriarchal relationships (Mt 18:4; 20:25-28; 23:11; Lk 9:48; 22:24-27). Jesus and his first followers radically rejected all relationships of dependence and domination as patriarchy and hierarchical structure

(Schüssler Fiorenza 1993:176). She claims that Jesus and his disciples must be considered egalitarian in their social and political orientation. Elliott (2002:80-81) argued against Schüssler Fiorenza's view of Jesus and that his first followers rejected Patriarchy. Elliott clearly investigated the definition of patriarchy through anthropology. A male dominant family structure was general in the ancient social and cultural world. This reversal saying is nothing explicit or implicit of the elimination of status differences altogether. In Matthew 18:1-4 it seems like patron-client relations. Hence, it is not a motive of an egalitarian. Moreover, Jesus and his first followers never spoke about patriarchy and its hierarchical structure, or more accurately, its stratification.

Sixth, Matthew 23:8-11¹⁵ (Lk 14:7-10), Jesus insists that his followers avoid hierarchical structure community as “but you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher and you are all disciples (brother), call no one father, for you have one father.” “Teacher” is leader of the local community and “father” is head of family. It means that no “teacher” and “father” in the local community is an egalitarian structure without hierarchy (Horsley 1987:242; Schüssler Fiorenza 1993:220-221; it is also suggested by Krentz 1977:334-336). However, the statement that “all disciples are brothers” eliminates the rabbi-student distinction, but this saying is not about equality. Brothers could be unequal in terms of position or privilege in the ancient world (Elliott 2002:82). These are probably eschatological overtones, as Jeremiah's declaration that no one will need teaching because they will all know the Lord directly in the end (Jer 31:34). Duling's (1997:134) interpretation of Matthew 23:8-10 is a limited egalitarian group. His view is that the community was in tension with social reality. The Matthean community tries to promote a new leadership role, but it is against the Pharisees, with their models of group leadership. That is an important point of view. Schüssler Fiorenza did not consider a description of a historical social reality.

All the above arguments indicate that the theory that Jesus established an egalitarian “community of equality” is problematic in several respects. The biblical texts alleged to demonstrate Jesus' egalitarianism are not probative but are open to other and contrary interpretation. Hence, the historical Jesus and his religious movement was not an egalitarian.

As an identified research gap the third issue to be addressed in this study is that the scholars' focus on Jesus had a special attitude about women's equality with men. Many Christian feminists and female scholars assume the egalitarian nature of the Jesus movement and engage in historical Jesus studies (D'Angelo 1992:199-218; Grant 1989:184; Corley 1998:291-325; 2002). Some of the historical Jesus scholars have also supported the above view (Borg 1987:133-135; 1994:57-58; Funk 1996:194-200). The presence and participation of women in ancient society and religion, including the Jesus movement, has been firmly established; suggestions continue to be made for an agency for women in the development and passing on of gospel traditions.

In the reconstruction of Jesus' teaching and the role of women in his movement, it is first necessary to discuss the social, religious, and political circumstance of women in Greco-Roman antiquity, Hellenistic Judaism and Roman Palestine (see Corley 2002:1). The life style of the Israelite women was terrible compared to that of the Greek, Roman and other Hellenistic women. Israelite women's circumstances were not the same as that of the women of Diaspora and Palestine. Israelite women in Palestine suffered more than Diaspora Israelite women. Ancient Israelite women weren't allowed to serve meals to or eat with men. A woman was not seen as a person before the Law and she wasn't able to act as a legal witness in Israelite courts (Borg 1994:57). During religious obligations such as study and prayer, women were segregated from men in special women's courts in the Jerusalem temple and it was the same in the galleries of the synagogue (Borg 1987:133-134; Safrai 1992:41,45). Moreover, Israelite women were not given attention in public places, in the house, and were prohibited from speaking to men in public. They were also excluded from all leadership functions in the ancient synagogues (Borg 1987:134). Women were systematically excluded from both the religious and public life of the social world.

We know that Palestine was under the influence of Hellenistic culture in the first century (Corley 2002:22). This cultural influence supported women's social status as the participation of Israelite women in communal meals with men (see Theissen 1995:631-634). However, it was only possible for elite Israelite women to attend meals with men. This cultural

background helps us to understand Jesus' teaching and the social configuration of his movement further illustrates the cultural diversity present in the Greco-Roman world and first century Palestine. The radical attitude of Jesus' movement toward women was already modified within the community before the New Testament was completed (Borg 1987:135).

Therefore, we need to focus on the nature of the communities of the first followers of Jesus, and in the search for a Jesus who might have been at least welcoming to women, to the women in this movement, on the possibility of an "egalitarian movement," on the possibility of women's contributions to early Christian traditions (see Schaberg 1997:159).

Women were closely related with Jesus religious movement. The role of women in the Jesus movement is striking and remarkable (Borg 1994:57; see Wink 1992:129-134). The woman who outraged an all-male banquet not only by entering it but also by washing Jesus' feet with her hair (Lk 7:36-50), the woman who haemorrhaged, whom Jesus healed (Mt 9:20-22), to His being hosted by Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42), to his learning from a Syro-Phoenician Gentile woman (Mk 7:24-30; Mt 15:21-28). Moreover, women were apparently part of the itinerant group traveling with Jesus. Indeed, they were apparently among his most devoted followers, the women at the cross and tomb (Mt 27:56-57; 27:61; 28:1-7, 8-10) (Anderson 2001:33-44; Borg 1994:57; Theissen and Merz 1998:219-225). These women were probably disciples of Jesus and it has been accepted by Feminist scholars (Schüssler Fiorenza 1983:136-140; see Kingsbury 1978b: 64; contra Anderson 2001:41-44; Deutsch 2001:109).

Schüssler Fiorenza (1983:136-140) said that Sophia-God of Jesus invited women to the discipleship of equals, this message would clearly have been clearly understood as an explicit challenge to the patriarchal bias of his culture. It indicates that Matthean Jesus teaching redefines qualification for new membership of his circle (cf Sheffield 2001:69). Moreover, Crossan (1991:261-264) and Borg (1987:133-135; 1994:57-58) mentioned that Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God and similarly his "radical egalitarianism" in the midst of a culture that devalued women's social level. Christian and Feminist scholars have been trying to prove that "Jesus was a feminist" within a negative Israelite environment as an anti-Judaic function. However, as we have seen, scholars such as John Elliott and Kathleen Corley

challenged this opinion with regard to the historical Jesus.

Furthermore, the female roles are not a major theme in the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew 10:1 mentioned that the twelve male disciples were called. They function as a symbolic group related to Israel; they were all male. If we accept women as disciples in Jesus' movement, it was probably not at the same level as that of male disciples (cf Saldarini 2001:161,n16). The narrator did not refer to female disciples as on the same level as that of male disciples in Matthew's Gospel (see Levine's (2001a:70-87) analysis of Matthean Jesus and Hemorrhaging women in Matthew 9:18-26). Although the narrator of Matthew's Gospel considers women and unclean people as welcomed in the Matthean community, they are not portrayed in terms of gender equality.

Saldarini (2001:157-170) analyzed women in Matthew's households in chapter 18. He argued against Wainwright's (1998:41-42) argument of households including women as daughters, young women, wives, mothers, widows, and single women and as followers of Jesus. She believed that the Matthean community was probably a household church or a group of household churches. According to Saldarini's interpretation of chapter 18 the low status and powerlessness of children is a reflection to the place of the new community of Matthew. The metaphor of the child (little ones) in Matthew (18:2-5, 6, 10, 14; 19:13-15) reflected a symbolic name for the members of the community (Davies and Allison 1991:763). The little ones are socially powerless and need to be cared for. It probably indicates that they exercised authority communally within highly structured leadership roles. However, in chapter 18, it did not appear to be the woman's major role. A woman appears once in the parable of the unforgiving slave/servant (Mt 18:21). Jesus' teaching included adult men and women with their children. However, the women have no role, voice, or visibility. The narrator of Matthew's Gospel could not ignore the social environment of adult male householders and their hierarchical structured society (cf Saldarini 2001:162).

Hence, the female disciples are not equal to male disciples. The female roles are significant, but they were not major roles in the Gospel of Matthew and early Christian tradition. The influence of Hellenistic culture could not destroy the hierarchically structured society in

Palestine. It has provided no evidence of actual, concrete, political or social equality of women with men by Jesus and his first followers.

As an identified research gap, the fourth issue to be addressed in this study is to critically evaluate a comparison between the inclusive and so-called egalitarian structure of the Matthean community and the way in which such an inclusive-egalitarian structure occurs in Pauline communities. It deals with a cross-cultural interpretation of Matthew and Paul's inclusive tendencies¹⁶. However, in this regard one should try to avoid the “hermeneutical fallacy” of ethnocentrism.

New Testament interpretation is unavoidably cross-cultural in nature. Ethnocentrism maintains that beliefs and practices in another culture should, or cannot but, be interpreted according to the standards of one's own culture. The obverse, cultural relativism, maintains that such beliefs and practices should be evaluated relative to the culture of which they are part (Craffert 1996:449; see Lett 1987:11; Winthrop 1991:235-237). This means that an ethnocentric interpretation judges all people in the whole world in terms of one's own cultural perspective. The presumption is that, since “we” are by nature human, if anyone else is human then they should and must be just as we are (Malina 1986a:29; Osiek 1992:5-6). However, Saler (1993:9) notes that “some amount of ethnocentrism is probably inevitable as a cognitive starting point in the search for trans-cultural understanding.” Bidney (1968:546) says that ethnocentrism implies “judgments based on irrational preferences incapable of rational validation.” Therefore, a degree of “actual” ethnocentrism is found in all societies and cultures; both conscious and unconscious preferences for inherited practices and beliefs are facts of socialization.

The cultural backgrounds of Matthew and Paul's communities were different. The Matthean community was part of the Israelite tradition. Of course, it was also under the influence of the Hellenistic culture. Paul's communities were not so much influenced by Israelite tradition. More than in Matthew's case, Paul's communities were of a mixed culture, which included both the Israelite and Hellenistic traditions. Let's us consider their different cultural backgrounds.

The Gospel of Matthew does not provide explicit information regarding the actual location where the Gospel was written, but there is general agreement among scholars that the Gospel was written in the eastern part of the ancient Mediterranean, or in Palestine. The most interesting argument favours Antioch, the capital of Syria, as the place of the composition of the Gospel of Matthew (Meier 1983:22-27; Luz 1985:73-74; Sim 1998:53-61; see chapter 3). The surroundings of Antioch included ordinary people who spoke Greek, a large population from the Israelite Diaspora, and the city possessed one of the earliest Christian communities outside of Palestine and a church founded by an Israelite background Christian, around 30 CE (Longenecker 1985:8-21). The Gospel of Matthew reflects the world of Judaism.

A Matthean community should therefore observe practical laws such as circumcision, food, and the Sabbath laws. The function of the Mosaic Law was to create and maintain the social stratification within the Israelite society. According to Malina (1993:159-166; see Duling 2002:534), the people of Israel were classified in terms of degrees of purity, deriving from their proximity to the Jerusalem Temple. As we know, it can be assumed that the cultural background of the Matthean community was part of this Israelite religious tradition. Judaism refers to a religious tradition and cultural grouping existing from post-exilic times, historically connected with the land of Palestine. The Israelites' tradition regarded themselves as the people of the Law. The function of the Mosaic Law was to codify the authoritative power of God for the Israelites, and it was central to their whole life in a moral, civil or cultic manner (Hong 1993:147).

The Hellenistic culture was derived from the Greek empire, in which government, economics, and culture were synchronized into a new kind of civilization that was to be adapted later by the Romans and was to remain the dominant culture in the Eastern Mediterranean world in the first century. Paul was irrevocably committed to the Hellenistic world. He was a Diaspora Israelite and, according to Acts 9:11, grew up in Tarsus, a Greek-Hellenistic city in the eastern part of Asia Minor. He went to Jerusalem, apparently in his youth, perhaps in order to immunize him against the infection of the Hellenistic world (cf Becker 1993:51-52). In Jerusalem, Paul was instructed in scripture and tradition by Gamaliel,

who was influential in the Pharisaic movement (Act 22:3). However, when he returned from Jerusalem, he situated himself within his Hellenistic context, probably in order to take a step back from conceptual comparisons to consider the broader question of the social matrix in which both the Israelite tradition and Hellenistic tradition existed (Den Heyer 2000:26-27). The Israelites in the Diaspora lived in a world dominated by pagan ideas and notions, and probably an individual person or group was Hellenistic in language, religion, education, and culture. As a Hellenistic Israelite, Paul had already become acquainted with Hellenistic-Jewish practice in the form of various writings, which he then reshaped as a Christian (cf Esler 2003:15; the catalogue of vices in Romans 1; Galatians 5). Moreover, Paul describes his apostolic existence with the aid of the metaphor of a competition in a Greek stadium (1 Cor 9:24-27), and the statement regarding Paul's baptism is dependent on the language of the Hellenistic mystery religions (Rm 6:1-11); this reflects his Hellenistic, urban socialization, which made the traditions of popular philosophy familiar to him.

It is possible that Hellenistic Israelites had their synagogues in Antioch, in which the scriptures were read, and worship was conducted in Greek (cf Osiek 1992:16). Paul did preach in synagogues, and Gentiles frequented synagogues throughout the Greco-Roman world (Acts 14:1, 17:1), which explains Paul's intention to include both Israelites and Gentiles in the Christian congregations. According to Duncan (1941:123; see Longenecker 1990:156), the distinction between Israelite and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female indicates that the society of Paul's day was stratified according to cultural roles and statutes. Longenecker's (1990:156) interpretation of Galatians 3:26-29 ("there is neither Jew or Greek, slave nor free, male nor female") is that old divisions and stratification have come to an end and that a new relationship has been established by faith in Christ, which implies that members of Pauline communities were no longer stratified under the Law. They comprised mainly of an agrarian society, with a gap between those who belonged to the elite (classes with authority) and those who had little or no access to any authority. Hence, the Hellenists and the Pauline group did not require strict Torah observance.

These different cultural backgrounds tell us that their “social identity” is not the same in the ancient Mediterranean world. It is a fact that group identities can transcend individual mortality within their daily life (Esler 2003:23; see Carr 1991:113-114). Social identity is especially concerned with the ways in which the members of one group seek to differentiate it from other groups so as to achieve a positive social identity. They tell members what they should think and feel and how they should behave if they are to belong to the group and share its identity. The Christian movement was in connection with various aspects of ethnic tension and conflict among them. “The social identity of a Christian (probably Matthew and Pauline communities were Israelite and Gentile Christians)” refers to that part of a person’s self-concept that is derived from his or her membership in a group (Esler 2003:155). The Matthew and Pauline communities were ethnic and the different form of social identity obtained by belonging to the Christian-Movement. Matthew and Pauline Christian communities were full of tension and even conflicted within Christian-movement in the capital calls for a theory of identity that is embedded in the processes of intergroup differentiation and hostility (Esler 2003:19; see Gundry: 1994).

Both communities accepted new people who chose a Christian identity (the new identity in Christ). The social identity of the new common ingroup identity in Christ in the Matthew community was more related to the Israelite tradition than Hellenistic culture. However, the Pauline communities were more related to the Hellenistic culture than the Matthew community.

Hence, the relationship of the Law is important in order to understand the social structure of both communities. Recently, Sim (2002:767-783; Jackson 2002:64) reflected on the relationship between Paul and Matthew with regard to their respective understanding of the Law. As we have seen, the Matthean community still identified itself with Judaism. This implies that the Matthean community was still a Law-observant group, which followed the ritual law (Sim 2002:774-775). However, Paul’s Christian communities were not Law-observant groups. The Law-observant community was not an egalitarian society because one of the functions of the Law was to codify stratification in Israelite society.

According to Malina (1993:159-166; see Duling 2002:534), the people of Israel were classified in terms of degrees of purity deriving from their proximity to the Jerusalem Temple. Therefore, if Matthew and Paul's communities were under the Law, they did not per definition form an egalitarian structured society. However, if these communities were free from the Law, these communities could have been transformed into an inclusive structured society (Riches 1980:168-189).

The following letters are accepted as authentically Pauline: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon, while the debate regarding the authenticity of Colossians and 2 Thessalonians continues (Van Aarde 2000a:107-122). The exclusion of Ephesians and the Pastoral epistles is, at the very least, questionable (Mohrlang 1984:3; cf Conzelmann 1969:155).

Paul's perspective on the Law and the terminology he used are confusing. The major difficulty concerns Paul's statements regarding the Law within the context of the Gospel. On the one hand, Paul states: "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Rm 4:10). On the other hand, "we uphold the law" (Rm 3:31; cf Rm 7:12), which leads us to ask: "Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not!" (Gl 3:21). It means that if Pauline's communities were no longer under the Law, they could be transformed into an inclusive and egalitarian structured society.

"Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" (Rm 10:4). This implies that salvation or the way to God does not merely come about through obedience to the Law. Paul was convinced that Christians did not merely need obedience to the Law to obtain salvation, but that they also needed faith in Christ as the new social identity of a Christian (Rom 3:21, 28, 30; 4:16; 10:4, 9; Gl 2:16; 3:6, 8, 11, 18, 22, 25) (Mohrlang 1984:27; see Hagner 1997:25). All of the afore-mentioned verses indicate that the Christian life was to be lived by faith, and that the Law no longer carried any authority towards salvation (Gl 2:19). Paul's gospel was disclosed separately from the Law (Hagner 1997:25). Paul's perspective regarding the Law was that righteousness was no longer only obtained through obedience to the Law, but that whosoever believed, would have received this free gift

from God. “Christ himself was now considered to have been the believer’s righteousness” (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21) (Mohrlang 1984:27). Paul’s perspective regarding the Law was that the Christian life should not necessarily be lived in accordance with the Law, but that it should be defined by submission to and control by the Spirit. Therefore, it is asserted that “all who relied on observing the Law were under a curse, for it was written: Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the Law. Clearly no one is justified before God by the Law, because the righteous will live by faith” as the new social identity in Christ (Gal 3:10-11).

Paul’s perspective indicates that the righteous were to live by faith. It implicated Judeans for non-Judean righteousness (Esler 2003:168-170). Paul’s understanding of νόμος in Galatians is as follows: Most scholars (Hong 1993; Lightfoot 1880:118; Stamm 1953:482; cf. Sanday and Headlam 1907:58; Burton 1921:458) agree that Paul uses ὁ νόμος to refer to the Mosaic law¹⁷. However, it seems that Paul did not view Law-observance in itself as important as Christian righteousness. This is obtained only through faith in Christ (Esler 1998:179), because Paul said, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:26-29). These verses clearly indicate that whoever has faith in Jesus is one with Christ Jesus.

The above discussion indicates that Paul’s communities were not Law-observant. In other words, Paul’s communities were to some extent an egalitarian and inclusive structured society based on faith in Jesus Christ. However, there could be a difference between Paul’s idea and the reality in the community itself. The term of Law-observance in itself is not automatically and logically egalitarian. The Law itself caused stratification within the Israelites’ tradition.

However, in Paul’s day, a hierarchical social stratification also of society and its members existed (Hendriksen 1968:149-150; Morris 1996:121-122). Distinctions between Israelite and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female indicate that the society of Paul’s day was stratified according to cultural roles and statuses (Duncan 1941:123; see Longenecker

1990:156). According to Hansen (1989:138; cf Crossan 1991:296), the equal status of all believers as sons of God means that they were also equal before Christ. It was Paul's intention to include Israelites and Gentiles in the congregations he established on account of their faith alone as the new social identity in Christ. Galatians 3:26-29 is a clear articulation by Paul of Jesus' egalitarianism and inclusiveness. According to Longenecker (1990:156), the interpretation of "there is neither Jew or Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" is that old divisions and stratification have come to an end and new relationships have been established, which implies that members of Pauline communities were no longer stratified under the Law, but were made equal on account of faith in Jesus Christ. However, Elliott (2002:83-84; 2003:180) suggests that Galatians 3:28 is not an indication of a modern egalitarian perspective. It is rather an example of inclusivity and not of social levelling or abolishment of social and economic inequity.

Moreover, the house churches in the Pauline period were not structured like patriarchal families, but those who joined house churches regarded them as an association of equals (see Elliott 2003:187; cf Schüssler-Fiorenza 1983:179). The term "association of equals" does not refer to an egalitarian structured house church. Like any association, the house church had certain persons who performed supervisory and leadership functions and who were distinguished from members (Elliott 2003:188). Schmeller (1995:52-53, 92-93) points out that a house church was predominantly hierarchical in structure but that it was also slightly egalitarian. The egalitarian theory fails to take into account the fact that what was behind Jesus' teaching was the presumption of social and economic equality, which is similar to the modern perspective. Jesus' inclusive ministry is inferred in his message and practice of social inclusively as evidenced from his egalitarianism and rejection of stratified society (Elliott 2002:84) although Paul's communities were based on equality of faith in Jesus Christ as the new social identity, it was not like a modern egalitarian structured society. Yet, we may assume that Paul's communities were really inclusive believing communities with a oneness and unity of persons who are one in Christ on account of faith, implying a partly equally structured society (Elliott 2003:178).

With regard to Matthew's perspective on the Law, it is important to take into account that his community was separated from its parent body, the Israelite community (see Cousland 2002:69-70; it will be more deeply discussed in chapter 2). According to Sim (2001:274), Matthew's community had no further relationship with this parent body (especially Pharisees), even though they still adhered to certain aspects of the Israelite tradition. When Matthew's community, owing to conflict, severed its ties with its parent body, it needed to create a new social identity in Christ. Henceforth, Matthew's community continued with some traditional Israelite aspects. It seems that Matthew's thoughts regarding the Law were reflected in his community.

Matthew 5:17-19 is one of the important passages in understanding the Law within the Gospel of Matthew. It has been discussed a number of times in detail by various scholars (Blair 1960:117; Meier 1976:46-124; Mohrlang 1984:8-9; see Balch 1991:68-86; Sim 2002:774-776). This passage is the primary evidence of the validity of the Torah in the Matthean community (Walaskay 2002:417-420). According to Sim's (2002:775) interpretation of Matthew 5:17-19, the Matthean community was to obey the Law in all respects, and this must apply to Gentiles as much as to Israelites. Moreover, Sim's view is that Matthew 5:17-19 includes observance of the whole Torah such as circumcision and the other ritual requirements of the Law. This discussion indicates that the Matthean community was a stratification-structured society because of its emphasis on the observance of the Law.

Matthew's perspective in relation to the Law was two-fold. On the one hand Matthew retains the original Law of Moses, and on the other hand chooses to abide by the new Law of love, in accordance with Jesus' interpretation of the Law. This means that Matthew had both a positive and a negative perspective in relation to the Law. Matthew had a dual concern regarding the community. As discussed, Matthew's community represents to a certain extent a mixed state. As an Israelite community, it shared in a dual "citizenship", in which it could not have conceived denying either the validity of the Law or the basic authority and need of scribal interpretation. However, as a community of Jesus' followers, its members recognized that Jesus' interpretation of the Law was for them supremely authoritative (Mohrlang

1984:22). Henceforth, some tension existed within the local community. Matthew reflected on both the validity of the Law, and on certain anti-Law situations (the new interpretation of the Law according to Jesus). For this reason, Matthew portrayed Jesus as a new lawmaker, having constituted the Sermon on the Mount (in line with Matthew's theology), as a new Law (see Bacon 1930:168, 342; Perrin 1974:174). This view was tied to the evangelist's intention to have the structure of the five discourses in his Gospel aligned to the five books of the Pentateuch. Moreover, according to Matthew's depiction, Jesus was considered to have been a "second Moses" (Allison 1993:267; cf Davies 1964:83, 86, 92, 107). However, the teaching of Matthean Jesus did not constitute a new Law; it merely formulated a new interpretation of the existing Law for the new social identity in Christ. His teaching enhanced the authoritative interpretation of the old Law, as it revealed the true nature of the will of God (Davies 1964:107). Jesus' interpretation of the Law did not focus on the letter of the Law like that of the Pharisees, who interpreted the Law in a strictly legalistic way. Jesus professed that the central commandment to love was the key principle towards a proper interpretation of the law (Mohrlang 1984:25). In Matthew, the Law was still considered to have been the Law of Moses, while the teaching of Jesus was perceived as some kind of "evangelistic Law" (Meier 1976:169). According to Matthew, Jesus was considered to have been the authoritative interpreter of the Torah. Kilpatrick (1946:108) therefore correctly interprets Matthew's emphasis on Jesus within the confines of the Law. Henceforth, the lives of the disciples were not merely interesting because of their submission to the Law, but also because of their personal submissive obedience to Jesus himself as Lord (Davies 1964:422).

This discussion leads us to a careful consideration of the life of the community and their Law-observance. Matthew's community was constructed on validation of the Law, and on living life in accordance with the radical teachings of Jesus which, according to Paul (Rom 10:4), terminated the validity of the Law (τέλος νόμου). However, according to Matthew (Mt 5:17-20), the Matthean community lived within the framework of and under the Torah authority (Mohrlang 1984:25). According to Matthew's perspective on the Law, the community's life was deeply aligned to the notion that "the gate is narrow and the way that

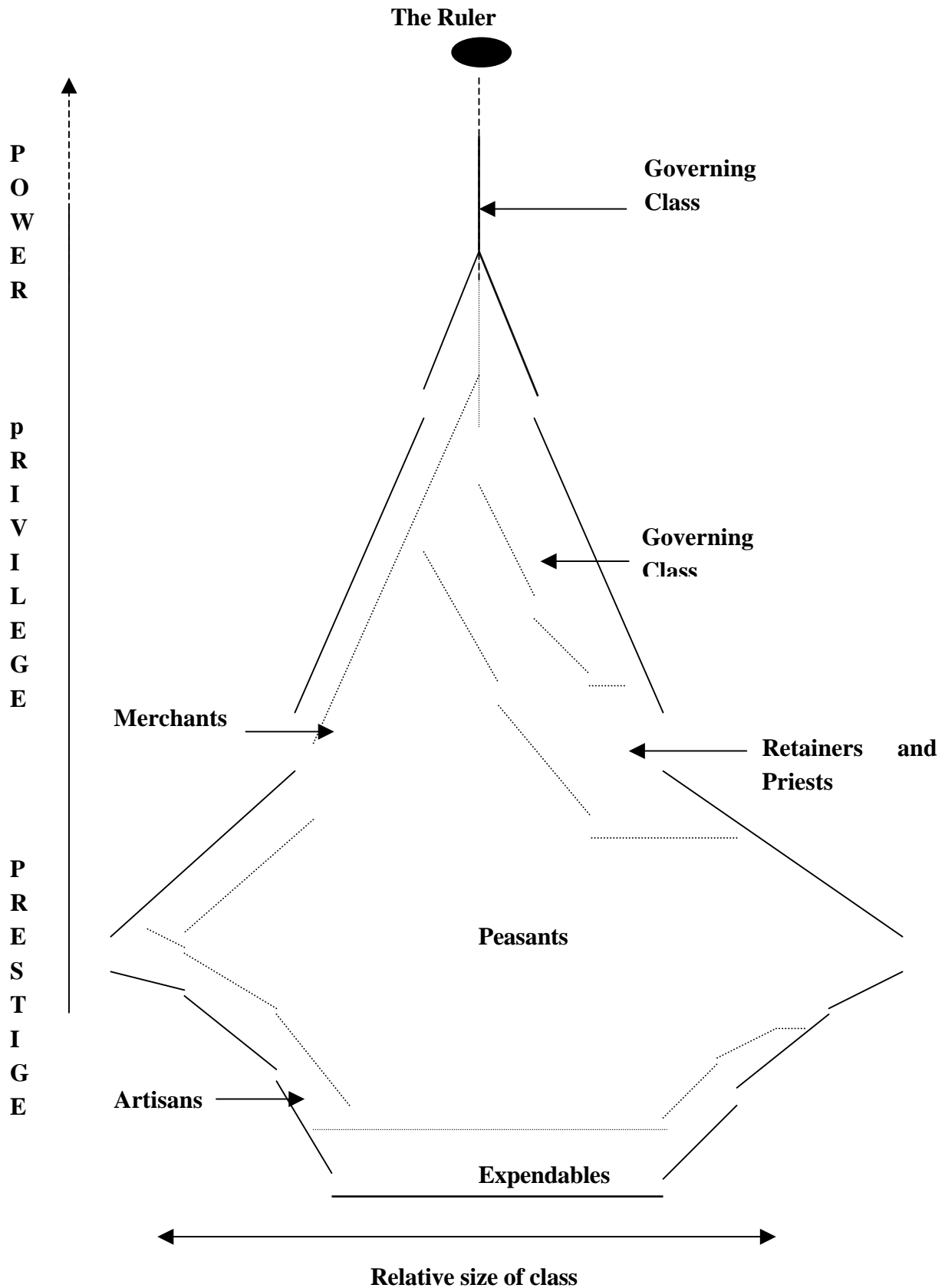
leads to life is hard and those who find it are few” (Mt 7:14). Yet, Matthew states that the yoke of Jesus was easy, his burden light, and proper rest was promised (Mt 11:28-30). These pictures indicate that the life of Matthew’s community, to a certain extent, validated the Law in an amended way.

The Law legitimated the Israelite society as an institution with a hierarchical structure. The identity of the people of Israel was not defined by individual personalities but as parts of a unified Israel (Rowlett 1997:375). This suggests that the people of Israel were hierarchically structured according to patriarchal authority and the Law. Vledder (1997:127-128; cf Duling 1995a:358-387) described Matthew’s community as an agrarian society and showed its component of unclean, degraded and expendable people (it will be discussed in chapter 3.3). Matthew’s community constituted of several types of people such as the man with leprosy (Mt 8:2), a sick woman (Peter’s mother-in-law) (Mt 8:14), and a paralytic (Mt 4:24). All of them were people of the lower class according to the Law. Hence, the Matthean community cannot be described as an egalitarian structured society in any qualified way (cf Hagner 2003:194). Instead, it was hierarchically structured as a new Christian society under the Law.

It seems clear that Paul and Matthew had a common Israelite background. There is a similarity between the two on fundamental issues. Both of them related their arguments to the Law and in this sense gave a valid expression of God’s will on behalf of the community of Jesus’ followers. However, Matthew and Paul both departed from certain elements of the traditional understanding and practice of the Law. In relation to the Law, it was Matthew’s perspective especially, which highlighted the difference in approach from the traditional perspective of the Law. This was the case with Paul as well. However, there was a definite difference between Matthew, Paul and the Temple authorities in the interpretation of the Law and its customs. Matthew’s community consisted of both Christians (Gentiles) and Israelites who closely observed the Law, while the communities that Paul ministered to, in a Graeco-Roman context, related to the Law only distantly.

It is probable that both of them had a different understanding of the personal perspective of Jesus in relation to the Law. This was reflected in their writing, together with the function the

Law fulfilled in the church life (Kilpatrick 1966:1299). Matthew maintained a more positive view of the function of the Law in the new social identity in Christ, probably because his community predominantly originated from an Israelite background. It is most likely that Matthew's community continued its observance of at least some elements of Jewish ritual law¹⁸ in the new social identity in Christ (Mt 5:19). According to Mohrlang (1984:44-45), Matthew's silence on the question of circumcision enforces this statement. It may be that Matthew's community had granted this ritual law a continued validity. Matthew's community stated that the yoke of Jesus was easy and that his burden was light (Mt 11:28), even though Matthew continually upheld adherence to Christian life while submitting to the demands of the Law. Matthew also emphasized the love commandment as the most important issue regarding the Law within his community. This view tells us that Matthew's community was a Law-observant new Christian identity society. The Law remained authoritative within Matthew's community. This Law-observant community structure did not include everyone; as members were from different social levels, their individual social standing differed. This obviously resulted in a non-egalitarian and hierarchical social structure. To Israelites in the first century, the Law played a leading role in defining their unique identity in relation to the Gentiles (Esler 1998: 178). The Law was the core determinant of the Israelites, resulting in the stratification of their community life in accordance with that of other first century Mediterranean people. The Law indicates that the Law-observing Matthean community was a hierarchical structured society. The following diagram illustrates Lenski's model of an advanced agrarian society.



Model : Lenski's Advanced Agrarian Society

(Nolan and Lenski 1999:190 [see Lenski 1966:284; Duling 2002:520])

This model focuses on social stratification as it relates especially to politics and economics. According to Lenski (1966:78; see Duling 2002:529) people actually ranked each other in “classes”; such as family, gender, occupation, race, ethnicity, and religions. The Matthean community was a hierarchically structured, advanced agrarian society.

In contrast to the Matthean community, the Pauline communities were not constituted and managed by the Law in any way. Paul’s perspective on the Law was not so much focused on the background as on the underlying theological structure (Mohrlang 1984:42). According to Paul, to receive God’s righteousness the fulfillment of the demands of the Law is futile. Paul’s message to his communities was that the Law is not the key to a life of proper moral standards. Paul maintained that the Law aroused and stimulated the very sin it forbade (Mohrlang 1984:43). We can therefore assume that Pauline new Christian social identity communities did not attach paramount importance to living by/under the Law. It no longer controlled their Christian life. The Law was merely considered to be a practical and functional tool within the evangelistic ministry (1 Cor 9:20-21; cf Acts 21:20-26).

According to Matthew’s Christology, Jesus’ ministry focuses on the salvation of the Israelites and Gentiles within Matthew’s community, and was therefore an inclusive community, though it was less “egalitarian” than that of the Pauline Christian communities (cf Morris 1992:6). This was due to their observation of the Law, which was an obstacle to the inclusiveness of people in Matthew’s community. Jesus’ inclusive ministry was continued in the communities of his followers. After the resurrection of Jesus, these communities maintained Jesus’ inclusive mission. Thus, the hypothesis of this study is that the Matthean community was not egalitarian, but rather an inclusive community within a hierarchical social structure.

The preceding discussions highlight three hypotheses of this study, which I shall further explore. Firstly, that the Matthean community was not egalitarian but rather hierarchical. Secondly, it was an inclusive community in conflict with religious leaders. Matthew states that Jesus’ ministry was inclusive of all people, but the religious leaders were exclusive and saw unclean people as social and religious outcasts from the traditional Israelite perspective

(the Law).¹⁹ Thirdly, the Matthean community's hierarchical and inclusive structure can be argued from a narratological and social-scientific perspective.

1.3 Methodology

In the above section, it was proposed that the narrative and social scientific analyses could be considered as two approaches to the study of Matthew's inclusive community. Why are these methodological approaches perceived as necessary for this study? Narrative criticism will be applied to analyse Jesus' journey from Galilee up to Jerusalem from a narrative point of view in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus' inclusive ministry is depicted by Matthew to follow geographical locations, which encompass the events of his inclusive ministry and his conflict with the religious leaders. Social scientific analysis is another way to understand Matthew's inclusive structured community. Social scientific theories argue that matters such as ritual, purity and pollution, healing, honour and shame, and kinship are deeply related to Matthew's description of Jesus' ministry. Because Jesus' ministry was an inclusive one but the religious leaders were excluding outcasts, both narrative and social scientific approaches will be applied to examine Matthew's inclusive community.

Towards the end of the last century, and at the beginning of this century, the integration of narrative criticism and social scientific criticism was a prominent methodological approach to Gospel research (see Merenlahti and Hakola 1999:13-17). Some scholars (Petersen 1980, 1985; Elliott 1987, 1991a)²⁰ attempted to further the integration of narrative criticism and social scientific criticism. Petersen (1985:ix) integrated "contemporary literary and sociological capabilities into the traditional philological base of the historical critical method" in his work of Philemon. He offered different explanations as to the inadequacy of previous literary and sociological integration (see Petersen 1985:ix). According to Petersen (1985:7), the Gospels consist of narrative and contextual worlds. Van Eck (1995:73) puts it as follows: "The relation between these two worlds, the narrative world and the contextual world, is that the narrative world of a text is always a conceptual interpretation of the real historical or contextual world." This means that any narrative world should be seen in the context of

human social actions and relationships. Van Staden (1991:40; cf Petersen 1987:5) argues that “the narrative world ... is a whole, complete world presented to the reader in any way by a narrative, and ... offers the reader the only way to understand the real, historical world of which the narrative world is a reflection.”

Elliott (1981:7) was one of the pioneers who applied a sociological interpretation to the exegesis of the New Testament. A decade later, he highlighted a failure of modern exegesis of the Biblical text, that is, that Biblical scholars could not attend to both the sociological and literary aspects when reading the Biblical text (Elliott 1991a:4). According to Elliott (1991a:11), the correlation between the *strategy* (the ideological perspective as reflecting the interest of the narrator) and the *situation* (the specific social conditions and features of the specific sender[s] and receiver[s]) of a text leads to the integration of a literary and social scientific analysis of the text. Elliott’s view is that a text is primarily a literary work or strategy, and that the situation of a text may be analysed by social-scientific methods, models and theories. Elliott (1991a:xxxix) believes that social-scientific criticism and literary-criticism are interrelated for the purpose of exploring the social situation and strategy of the biblical text. A combined narrative analysis and social scientific approach has already been applied to the Biblical text by Van Eck’s (1995) study on the Gospel of Mark and Vledder’s (1997) study on the Gospel of Matthew.

1.3.1 Narrative criticism

Narrative criticism is one part of literary criticism (Rhoads 1982: 411; Van Eck 2001a:597). The purpose of narrative criticism is to interpret the formal features of narrative texts such as the Gospels. In the past three decades, many scholars have been concerned with the literary question of “what does the text mean?” This is a different question to that of historical criticism (source, form and redaction) which asks “what did the text mean?” The focus of an immanent literary question is a search for internal rather than external meaning. Hence, the text is a form of communication between author and reader, conveyed as a story or account of events and participants who move through time and space, a recital with a beginning, middle

and end (see Marshall 1989:15; Van Aarde 1991a:101-128; Malbon 1992: 24; Merenlahti and Hakola 1999:21; Van Eck 2001a:597). The interrelation of the characters, plot, and setting of a story or text is the narrator's way of communicating some kind of reality to the readers, namely the elements of narrative (Ryken 1987:53).

The characters in the story relate to someone's actions in the narrative world. These actions are intertwined with events in the plot. Two basic types of characters can be identified, namely flat and round. The flat character usually acts according to a constant ideological perspective from the beginning to the end of the narrative. The round character often acts contrary to expectations. One way to analyse characters is to focus on the characters' actions, evaluating the functions of their actions in relation to the plot of the story. In this way, characters are assessed in the same way we evaluate real people (Rhoads 1982:417).

In the case of this study, characters are important for understanding Matthew's intention of his inclusive community through Jesus' inclusive ministry. Jesus is a flat character in the Gospel of Matthew. He is the protagonist of the plot of this Gospel and his ministry is inclusive of all people, including social and religious outcasts. The religious leaders are also flat characters. They are the antagonists who react against Jesus' inclusive ministry to the crowd (referring to both Israelites and Gentiles). Other characters in the Gospel of Matthew include the disciples of Jesus who assist in their Master's inclusive ministry, although they could not understand everything concerning it. The crowd is also an important character in the Gospel of Matthew because they form the audience of Jesus' inclusive ministry.

Stamps (1997:232) notes that "setting refers to the 'where (place)' and 'when (time)' or the spatial, temporal, and social locations of narrative events." It is related to the time at which the characters' actions occur in the story. The place is where the events occur in the story.

The plot of a narrative is made up of the specific causal links between events or episodes of events (Stamps 1997:231). According to Van Aarde (1991a:102), "the beginning of the plot introduces the action and creates expectations; in the middle, the initial action is developed and this presupposes an unravelling of the plot (denouement) which is worked out in the conclusion." Having mentioned the important elements of narrative criticism, we shall now

turn to the notion of a narrative point of view.

1.3.1.1 Narrative point of view analysis

Point of view relates to the point of view of the narrator or of the story. Rhoads (1982:421) put it as follows: “The narrative reveals the point of view of the narrator, and the narrator in turn shows us the points of view of the characters, in the course of telling the story” (cf Kupp 1996:33). Van Aarde (1991a: 102) describes the structure of a narrative discourse as follows: “The narrative discourse is constructed from the relations between the writer and the narrator, between the narrator and the (implied/idealized) reader, between the narrator and the narrated characters, and among the narrated characters themselves in their binary relations” (cf Chatman 1978:116-126; Powell 1990:51-67; see Kingsbury 1997:3; Van Eck 2001a:598). The narrator presents all these relations in the narrative from his or her point of view (manner of presentation). Hence, the significance of analysing the narrative point of view is to abstract the narrator’s ideological point of view from his or her manner of presenting the narrative, which tells us about his situation, the narrative tempo, the narrative space and the narrated characters (Van Aarde 1991a:104). A narrative point of view is taken from various perspectives from within the narrative (Tolmie 1999:29).

In the case of Matthew’s narrative, the narrator designed his inclusively structured community: a mixed community consisting of Israelites and Gentiles. Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus’ inclusive ministry took place in a particular framework of geographical spaces, from Galilee up to Jerusalem. According to Uspensky (1973:8-100; cf Rhoads 1982:421; Van Aarde 1982:58-62; Tolmie 1999:30; see chapter 4), the narrative point of view takes place on four different planes: 1) the ideological plane of the point of view (the general evaluative system of viewing the world conceptually); 2) the phraseological plane of the point of view (the correlation between the speech of the author and the speech of the characters in the text); 3) the spatial (geographical location) and temporal plane of the point of view (the physical place or the point in time from which someone views something)²¹; and 4) the plane of the psychological point of view (state of the characters’ minds, such as thinking,

feeling, or experience).

We will consider only the ideological and spatial points of view in this study. From these perspectives, we will analyse and explain Jesus' inclusive ministry in Matthew's narrative world. Firstly we will look at the point of view on the ideological plane. Marxist tradition links the concept of "ideology" to the social location in which people find themselves with regard to economic productivity. According to Kinloch (1981:5-7), the Marxist tradition of ideology possesses three major dimensions; firstly, Van Eck (1995:95) notes that "in ideologies, certain ideas are limited to particular class interests, which tries to determine social being existentially"; secondly, Kinloch (1981:7; cf Van Eck 1995:96) says that "ideology represents a belief system that intellectually legitimates the political interests of its advocates, constraining the behaviour and ideas of those subject to the dominance of the elite. This 'false consciousness' is rational in that it furthers the interest of its adherents"; Finally, Van Eck put it as follows: "ideologies reduce reality to abstractions and premises that reflect predominant characteristics of the social system." In tracing the provenance of the term "ideology", following are the different ways in which ideology is used literally.

According to Van Aarde (1991a:104), every text can be viewed as an imagined account of reality. Therefore the literary theory framework encompasses the term "ideology" as used in narrative analysis. From a literary perspective, ideology is the network of themes and ideas that occur in a narrative and it represents an imagined version of a specific reality. This may mean that the author has a single dominating point of view, or multiple evaluative views (Kupp 1996:46). Hence, all narratives present the narrator's ideology as a reality by means of language (words and sentences). In other words, Van Aarde (1991a:105; cf Joubert 1990:335-339) notes that "while language (the linguistic dimension) is the communication code, a literary communication *record* (a text) presupposes an ideology (a network of themes and ideas) which is communicated and has meaning only in a certain social context."

We have seen clearly that the author, narrator and character are possible vehicles of the ideological viewpoint (Uspensky 1973:11). Although Biblical texts are theological in nature, they are also documents that can be termed ideological. Elliott (1989:10) puts it as follows:

Biblical texts are ideological in nature. The ideas they communicate are related to and expressions of the specific interests, perspectives, and goals of the groups from which they emerge. The term “ideology” is understood here not in the reductionist sense of “false consciousness” or dominant ideas of only the dominant class as a cognitive feature of all self-conscious groups and classes and their textual productions.

The narrator’s theological point of view “enables one to get at the meaning of both the entire story and each episode within it” (Kingsbury 1997:3). Hence, an ideological reading of Biblical narrative texts also indicates some aspects of theology. Because all texts are in some way or other the products of real authors (writers) and are intended to be read and/or listened to by real readers and/or listeners within their social context (culture), they may reflect directly or indirectly on the texts (Van Aarde 1988:236-237). Thus, the ideology of the text is related to the narrator’s theological point of view (Van Eck 2001a:598). The ideological (theological) perspective of the author (narrator) is reflected in the text (see above; a literary communication record) through language. In a narrative discourse, an author (narrator) communicates an ideology to a reader by means of a narrator in the story. Both the real author (writer) and the real reader are unconcerned with the intra-textual narrative record (text of narrative discourse), but this record should not be divorced from the ideological perspective, which determines the perceptual dimension behind the communication record (Van Aarde 1988:237; cf Petersen 1980: 38; Van Aarde 1989:2-3). The result of the analysis of the narrative point of view on the ideological plane is defined by Van Eck (2001a:598-599) as if it is the narrator’s theological point of view:

Ideology is an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values (in terms of the symbolic universe), a network of themes and ideas (in terms of the text), representing an interpretation of the social reality (the macro-social world of the

text), intended to have meaning within a particular context (the micro-social world of the text). Ideology/ideological perspective thus has a pragmatic intention: its intended effect is either the legitimisation or the radical restructuring of the contextual world of its intended addressees. As such, the narrative text is not only seen as both the product and the vehicle of ongoing social interaction, but it is also studied in terms of its communication, which is its intended social effect.

This shows that the ideological (theological) perspective of the author has intra-textual and extra-textual components; the social context is the extra-textual component of the text. Hence, the narrative construction of the social context of a specific text depends on the text being read as a sociological (phenomenological) account of human experience. For this reason, we need to read the narrative text from a social-scientific approach (this will be considered below).

Narrative criticism as a method has already been applied to Matthean research²². In the case of Matthew's narrative, the ideological perspective of the narrator was shown to be of an inclusive nature. The Matthew's narrative of Jesus' ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem demonstrates the opposing ideological viewpoints of Jesus and his opponents (the religious leaders). The narrator's ideological perspective is that Jesus' ministry was inclusive of all people, but that the religious leaders obstructed his ministry, although, according to the narrator's ideological (theological) point of view, Jesus' inclusive ministry was successfully completed by his death on the cross in Jerusalem. Kupp (1996:47) clearly indicates that the narrator's evaluation of the ideological conformity of the characters fits into three aspects of Matthew's narrative: 1) the acceptance of Jesus' inclusive mission; 2) his proclamatory (ideologically aligned) rejection of Jesus and his inclusive mission (ideologically opposed), 3) the wavering obedience (of the crowd and the Gentiles) to Jesus (in ideological transition). The narrator's dominant viewpoint has direct implications for their social affiliations within the narrative world and with the narrator's assessment of all the characters in his narrative. The narrator's point of view regarding the characters, is that Jesus is the inclusive minister as

the authoritative and reliable representative of God's presence and salvation (Kupp 1996:47; cf Anderson 1994:57-68; Howell 1990:190-202); they interact with, and respond to Jesus' inclusive ministry. These characters included Jewish leaders, disciples, crowds and Gentiles in Matthew's narrative. The Israelite leaders are the antagonists against Jesus' inclusive ministry, while the disciples function as adherents to their master's inclusive mission. Hence, the narrator's ideological point of view is that Jesus' inclusive ministry, with his authority from God, is reflected by the perspective of the other characters in Matthew's narrative.

The narrator sets his ideological viewpoint against a spatial background (see more general information on the spatial form in Matthew's narrative in Smitten and Daghistany (1981)). The point of view regarding the spatial plane is, for instance, that "the narrator's position in a literary work may concur with the position of a character, as though he was carrying out the narration from the point of where the character is standing" (Uspensky 1973:57). Howell (1990:170) points out that the primary function of the spatial point of view is a means of structuring and communicating the psychological and ideological dimensions of a narrative viewpoint. The narrator's spatial position is in relation to the narrative of characters and events (Kupp 1996:39). This means that the narrator describes Jesus' inclusive mission spatially, following his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4). The spatial alignment with Jesus was broken at numerous points in the narrative (see chapter 4) and on four significant occasions: during his preparation for his inclusive mission (Mt 2:23-4:11), his ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:12-18:25), on the way to Jerusalem (Mt 19:1-20:34) and in and near Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-27:66) (see Combrink 1983:62 and chapter 4). The narrator's particular use of spatial focus is expressed using the Greek words *προσελθοῦσαι*, *προσελυνεω*, *προσφέρω*, and *ἀκολουθεω* (see Kupp 1996: 40 n 43-46). The central character was Jesus (Bauer 1997:27). The inclusive mission of Jesus was defined spatially by the places of his journey. Jesus proclaimed to his disciples that the Kingdom of God would be coming soon. The disciples were described as "helpers" of Jesus' inclusive ministry and the audience of Jesus' inclusive proclamation was the crowd (including social and religious outcasts). While Jesus moves from place to place in Matthew's narrative, the crowd approaches him and

Jesus heals and forgives their sins, as inclusive signs of the kingdom of God, but the religious leaders obstruct his ministry. These characters' relationships are reflected in the temporal and spatial points of view of Matthew's narrative (Van Aarde 1994:36-37; see chapter 2; cf. Kupp 1996:36). The narrative approach on the spatial plane tells us about Jesus' inclusive ministry according to the spatial/geographical movement in Matthew's narrative. From the spatial point of view, Jesus remains the focus in narrative accounts as the narrator's spotlight follows him across the stage of his inclusive ministry. This clearly confirms that an analysis from a narrative perspective is useful in order to understand the inclusive ministry of Jesus in Matthew's narrative. This is Matthew's intention of his inclusive community through Jesus' spatial ministry.

1.3.2 Social scientific criticism

As we read the New Testament, it is easy to discover some of the social facts (circumstances) of the first century. For instance, an author's particular culture and history was deeply embedded in the Biblical text. The writer was connected to social actions within a common social system and to the reader's situation as well. Therefore, the New Testament addresses specific people with a unique message for a given time, place, and circumstance. For this reason, the modern reader requires cross-cultural knowledge to fully understand the New Testament since the New Testament was written in the social context of the first century. Differences clearly exist between modern and first century societies. These differences pertain to language, customs, economy, political order, social structure, and values. Our notions of modern culture are far removed from those of the first century and constitute a large gap in our understanding of this time.

In recent years, some social studies have been carried out with regard to the New Testament. Important social scientific categories in studying Biblical texts include: social description, social history, sociology of knowledge, and the use of social science theory (models from cultural anthropology) (Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991b:58; Rhoads 1992:136; see Gager 1982:258; Richter 1995:268).

Social description draws upon all the sources of information about the ancient world such as literature, archaeology, inscriptions, art and coins. This information was gathered, analysed, and organised from the description of every aspect of the social environment of the New Testament in its original setting (cf Jeremias 1969). A reflection on the social environment of ancient Palestine can be found in the New Testament: jobs, houses, roads, economics, the political situation, kinship, clothes, food, cities, towns, the social system. These social descriptions inform us about the everyday life (culture) and customs at the time of Jesus' inclusive ministry; and about the lives of early Christians in Palestine and the Roman Empire. Matthew's narrative is one among many other documents, that portray a subjective social description of this social world (see Rhoads 1992:136-137; Domeris 1991:217; see chapter 4); it is therefore, the narrator's description of the social setting of the time (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991b:56).

Social history aims to understand the broad depth of historical change. This approach applies a comprehensive knowledge of social descriptions throughout that time to produce a social history of the period (cf Malherbe 1977). For instance, how did Christianity develop in Palestine within the social and political context at the time of Jesus and the early stages of the Christian communities? A social-historical approach aims to reconstruct this past.

Sociology of knowledge examines "what people in a particular culture take for granted in their understanding of the world and their social construction of reality" (Rhoads 1992:139; see Berger & Luckman 1963; Van Staden 1988:337-353; Kearney 1984; Du Rand 1992:38; Esler 1994:4-5). Finally, as a result of cross-cultural studies, anthropologists formulated models to map the dynamics of a culture and to describe certain generic phenomena that occur in more than one culture. Hence, models analyse matters such as purity and pollution, healing, honour, shame, rituals and power relations. According to Elliott (1986:5; see 1991a:8), models are thus conceptual vehicles for articulating, applying, testing, and possibly reconstructing theories used in the analysis and interpretation of data such as social behaviour, structures and the process.

1.3.2.1 Social scientific models

Before we discuss social scientific theory, we will first consider the definition of terms such as model, theory and perspective. According to Gilbert (1981:3), “a model is a theory or set of hypotheses which attempts to explain the connections and inter-relationships between social phenomena. Models²³ are made up of concepts and relationships between concepts.” Malina (1993:19) puts it as follows: “Models are abstract, simplified representations of more complex real world objects and interactions. Like abstract thought, the purposes of models are to enable and facilitate understanding.” In addition, Elliott (1986:7) notes that “models are tools for transforming theories into research operations.” All the above scholars view a model as a tool or a speculative instrument. Hence, we can assume that a model is a selective representation, which focuses attention on major and selected components of interest and their order of importance (see Van Eck 1995:159; see Carney 1975:8-9; cf Van Staden 1991a:156). This means that a model is perceived through the lenses of especially interesting social phenomena. Another aspect of such a model is that other models have been employed to analyse and interpret specific social data (see Reinstorf 2002:9; cf Malina 1993:231). This implies that such models analyse the complex system of social behaviour in terms of some real-world objects, events or social acts (Barbour 1974:6; see Malina 1983:14; Scroggs 1986:142). Carney (1975:8) defines the term “theory” as follows:

A theory is a basic proposition through which a variety of observations or alternatively statements become explicable. A model, by way of contrast, acts as a link between theories and observations. A model will employ one or more theories to provide a simplified (or an experimental or a generalized or an explanatory) framework which can be brought to bear on some pertinent data.

Theories are thus the stepping-stones upon which models are built.

In other words, model and theory are not the same. In sociological research, the conceptual model is used to select and apply certain theories for the investigation and interpretation of

certain data as specific social phenomena (Elliott 1986:6). A model should consist of clearly formulated ideas or theories about the social phenomena in the real world, which, as in communities, of human beings are aspects or properties of social behaviour. A model also describes the ways these aspects fit together and affect each other (Elliott 1986:6). Hence, theories, in a sense, will always determine the model used, because the preference for certain theories will determine the kind of model that will be employed (Van Eck 1995:161). Here, it is confirmed that any model is a tool for transforming theory into research operations.

It is not the same between models and perspectives. According to Van Eck (1995:161; Elliott 1986:7), ‘perspectives’ are more encompassing ways or ‘styles’ of theorizing. These perspectives are not models, but determine the models used, by the user’s preference or belief in certain theories and research objects.

The problem of the social scientific modeling approach is that it has some difficulty with the cultural distance between modern readers and the first century Biblical writers (see above). This means that the social scientific approach to the anthropology of the ancient Mediterranean world has to deal with the social distance between the New Testament world and the modern world (Rohrbaugh 1996:2; see Shin 1998:1-15). However, the world of the New Testament and the modern world share a common set of cultural institutions that have persisted over a long period. This means that while the first-century Mediterranean cultural world and the modern world do not share the same culture, they share many common elements. This is why we can apply the cross-cultural model to aid understanding of the New Testament world. According to Rohrbaugh (1996:8), “Cross-cultural models of various aspects of human society are the best tools we have to select, organise, and interpret our data in a culturally sensitive way.”

We now turn to examine the use of models from the cultural anthropological study of the New Testament. Models deal with core values such as honour and shame, personality, purity and pollution, ritual, patronage and clientism, sickness and healing, labelling and deviance, and kinship. In this study, these different kinds of cross-cultural theories will be used to construct a model to help understand Jesus’ inclusive ministry in Matthew’s narrative world.

The model will be socially and culturally determined and encoded in the texts within the social and cultural context of Jesus' inclusive ministry (see Craffert 2001:22-25; cf 1992:225).

1.3.3 A combination of narrative criticism and the social scientific criticism

This combination helps to understand the Bible, taking the social structures and arrangements as depicted in a narrative world into consideration (cf Hays 1987:173). Elliott (1993:7) provides a detailed description of the social scientific paradigm. He refers to the employment of the perspectives, presuppositions, and modes of analysis, comparative models, theories and research of the discipline of sociology (Elliott 1993:7-8).

The combination of narrative (text) and social scientific (context) analysis raises the question as to the primary analysis. Would it be the narrative point of view or the social-scientific analysis within a combinational framework? According to Petersen (1978:20, 38-40), the text itself must be analysed in its own terms before we can discuss the background of the text, whether in relation to the time of writing or in relation to the events referred to. This point of view is supported by scholars such as Elliott (1991a:xxii), who believes that a literary analysis of text should begin with an initial close reading. According to Wire (1984:209), the text itself will tell us about its specific situation. Therefore, literary analysis considers the strategy of the writer by discovering the social situation.

Van Aarde (1991a:105) also believes that the language of the text constitutes the communication code, as the text is a literary communication record witnessing to a specific social context. Consequently, the communication process consists of both intra-textual and extra-textual components. Extra-textual factors can be understood only within a specific text. This means that the construction of the social context can only be achieved through reading of the text. However, "the construction of the social context is only possible after analysis of the specific text" (Van Aarde 1991:105; cf Routh & Wolff 1977:18; De Villiers 1982:29-30; Malina 1983:120; Van Staden 1991:33)

The methodological point of departure of this study involves a reading of the text from an analytical narrative point of view and then an application of social scientific models and

theories. The intention of this study is to show that the Matthean Jesus' ministry was directed at all people (at different levels). An application of a social scientific model helps us to understand this inclusive ministry. Social scientific categories such as cleanness/uncleanness, ritual, healing, honour and shame, patronage and clientism, and labelling are taken into consideration.

1.4 Outline of research

This study comprises of six chapters. The purpose of Chapter 1 is to discuss the introductory matters of this study, including a reflection on the problem statement, research gaps, and methodological issues. As previously noted, this study employs a combined approach of both narrative and social scientific analyses. A literary (narrative point of view) analysis examines Matthew's intention for his inclusive community's depiction through Jesus' ministry as it unfolds during his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. A social-scientific analysis considers also Matthew's intention for his inclusive community through Jesus' ministry, by using social models.

Chapter 2 is a brief survey of current scholarship with regard to the characteristics of the Matthean community. Scholarship is assessed in terms of three categories, namely, salvation history, a theory of transparency, and a structuralist (in the light of Greimas' theory) approach. The salvation historical approach considers the Gospel of Matthew in terms of the design of God's will for the salvation of God's people. The transparency approach will consider Jesus' inclusive ministry to be continued by his disciples' community after his resurrection. The structuralist analysis will show that the narrator's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry is in conflict with the religious leaders of his time. Jesus' ministry included all kinds of people in Matthew's narrative. Yet the religious leaders were exclusive by rejecting social and religious outcasts. This analysis will conclusively demonstrate that Matthew's community did not represent an egalitarian structure, but was in fact an inclusive community within a hierarchically structured system.

Chapter 3 covers the social location of Matthew's community. A brief survey of the debate

regarding the historical date of the community is followed by a discussion of the earlier history and the subsequent periods after 70 CE. Secondly, we will examine the location of Matthew's community, which could fit such an inclusive structured community. Thirdly, the members of Matthew's community will be considered in terms of their various levels within a stratified structure. Finally, we will analyse the social structure of Matthew's community at Antioch.

Keeping in mind the conclusions of Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will look at Matthew's intention for an inclusive community depicted through Jesus' ministry from an analytical narrative point of view. This ministry will be discussed by means of an analysis of the narrator's ideological and spatial viewpoint. Matthew's description of Jesus' inclusive ministry was aimed at social and religious outcasts, whereas in contrast, the mission of the religious leaders was exclusively directed to insiders. However, this chapter is not an exegetical piece, it is the narrative structure of Jesus' inclusive ministry for the first evangelist's intention of his inclusive community. The conclusions in Chapter 4 form the basis of the discussion in Chapter 5, which investigates Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry by means of the application of social-scientific theories with regard to concepts such as purity and pollution, healing, honour and shame, and finally, kinship. Hence, Jesus' inclusive ministry was to be continued by his followers in their communities (as Matthew) after his resurrection (see Van Aarde 1994:31; 1997:126-131). Exegetical work will also not be considered in this chapter, it is focused on Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry through social scientific models. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the conclusions derived from the discussion of Matthew's inclusive community.

¹ The meaning of "salvation history" concerns Matthew's conception of God's plan of salvation for his people (Meier 1975:203).

² Recently published books on Matthew's community are those of Thompson (1970), Brook (1987), Overman (1990), Balch (1991), Stanton (1992), Saldarini (1994) and Sim (1998).

³ According to Saldarini (1994:78-81), the meaning of "Jewish-Christian" is that the Matthean group is a minority still thinking of themselves as Jews and still identified with the Jewish community by other groups. This view shows that the Matthean community did not consist of Gentile members.

⁴ The term "sect" connotes that "a sect is not only a minority, and not only characterized by opposition to norms accepted by the parent-body, but also claims in a more or less exclusive way to be what the parent-body claims to be. Whether such a group formally

severe itself, or is excommunicated, will depend largely on the degree of self-definition attained by the parent-body and the level of tolerance obtaining within it” (Stanton 1992:90). Stanton (1992:94) believes that Matthew’s group is a sectarian community. The first evangelist and his community parted company with Judaism in the first century and they were persecuted by their parent body (Mt 5:10-12; 21:41-45; 23:31-35). Moreover, the first evangelist emphasises the very strict moral requirements (Mt 5:20, 48; 18:8-9, 19:11-12). For more information see Marcus (1980:1-15).

⁵ The membership of Matthew’s community is mixed as the Israelite crowd included many Gentiles who were later to become disciples (Mt 4:25-5:1; 7:28-8:1; 21:8-9, 11). Especially, the result of the command to make disciples of all nations indicates that the community become large and mixed (Mt 28:18-20).

⁶ For egalitarianism in the history of biblical scholarship, see Kloppenborg (1996:248-252) and Atkins (1991).

⁷ Crossan mentioned “egalitarianism” in historical Jesus research. Hence, his view of egalitarianism is not applied to the Gospel of Matthew only, but to the other Synoptic Gospels as well.

⁸ Funk and the Jesus seminar (1998:1-40, 163-266; 1993: 1-38, 129-270; Meier 1991-2001) colour code Jesus’ sayings and interpretation thereof in the narrative of the four Gospels. The words coloured in red are most probably spoken by Jesus. The pink words are less certain, because they could not be accurately traced back to Jesus. Has it suffered modification in transmission? These grey coloured words are not said by Jesus, but the ideas contained in them are close to his own. The black coloured words are also not sayings of Jesus, but represents the perspective of evangelists and the content of the community situation at a later stage. In the case of this study, the Matthean text considers Jesus’ inclusive ministry, Matthew’s inclusive community and Matthew’s understanding of Jesus’ inclusive ministry. Chapter 4 and 5 focuses on Matthew’s (the narrator) inclusive community within the historical interpretation of Jesus and his interpretation of Jesus’ inclusive ministry.

⁹ The definition of social and religious outcasts is that the levels of people were different in Israelite society. Unclean and sick people belonged to the groups of outcasts. The Gentiles also belonged to this class. They were not allowed to enter public worship in the temple or public places.

¹⁰ Lenski, Lenski and Nolan (1991:158) notes that the first-century Mediterranean world comprised agrarian societies with “new cultural resources, societies which expanded their populations, increased their material wealth, and developed social organizations.” There were also a gap between those who had ruling authority and those who did not. An advanced agrarian society was not very different to a simple agrarian society, it was only advanced in technology and production in the field of agriculture (see Lenski, Lenski and Nolan 1991:169-196). It was also a highly stratified society divided into governing, retainer, and lower classes. These classes will be described in Chapter 3.

¹¹ The terms “egalitarian”, “equal”, “equality” have been identified as the same definitions basic to any egalitarian argument.

¹² The term social stratification refers to people who obtain, and those who do not obtain, limited goods such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, honour, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety (Vledder 1997:119). In other words, social stratification is a general rule. Bryant (1983:366) notes that “the division of a society into a number of strata, hierarchically arranged groupings.”

¹³ The term “Jew” is important to this study, and it is necessary to interpret this concept. According to Pilch (1997:119-121), the modern word “Jew” comes from Middle English (1200 CE). This English word is derived from the French *Jiu/Juiu*. It also goes back to the Hebrew word יְהוּדִים and the Greek word Ἰουδαῖος. However, a verbal translation is not an appropriate one according to modern semantics, because the verbal meaning does not come from dictionaries and etymologies but derives from the social system. We shall briefly refer to terminology in a three-fold division of “Jewish” history (Plich 1997:122) as follows:

* The period of the First Temple (950 BCE – 586 CE). The Temple was built by King Solomon and was destroyed by the Babylonian armies. During this period, the name of the country was *Israel* and the people are therefore described as “*People of Israel*”. Their religion is called *Israelite* religion.

* The period of the Second Temple (520 BCE – 70 CE). In this period, the country is called *Judea* and the people are called *Judeans*. The religion is called *Judean* or *Judaic*.

* The period of Rabbinic Judaism (beginning perhaps as early as 90 CE and continuing to the present day). The term “normative Judaism” was derived from Pharisaic scribalism. It has become the foundation of contemporary Jewish belief and practice. The people

are called *Jews* and the religion is called *Judaism* or *Jewish* religion.

Against this background, the term Ἰουδαῖοι is best translated as referring to the inhabitants of Judea (region), even though, according to Reinstorf (2002: 93), Judea is not confined to the geographical people (adhering to the Israelite religion). Plich (1997:122-123) has pointed out in-groups and out-groups who supported the people (the period of the second Temple) themselves as the “people of God” and “house of Israel”. Hence Israel was an in-group name. It seems like a family organization of Israelite people. Blood is very important in oriental families, and people do not allow their children to intermarry with other nations. The idea was the continuation of the “holy seed”, that is of the physical “children of Abraham” (Mt 3:9) (see Malina 1993: 137-138). The in-group conserved Israel’s traditions such as the practice of circumcision and purity laws. Such behaviour is rarely extended to outsiders. The first century geographical “house of Israel” refers to those who lived in Judea, Perea, and Galilee, the people of these regions being referred to as Judeans, Pereans and Galileans respectively (Malina & Ronbaugh 1992:88). The inhabitants of Judea, Perea and Galilee had a lesser claim to purity (Reinstorf 2002:93, cf Malina 1993:149-162). Even though it is important to note that the Samaritans were antagonistic towards the Judeans. The Samaritans were historically an in-group within the “house of Israel” (Reinstorf 2002:94), such as those who lived in various colonies outside the country as well as members of the “house of Israel” born outside of Judea (Plich 1997:123). For instance, outsiders like the Romans called the entire land Judea and its inhabitants “Judeans”. Paul reveals the usage outside of the Jewish (Acts 22:3) context, when he identifies himself. Thus, members of the in-group were part of at known as the “house of Israel”. Similarly, all outsiders were lumped into a large group called non-Israel or “the nations” - the term Hebrew *goyim* (גוים) or the term Greek *ethnoi* (ἔθνοι), in English “Gentiles” (Plich 1997:123).

The in-groups of the people of Israel show ideological differences, depending on the way they worshipped the God of Israel: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Samaritans, and the followers of Jesus. They are all part of one large in-group called Ἰουδαῖοι, who all practised what traditionally has been called “Judaism”. The history of the antagonism between Judea and Samaria goes back to the faith of the ideal of a united Davidic dynasty. This antagonism still exists today because each group (the Galileans, Idumeans, Judeans and Samaritans) had their own in-group dynamics. That is the reason the Judeans questioned whether anything good could come from Galilee (Jn 1:46). Luke 2:1-7 implies an insider – outsider contrast between the εὐαγγέλιον of the birth of Caesar Augustus in Rome and the birth of Jesus, whose parents came from Nazareth (Galilee) to Bethlehem (Judea) (Dreyer 2000:79). For outsiders, such distinctions did not exist.

Therefore, “Judaism” is not the right word as a designation for the religious practices during the Second Temple period. Ideological Judaism is not a singular concept, because each group has ideological differences. For that reason, modern Jewish scholars choose to use the word Judaism to mean the plural Judaisms in the Second Temple period only. The discussion above tells us that the Judean religion was not only from a contemporary “normative Judaism”, it was also from the First Temple period.

Here, we will consider the issue in the light of the social dynamics of the usage of Ἰουδαῖος in the first century. The terms Jew, Jewish and Judaism are not the correct usage for those living in the first century in Palestine (Plich 1997:122). In this study, therefore, the usage of the term Jew (Jewish, Judaism) refers both to the people and their religion, as the above discussion suggests.

¹⁴ The handing over of people who were to be killed indicates that persecution, hostility and evil reigned prior to the end of the first century (Hagner 1995:278).

¹⁵ This pericope is formulated with a view of the post-Easter community, but it is also considered in relation to Jesus’ concept of the family of God (Theissen and Merz 1998:219; cf Schnackenburg 2002:229).

¹⁶ However, avoid comparing modern western culture to the ancient culture of the Bible in this interpretation.

¹⁷ According to Hong (1993:122), ὁ νόμοις and νόμοις are interchangeably used without any distinction in meaning (Gal 3:11-12, 23-24).

¹⁸ Matthew’s understanding of the Law is closer to that of his antagonists. Of course, his community was in conflict with the religious leaders about the interpretation of the Law. Matthew believed that his community was fulfillers of the Law and that Jesus’ teaching also fulfilled a new Law (Overman 1990:86). Matthew believed that Jesus had affirmed and validated all aspects of the Torah but Paul believed that the coming of the Christ led to the abandonment of the ritual law.

¹⁹ Van Aarde (2003:14-15) argues that the opposition is between Jesus and the religious leaders of the temple cult. Jesus is inclusive, but they are exclusive. Jesus’ inclusive ministry is aimed directly at the lost sheep of Israel. The religious leaders were blind leaders and they led the sheep astray. Jesus ministry was inclusive while that of the religious leaders was an exclusive one.

²⁰ The methodological perspective of the combination of a literary and social scientific approach is accepted by scholars such as Petersen (1980, 1985) and Elliott (1987, 1991). However, there are different reasons for both scholars to combine these two exegetical approaches. Petersen (1985:ix) calls his method “literary sociological”. Its purpose is literary and historical. Hence, Petersen (1985:6-10) made a distinction between texts and contexts and history and story. On the contrary, Elliott’s (1991a: xix-xxii) methodological point of departure is that the biblical text needed to be understood through a social scientific model.

²¹ Anderson (1994:55) distinguishes Uspensky's point of view on five planes. Uspensky (1973:1-100) spells out his point of view on four planes. The spatial and temporal planes are one plane but Anderson divided this into two.

²² Narrative studies on *Matthew* discusses various aspects: point of view by Anderson (1994; Kingsbury 1988, 1992; Howell 1990:93-160; Edwards 1990; Powell 1990,1992; Van Aarde 1994); plot discussed by Van Aarde (1986); Matera (1987); Kingsbury (1988, 1992); Howell (1990:93-160); Powell (1992); Carter (1992); Verseput (1992); Humphries-Brooks (1993); Reeves (1993); characterization by Edwards (1985, 1992); Burnett (1987, 1989); Black (1989); Donaldson (1991); Wainright (1991:59-153); Wilkins (1991); Bauer (1992); Weaver (1992); Carter (1993); Anderson (1994); Van Aarde (1994); Syreeni (1999:106-152); Mattila (1999:153-179).

²³ According to Ricoeur (1975:85; 1981:240-241), three kinds of models are generally distinguished: scale models, analogue models, and theoretical models. Scale models consider replicas of the original. Analogue models are similar, showing analogy, for instance, the use of electrical circuits in computers. Theoretical models are used within social sciences as conceptual models.