

**MATTHEW'S INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY:**

**A NARRATOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC READING**

By

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*It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire of effort, but on God's mercy (Rom 9:16)*

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**Summary**

**MATTHEW’S INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY:  
A NARRATOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC READING**

by  
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The nature of Matthew’s community has been investigated by a number of scholars in the past and present. Currently, the debate centers on whether the Matthean community was a society with egalitarian structure consisting of equals. This study has also focused on the social structure of the Matthean community. The basic question is whether (or not) the Matthean community was an egalitarian group in an ancient advanced agrarian society in the first century Mediterranean world. If so (or if not so) does the Matthean community lack a hierarchical structure?

This study suggests that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society. The term “egalitarian” would not be applicable to the Matthean community, because the term “egalitarian” is a modern Western political and philosophical concept, which has its origin in the French revolutionary movement. The Matthean community was rather a socially stratified group in an ancient advanced agrarian society in the first century in the Mediterranean world. Consequently, the Matthean community was not a society with an egalitarian structure; rather, it was an inclusively structured society.

This study has utilized two methodologies. Firstly, the investigation uses narrative criticism to analyse Matthew’s intention of his inclusive structured community depicted through Jesus’ inclusive ministry. This methodology considers the narrator’s point of view concerning Jesus’ ministry as he journeyed from Galilee to Jerusalem. Secondly, this research uses social scientific criticism to explore the Matthean text in order to consider Jesus’ ministry. This approach on Jesus ministry was reflected in the context of Matthew’s inclusive structure community.



The Matthean community was socially mixed, consisting of Israelites and Gentiles. It was written in the years between 80 to 90 CE. The city of Antioch was the most likely setting for Matthew's inclusive community, however hierarchically structured.

A narrative point of view reading of Matthew's story shows that Jesus was the protagonist involved in an inclusive ministry in accordance to God's plan for the salvation of all people. The Israelite leaders are antagonistic to Jesus' ministry, and they exclude social and religious outcasts. The disciples of Jesus help Jesus with his inclusive ministry, while the crowds help the Israelite leaders. However, there are times when the disciples do not understand Jesus' inclusive ministry. The audience of Jesus' inclusive ministry was the crowd. This inclusive ministry shifts from Galilee to Jerusalem and his ministry comes into conflict with the ideology of the Israelite leaders. Jesus' focus was inclusive but the Israelite leaders were exclusive. Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive mission completed with his death on the cross.

A social scientific approach reveals that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry is directed to social and religious outcasts. His ministry includes sick people, sinners and tax collectors who are from the lower classes within a hierarchically structured society. Jesus' ministry was reflected in the context of Matthew's inclusive community.

This study shows that the Matthean community was not a society with an egalitarian structure; rather, it was an inclusively structured society within a hierarchical context.

### **Keywords**

- Matthean community
- Inclusivity
- Exclusivity
- Conflict
- Narrative point of view
- Social scientific criticism
- Egalitarian

- Hierarchical
- Stratification
- Mixed status

**Opsomming**

**MATTEUS SE INKLUSIEWE GEMEENSKAP:**

**‘N NARRATOLOGIESE EN SOSIAAL-WETENSKAPLIKE LESING**

deur

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Die aard en samestelling van Matteus se gemeenskap is in die verlede en word steeds in die hede deur ‘n aantal navorsers ondersoek. Tans wentel die debat rondom die vraag of Matteus se gemeenskap ‘n gemeenskap van gelykes was. Hierdie studie fokus ook op die sosiale struktuur van Matteus se gemeenskap. Die basiese vraag is of dit moontlik is om Matteus se gemeenskap voor te stel as ‘n groep van gelykes terwyl dit deel gevorm het van die gevorderde agrariese samelewing in die eerste-eeuse Mediterreense wêreld. Het Matteus se gemeenskap dan geen hiërargiese struktuur gehad nie?

Navorsing dui sterk daarop dat Matteus se gemeenskap nie ‘n samelewing met ‘n gelyke struktuur was nie. Die begrip “gelykheid” sou nie op Matteus se gemeenskap van toepassing kon wees nie, omdat die begrip “gelykheid” ‘n moderne Westerse politieke en filosofiese begrip is wat teruggevoer kan word na die Franse Revolusie. Dit blyk dat Matteus se gemeenskap ‘n sosiaal gestratifiseerde groep in ‘n gevorderde agrariese samelewing in die eerste eeuse Mediterreense wêreld was. Hoewel ‘n mens nie kan sê dat Matteus se gemeenskap ‘n gemeenskap met ‘n gelyke struktuur was nie, was dit wel ‘n gemeenskap met ‘n inklusiewe struktuur.

Die studie het gebruik gemaak van twee metodologieë. Eerstens is die narratiewe kritiek gebruik om Jesus se inklusiewe gemeenskap te bestudeer. Met behulp van hierdie

metodologie word daar na die verteller se perspektief aangaande Jesus se inklusiewe bediening tydens sy reis van Galilea na Jerusalem gekyk. Tweedens is daar in hierdie navorsing gebruik gemaak van die sosiaal-wetenskaplike kritiek om Jesus se inklusiewe bediening in Matteus beter te begryp.

Matteus se gemeenskap was sosiaal gemeng en het uit Israeliete en heidene bestaan. Die gemeenskap het 'n hiërargies-gestruktureerde samelewing gevorm. Dit blyk dat die stad Antiochië in die jare 80 en 90 na Christus die mees waarskynlike milieu vir Matteus se inklusief gestruktureerde gemeenskap was.

Volgens die narratiewe perspektief op Matteus se vertelling is Jesus die protagonis wat sy inklusiewe bediening uitvoer in lyn met God se plan vir die redding van alle mense. Die Israelitiese leiers is antagonisties ingestel teenoor Jesus se bediening en hulle sluit sosiale en religieuse uitgeworpenes uit. Jesus se dissipels staan hom in sy inklusiewe bediening by, maar die skare help die Israelitiese leiers. Soms kan die dissipels egter nie Jesus se inklusiewe bediening verstaan nie. Die teken van Jesus se inklusiewe bediening is die skare. Jesus se inklusiewe bediening verskuif van Galilea na Jeruslam en sy diens lok weerstand by die Israelitiese leiers uit. Jesus se fokus is inklusief, maar hulle s'n is eksklusief. Jesus se inklusiewe missie word voltooi deur sy dood aan die kruis.

Die sosiaal-wetenskaplike benadering toon dat Jesus se inklusiewe bediening bedoel is om sosiale en religieuse uitgeworpenes in te sluit. Sy bediening sluit die siekes, die sondaars en die belastinggaarders uit die laer klasse binne 'n hiërargies-gestruktureerde samelewing in.

Hierdie studie toon dat Matteus se gemeenskap nie 'n samelewing met 'n gelyke struktuur was nie, maar 'n inklusief-gestruktureerde gemeenskap binne 'n hiërargiese konteks.

### **Sleutelwoorde**

- Matteus se gemeenskap
- Inklusiwiteit

- Eksklusiwisme
- Konflik
- Narratiewe kritiek
- Sosiaal-wetenskaplike kritiek
- Gelykheid
- Hiërargies
- Stratifikasie
- Gemengde status

## 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"<sup>1</sup> 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 scholars<sup>2</sup>. Some scholars’ understandings of the nature of Matthew’s community are that it could have been, for instance, “Jewish-Christian”<sup>3</sup> (Saldarini 1994:1), “sectarian”<sup>4</sup> (Stanton 1992:93-98; see Luomanen 2002:107-130), of a “mixed state”<sup>5</sup> (Gundry 1994:5-10; see Loumanen 1988:469-480; Smith 1963:149-168), or “egalitarian”<sup>6</sup> (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 Crossan<sup>7</sup> 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 Jesus<sup>8</sup> 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 outcasts<sup>9</sup> (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 society<sup>10</sup>



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”<sup>11</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 stratified<sup>12</sup> structured group alongside the cultural patterns of the first century. It consisted of a mixed state with both “Israelites”<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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 23:8-11<sup>15</sup> (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 tendencies<sup>16</sup>. 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 law<sup>17</sup>. 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

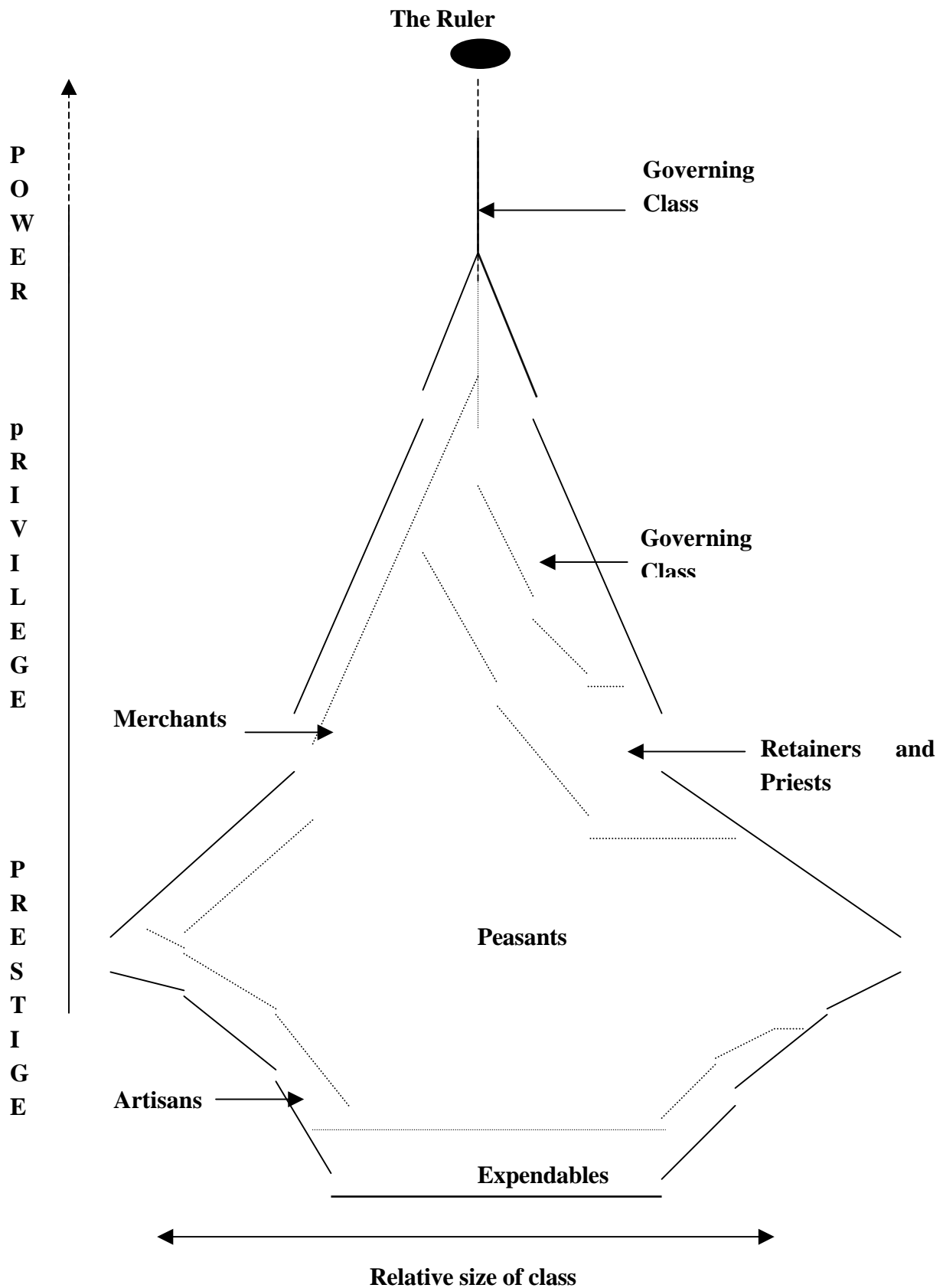
leads to life is hard and those who find it are few” (Mt 7:14). Yet, Matthew states that the yoke of Jesus was easy, his burden light, and proper rest was promised (Mt 11:28-30). These pictures indicate that the life of Matthew’s community, to a certain extent, validated the Law in an amended way.

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 law<sup>18</sup> 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).<sup>19</sup> 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)<sup>20</sup> 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)<sup>21</sup>; 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 research<sup>22</sup>. 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 προσελθῶσαι, προσελυιῶ, προσφέρω, and ἀκολουθεῶ (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. Models<sup>23</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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

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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).

<sup>5</sup> 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).

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

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

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

<sup>12</sup> 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.”

<sup>13</sup> 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 (Pilch 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 εὐαγγελιον 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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).

<sup>15</sup> 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).

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

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

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> 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).

<sup>23</sup> 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.



## Chapter 2

### PRESENT SCHOLARSHIP WITH REGARD TO MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY

#### 2.1 Introduction

The Matthean community has been investigated in the past by means of a number of different approaches. It has been approached from the historical, literary and social-scientific perspectives, which have attempted to address the question of the characteristics of the structure in Matthew's community. According to Stanton (1985:1889-1951), a review of the Matthean scholarship from 1945 to 1980, shows that Matthew's community was both isolated from and embedded in a deep, entwined relationship with Judaism. As a consequence, a large number of Gentiles may have been accepted into the First Evangelist's community (Stanton 1985:1915). Research on the characteristics of Matthew's community continues to this day. The social-scientific approach provides us with some insight into the social structure of Matthew's community. Nevertheless, this approach in itself is insufficient in attempting to understand and analyse the life of the community. For these reasons, we require another perspective to enable a fruitful investigation of this community and to critique the viewpoints of the Matthean scholars.

This chapter will briefly survey recent studies of the community from the perspective of an egalitarian theory. Chapter 23 of the Gospel has often been mentioned by scholars in relation to the egalitarian theory embodied in this Gospel (see Sim 1998:139-140). Moreover, chapter 18 indicates that equality was indeed an issue deeply linked with the social life of the Matthean community. Therefore many scholars have also analysed Chapter 18 within the framework of this community, and have provided an abundance of theories regarding its character, as noted in the previous chapter, where the egalitarian character of the Matthean community was discussed. However, as previously noted, the egalitarian theory does not provide an adequate and comprehensive view of community life. Egalitarianism is a modern sociological term, which has been introduced since the French Revolution (Doyle 1989:420-421; see chapter 1). It is therefore an anachronism to approach the ancient society of the First

Century from the perspective of a modern egalitarian theory. In fact, scholars (cf Lenski 1996:190-193; Duling 1992:100; 2002:526-532; Vledder and Van Aarde 1994:511; Van Eck 1995:211-214) agree that ancient Middle Eastern society was hierarchical.

To a great extent, I have been guided by books and articles on Matthew's Gospel in selecting Matthean scholars' perspectives in this field. It is therefore very important to critically assess current works by scholars in the field as a starting point for this study. We will investigate scholarly criteria and their divisions of the Gospel in order to understand their viewpoint concerning the Matthean community, its members, structure, and relationship with the outside community, with particular reference to the inherent egalitarian structures. It will be necessary to use some categories to clearly understand recent scholars' perspectives on this community. This discussion will therefore be divided into three categories: (1) The salvation-historical category as reflected in Matthew's discourse concerning the salvation of Israelite and Gentiles. (2) According to the transparency category, the Gospel of Matthew overlapped between Jesus' world (the pre-paschal commission of Jesus) and the Matthean community (the post-paschal commission of the disciples). A comparison between Jesus' context and Matthew's community illuminates our understanding of the inclusive nature of Jesus' ministry and the inclusive structure of Matthew's society. (3) A structuralist-narrative approach, for example the so-called Greimas category, uses Roman Jakobson's communication model. In a narrative, there are three aspects: the sender, the message and the audience. In order to understand the Biblical message, it will therefore be fruitful to understand the implied author, together with the circumstances of the implied audience. The purpose of the structuralist approach is, therefore, to explore current scholars' work through reinterpretation.<sup>1</sup> Results stemming from the application of Greimas' theory to Matthean society may assist in clarifying our view of Matthew's community with reference to the hierarchical structure and egalitarian interaction of characters. This theory also provides us with an analysis of the hierarchy of the historical Jesus' movement in relation to its egalitarian character. These three categories will help us to understand to a better extent, scholars' works on egalitarianism, hierarchy, and the inclusivity of Matthew's community.

## 2. 2 The salvation-historical approach

The salvation-historical approach is one of the most dominant perspectives on the Gospel of Matthew studies. Salvation history should not be understood as general history. Walker (1967; cf Meier 1975:203) emphasized that salvation history is Matthew's conception of God's plan of salvation for his people.

Hans Conzelmann's (1960:34) theory of the salvation-historical approach in the Gospel of Luke has widely influenced Matthean scholars. Salvation history is divided into three eras (see Howell 1990:59-77), which can clearly be distinguished as the era of Israel, the era of Jesus and the era of the church. This view has created partial differences among scholars, but there were basic forms of agreement between scholars such as Trilling (1964), Strecker<sup>2</sup> (1962), Walker (1967) and Thompson (1974). Strecker (1962: 45-49, 184-188) believes that the delay in the parousia is the main issue in understanding salvation history as found in Matthew's Gospel. Matthew did compose a life of Jesus with eschatological relevance as it pertained to the prescribed way of righteousness in the history of salvation. This focus on eschatological righteousness has been drawn from three successive perspectives: the time of the Old Testament prophets, the time of Jesus and the time of the disciples' community. From another perspective Trilling (1964:95-96, 162, 213), in interpreting Matthew 28:18-20, 21:43, and 27:25, has asserted that the salvation-history approach has demonstrated Matthew's intent in depicting the church as being the true Israel. The church is the "true" Israel, which replaced the "false" Israel, who had lost its position as the chosen people of God. Walker (1967:114-115) argued that the structure of Matthew was determined by his specific historical era in relation to his involvement in the Gentile mission of the post-paschal period. Hence, salvation history consists of three epochs: the pre-history of the Messiah, the history of the mission to Israel and the mission to the Gentiles. Thompson's (1974:244, 252-254, 262) viewpoint is that the Matthean community was in conflict with the Gentiles, but that it was not against Israel. Matthew composed his Gospel when his community was in conflict with the Gentiles and afflicted with internal dissension.

All these scholars view the three periods of the church's salvation history as constituting the true Israel; the delay in the parousia that the Gentiles inflicted upon the church is explained by way of redaction criticism. The Matthean community was also affected by conflicting issues resulting from the Gentiles' mission. Scholars believe that the concept of salvation history is connected with the ecclesiology of Matthew. However, Kingsbury (1975:25-37; cf Combrink 1988:99-101) is of the opinion that the salvation-historical epoch can be divided into two sections (Howell 1990:78-88), namely the era of Israel, followed by the era of Jesus and the church. This twofold formula in Matthew's view of salvation history was placed within a specific epoch of Israel's history, when prophecies regarding the coming of the Messiah and the ministry of John the Baptist marked the beginning of the time of Jesus. By way of the post-paschal Matthean community time line, the era of Jesus and the church heralded Jesus' resurrection. This was with particular reference to a larger involvement of this community in the future (Kingsbury [1975] 1989:31, 33, 35). Moreover, Kingsbury's position is that Matthew's concept of salvation history did not relate to some kind of time line, as it was and still is related to Christology. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' time extended from the time of Matthew's community and its Christological motivation, and continued during the pre-Easter to post-Easter period (Kingsbury 1989:32). Meier (1975:203-15) also believes that Matthew only distinguishes between two periods in the salvation history. His view is that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is the turning point of the salvation history. According to Meier, Matthew 10:5-6 and 15:24 reflected only a mission to Israel, but in Matthew 28:16-20 a mission to all nations was implied.

The foregoing discussion has attempted to show that the structure of the Gospel of Matthew was composed in line with the First Evangelist's conception of salvation history. The Gospel of Matthew's twofold structure is divided into three most comprehensive sections. The first section (Mt 1:1-4:16) focuses on Jesus as the Messiah and the second section (Mt 4:17-16:20) on Jesus' proclamation of God's salvation to Israel. But the Israelites rejected Jesus' proclamation of salvation. The third section (Mt 16:21-28:20) covers the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Hence, Jesus' proclamation of salvation to the Gentiles was continued

by the community of the disciples. Kingsbury's (1973:474) focus on the concept of salvation history is one aspect of ecclesiological<sup>3</sup> concerns raised by Matthew's Christology (Matthew's narrative of Jesus' story started with the prophecy of the Messiah, the birth of Jesus, continued with the ministry of Jesus and concluded with the crucifixion of Jesus).

The Matthean community expected the parousia, even though the parousia was delayed. At that time, the Gentiles were attending church, not the synagogue, and their internal discord and external opposition were provoked by the Gentile mission. Most probably, due to these reasons, Matthew employed a description of salvation history by using a "Christological" time line. Another important aspect is Kingsbury's (1975:33) view of Matthew's presentation of the conception of salvation history through stressing the function of the disciples in the Gospel. Peter, in particular, has given primacy to the salvation-historical focus in the Gospel. Matthew described Peter as the spokesperson of the disciples (Luz 1971:152; Brown 1973:75-107; Kingsbury 1979:71; cf Van Aarde 1994:16). Peter's role had a significant influence on the Matthean community, as Matthew referred to building the church's foundation (Kingsbury 1979:71). Meier's (1975:203-215) work focuses specifically on the salvation history in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew's objective in establishing a scheme of salvation history had national (Israel) and geographical limitations (Mt 10:5-6; 15:24, 28). In contrast, Hummel (1966:25) points out that the most important issue was that Jesus proclaimed salvation to the Gentiles (centurion 8:5-13, the Canaanite women 15:21-28). Meier (1975:205) mentions that Matthew "consciously draws up a scheme of salvation-history which widens the geographical and national restrictions of Jesus' public ministry<sup>4</sup> into a universal mission (mission to the Gentiles) after the death-resurrection."

Many Matthean scholars who have focused on the historical background of the Matthean community are of the opinion that the Gospel was written during the time of separation between the church and the synagogue (Brown 1908:193-213; Van Aarde 1989b:219; 217-233; Gundry 1991:62-67; Stanton 1992:113-145; Cousland 2002:69-70). This is a very important issue in relation to the community to whom Matthew ministered. If we accept that the Matthean community was already separated from the synagogue, this means that the

members of the Matthean community were not solely Israelite.

Most scholars agree that Christianity began as an Israelite sect in the land of Israel and that these two groups were involved in a sincere relationship. Christianity's time line during the first century pinpoints the separation between Christianity and "Judaism" as being after the destruction of the temple. The separation between Matthew's community and the synagogue was, and still is, intensely debated within the Matthean scholarship. This topic will be discussed here within the three categories of scholarship.

Firstly, some scholars (France 1989b; Joubert<sup>5</sup> 1993; Saldarini 1994) view Israelite-Christian communities as still following Israelite religious symbols and rituals, and maintaining friendly relations with Israel's neighbours. However, the viewpoints of these scholars are dissimilar. Joubert (1993:361) outlines France's (1989b:100-1) view of the antagonism between the Israelite-Christian communities and "Judaism" (*Birkath Ha-Minim*) as a result of certain individuals' hostility. Even in the period before 70 CE, hostility existed between Jesus' followers and the Synagogue. This is partly a problem of general conflict between the groups and not necessarily evidence of separation between them. Saldarini (1994:21; 1991:36-59) believes that the Gospel of Mark was written in the period of the war with Rome, with Matthew using the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Matthew was written around 80-90 CE, subsequent to Mark's Gospel. Saldarini analyzed the authors' attitudes toward "Judaism". His conclusion was that Mark's Gospel was based on the life and teaching of Jesus, with only a very selective observance of the Law. Mark declared Jesus as "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mk 2:28), and asserted that the traditions of the elders be upheld and that an individual's conduct should be exemplary, especially in relation to dietary intake (Mk 7:3-4). This indicates that the Gospel of Mark was within the framework of "Judaism". Moreover, Matthew was an Israelite who supported obedience to Israelite laws, according to Jesus' interpretation. "Judaism" and "Christianity" varied in their relationship with Israelite communities. Saldarini's (1994:19) other argument is that the rabbinic group gave "blessings" to the heretics (Israelite-Christian), but that they did not control the synagogue. The *Birkat Ha-Minim* was not promulgated at synagogue services in the first century. It was primarily

aimed at Christians, but was accepted by a large number of Judaistic communities. The fact that the Gospel of Matthew was written later than that of Mark indicates that the Matthew community (only one of the groups of believers in Jesus) was a complex cultural phenomenon. The process of separation of Christianity from the synagogue was prolonged and subject to local variation.

These scholars' views regarding the separation of the Matthew's community from "Judaism" argues that it was not a reality prior to the writing of the Gospel. Individual hostilities between each group in 70 CE do not provide evidence of separation from Matthew's community. Moreover, the *Birkat Ha-Minim* was not relevant at the time of Gospel writing, as it was targeted at Christian and numerous Judaistic communities.

In the second place, Overman (1990) and Sim (1998) provide us with some insight into the way in which Matthew's community was separated from Judaism, from being closely entwined to possessing only a few remnants of "Judaism". Overman's view is that after the destruction of Jerusalem and the loss of institutional (Israelite religious) leaders, they needed new procedures. These procedures involved the emergence of rabbinic Judaism and literally of the *Birkat ha-Minim* (the blessing of the heretics). Overman (1990:50-51) believes that the *Birkat Ha-Minim* was aimed against Christians (cf Kilpatrick 1946: 109-123), but there is a lack of evidence of any specifically anti-Christian prayer in early rabbinic Judaism. The "Minim" prayer was not anti-Christian as such, but rather a defensive measure against Judaistic dissenters ("who denied any number of elements which were, or were becoming, essential to developing formative Judaism such as the denial of the resurrection, the rejection of the Torah, pronouncing the Tetra-grammaton, or healers who use the Scriptures"). For that reason, even though Matthew's community had separated from the synagogue, the members of his community nevertheless seemed to maintain close ties with it (Overman 1990:56). Sim's (1998:150-151) view of the Matthean community is that it was still within the framework of Judaism. His interpretation of the *Birkath Ha-Minim* does not provide sufficient evidence of separation of Matthew's community from the Synagogue. The dating of this material in its original form and its intent were problematic within the Matthean community

(cf Schiffman 1981:155-56; Horbury 1982:19-61). The Evangelist's sectarian group left the world of formative Judaism and went its own way in opposition to the parent body (Sim 1998:151). Sim emphasized the social context of the Matthean community and that members still had contact with their opponents (the Pharisees). This indicates that a minority group (who persecuted people from the Matthean community) had broken away from the parent body (see Mt 5:10-12). In fact, the Matthean community endured persecution from the Israelite community, but the persecution could not be prevented by all of the Scribes and Pharisees (and their followers); there was no prevalent violence in Antioch. The Israelite communities were worried about the impending Gentile persecution. As a result of the Gentile persecution of the Jews at the time of the "Jewish war", the entire Israelite community at Antioch was afraid of future outbreaks of violence in the homeland (Sim 1998:156-57). Therefore, the hostility between the Matthean community and Rabbinic Judaism occurred (partially) in the middle of the first century in Antioch. Summaries of Sim's discussion show that the Matthean community was in conflict with a very fluid post-war formative Judaism. After a period of bitter dispute, Matthew's community separated from local synagogues although it was still not completely outside the Israelite community.

Finally, according to the viewpoint of Brown (1980:193-213; see Gundry 1991:62-67; Stanton 1992:113-145; Cousland 2002:69-70), the Matthean community was separated from "Judaism". Cousland (2002:69-70) has argued against France's (1998) assertion that the Matthean community was not separated from the synagogue. He stated that "their synagogue" (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 12:9) is not necessarily proof of community separation. The Greek word *αὐτῶν* refers to "the particular geographical area of the next phase of ministry", Matthew 10:17 and 23:34 refer to "those who oppose the Christian movement", and 7:29 refers to the crowds just mentioned (France 1989a:107). Cousland's thrust is that France's argument does not offer a full and comprehensive explanation. The pronoun *αὐτῶν* (cf Kilpatrick 1950: 110-11, 122-23; White 1991:215-16) appears regularly in the Gospel (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34). The most common explanation is that the pronoun reflects a separation from Judaism, with the community no longer participating in Israelite institutions (Cousland



2002:70). Furthermore, Brown (1980:215) suggests that the references to “*their* synagogue” and to “*your* synagogue” (see Bible reference above) imply that Matthew’s Christian community had ceased to belong to the synagogue. For that reason, the First Evangelist’s community’s primary responsibility was to the Gentiles. The above hypothesis is based on the belief that the Gospel of Matthew was composed circa 70-80 CE (Brown 1980:217). Stanton (1992:113-14) agrees with Brown’s view that the Gospel was written after the Matthean community parted from “Judaism” (at least 70 CE). Stanton (1992:126-131) analyzed the five reasons for the separation of the First Evangelist’s community from Judaism. First, the relationships between the Israelite-Christian leaders of Matthew and the Temple authorities (particularly scribes and Pharisees) were consistently depicted in a negative light. The Temple authorities in the Gospel were portrayed as always being at odds with Jesus and his disciples. Secondly, the reference to the First Evangelist’s hostility against the synagogue has already been mentioned above (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; cf 23:34). The scribes and Pharisees were associated with the synagogue (Mt 23:6,34), which had almost become alienated from the Matthean community. Thirdly, the Gospel of Matthew only mentions ἐκκλησία three times (Mt 16:18; 18:17). The word does not appear among the other three Gospels. The First Evangelist depicted that the Matthean church was founded by Jesus and was promised divine protection (Mt 16:18) and priority against the συναγωγή. This means that the church was the Evangelist’s own religious institution. The Matthean community seemed to have an independently developing structure as the right of being included and excluded from the community indicates (Mt 16:19, 18:19). In the fourth place, the transference of new people to the kingdom of heaven also included the Gentiles in Matthew’s text. Stanton made a comparison of two passages, Mt 8:5-13 and Mt 15:13. According to him, the kingdom of heaven was open to Gentiles (Mt 8:5-13) (as with the Roman Centurion) and they would sit with the faithful Israelites at the feast in the kingdom of heaven. But the Pharisees were no longer considered to have been planted by the heavenly father (Mt 15:13). The Jewish leaders would not be accepted into the kingdom of God but the Gentiles would. That is why the synagogue and church were going their separate ways. Stanton’s fifth point is

that Matthew 28:15 explicitly refers to the relationship between synagogue and church at a post-paschal level. The news of the resurrection of Jesus had been widely disseminated amongst the Israelites (it was said that his disciples stole his body from the tomb). As the disciples' community and the Israelites were rivals, the latter wanted to deny the resurrection of Jesus. The implication was that the Jews had separated as an entity, completely distinct from the disciple community. Similarly, Van Aarde's (1989b:213-33) argument consists of textual evidence on the separation of Judaism and Christianity through examining the transparent historical narrative<sup>6</sup>. He found evidence of the separation between Christianity and Judaism in the Matthew narrative of Jesus' resurrection. The Gospel of Matthew is a reflection of the conflict between the Matthean community and the synagogue in the post-CE 70 period (Van Aarde 1989b:224-25). Furthermore, Van Aarde (1989b:224- 225; cf Katz 1984:76) does not agree that the *Birkat Ha-Minim* signals a decisive break between "Jewish" and "Jewish-Christian", as owing to the latter's belief in Jesus' miraculous conception and resurrection from the dead, the Yavnean rabbis regarded them as heretics and threatened them with excommunication. Van Aarde suggests that Ἡγέρθη ἄπο τῶν νεκρῶν (Mt 28:7f) comprised the Israelite-Christians' faith in the resurrection, as seen in the narrative. Post-70 CE, the earliest Christians expressed their faith in the resurrection as opposed to that of the Pharisees (Van Aarde 1989b:230; cf Brown 1980:119).

The Matthean community was therefore in a process of separation from Judaism. We have discussed many examples of the levels of separation between them. The Matthean community turned towards the Gentiles mission (see Brown 1980). However, they did not exclusively surrender their Israelite mission. Of course, Matthew's rejection of Israel was so absolute that the struggle was truly over for him. However, at the end of the Gospel, in Matthew 28:19, he wrote more generally about salvation and did not only refer to the Gentiles. The Greek word ἔθνη referred to all the nations<sup>7</sup> as Israelites and non-Israelites. Therefore, the debate between Matthean scholars employing the salvation-historical approach regards whether Matthew's view of salvation refers only to Israelites or whether it includes all nations together with Israel (Stanton 1992:37-38.)

In this section, we will discuss earlier scholars' work using the salvation-historical approach to the Matthew community. This is of importance as the members of the Matthean community were Israelites as well as Gentiles (this will be discussed in chapter 3). It means that the members of the Matthean community were originally Israelites, but that the community included Gentiles as well as other nations. The salvation-historical perspective confirms, therefore, that the Matthean community was an inclusive community.

### **2.2.1 G Bornkamm**

Bornkamm (1963:15-51; 1983:85-97) wrote two important essays on the Matthean community and on chapter 18 of the Gospel of Matthew. He used two methods for these studies. The first method was redaction criticism by means of which he investigated the theological detail and the central theme of the Gospel of Matthew in his essay "End-expectation and church in Matthew." He examined the problem of sources in Matthew's Gospel within the literary issues of the Synoptic texts. Secondly, he used the form-critical and redaction-critical approach for his essay "The authority to 'bind' and 'loose' in the church, according to Matthew's Gospel." Both approaches are very useful in understanding the First Evangelist's ideas, as Matthew was a creative theologian. The purpose of Bornkamm's study of the church in Matthew's Gospel is to find a representative for the discourse concerning the congregation through examining the working method of the First Evangelist's intention, and also to contribute to the investigation regarding the problem of sources in the Synoptic Gospels. He pointed out the main issue in Matthew as being deeply connected with ecclesiology and eschatology in the discourse in which Jesus' teaching was prominent.

Therefore, Bornkamm's (1963:19) view of Matthew's theology is based on the relationship between ecclesiology and eschatology in the Matthean community. In the seven Kingdom of God parables, Bornkamm emphasized that the kingdom of heaven implies that the Matthean community was not only a collection of the chosen and the righteous, but also a hybrid community on its way to meeting the final judgment. When Jesus returns to the earth, the wheat will be separated from the weeds (cf Van Aarde 1994:15). Both ecclesiology and

eschatology are employed to confirm the salvation-historical perspective of Matthew's Gospel. The starting point of Bornkamm's (1963:15) salvation-historical view regarding Matthew's Gospel is that salvation history differs in Mark and Luke. For instance, Mark describes John the Baptist as a messenger of repentance, whereas Luke depicts John the Baptist in a historically fixed way (as a figure belonging to the unrepeatable past; cf Strecker 1983:70-74; Cousland 2002:265) in the text (Lk 3:1) and more complete in himself (Lk 3:19). Thereby John the Baptist adhered to the historical and salvation-historical epoch, which he articulated in Luke 16:16 (Bornkamm, cited by Conzelmann 1960:13-17). However, Matthew's portrayal of John the Baptist was based on the fact that in John's preaching he expected the Messiah, and this was similar to the preaching of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew (Bornkamm 1963:15-16). This implies that Matthew viewed John the Baptist's teaching as an instructive model of salvation for his community. His teaching was linked with prophecy, with announcements of the coming βασιλεία and the call to repentance before the approaching judgment. The same passage touches on the Sermon on the Mount's threat about the tree (Mt 7:19) which, failing to bring forth fruit, would be cut down and cast into the lake of fire. Through the preaching of John the Baptist, this passage contained the basic salvation thoughts of Matthew's understanding of his community. Bornkamm (1963:16) pointed to the mention of Abraham's children through the mouth of John the Baptist. In all likelihood, these children of Abraham through their charismatic movement, together with the later followers of Jesus (resulting from the ministry of John the Baptist) were disciples of Jesus and had implored people to seek salvation in Jesus' name. Matthew's intention was that the fruits of repentance would become part of the community (Bornkamm 1963:16). Bornkamm stressed that the First Evangelist reflected the primacy of the narrative of John the Baptist, with emphatic reference to the instructions regarding salvation toward his community.

Bornkamm's other example, the structure of the Sermon on the Mount, also informs one about a list of requirements for admission and the conditions of entrance ordained by God (Bornkamm 1963:16; Dibelius 1953:92). The composition of the Sermon on the Mount (Jesus' teaching) formed the character of an ecclesiastical discipline. The setting of this

discipline within Matthew's community reflected an end-expectation, on the way to their eschatological salvation. The focus of the Sermon on the Mount is that salvation belongs to whosoever becomes righteous<sup>8</sup> and that such a person can enter the βασιλεία. The whole Sermon on the Mount passage is an alignment of the eschatological, which is visible from the first Beatitudes (Mt 5:3, 8-10, 19-20), the teaching rewards (Mt 6:1-32), seeking the βασιλεία and its righteousness (Mt 6:33), and the chosen narrow gate (Bornkamm 1963:17). The Sermon on the Mount is therefore a salvation-historical composition.

Some aspects of the eschatological character of the Matthean community and its end-expectation also appeared in the Mission Discourse in Matthew 10. Bornkamm (1963:18) considered Matthew's construction of this, together with his theological motive, where the missionary discourse focuses on Jesus' deeds and the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 9:35 and 4:23). This implies that Matthew's mission-discourse was motivated by the compassion of Jesus for the languishing and leaderless people. Matthew's missionary objective progressed from the missionary task of the disciples to Israel. The disciples preached the closeness of the kingdom of God, healing the sick, the casting out of demons (Mt 10:7-8) and finally the judgment (Mt 10:15). The persecution section of Matthew's Mission Discourse (in view of the approaching end, the disciples had to answer persecution with confession and separation with decision, Mt 10:17-39) was not a missionary instruction in the proper sense, but taught members of the Matthean community to endure as the disciples of Jesus endured during persecution (Bornkamm 1963:18). This endurance was, according to the instruction regarding salvation in Matthew's community, very important. It was considered necessary in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Thus, Bornkamm correctly found that the eschatological end-expectation of Matthew's community was that salvation for the members of the community had not been intended for a collection of the selected and eternally secure, since Matthew's understanding of Jesus ordered a harvest of labourers, for the end had not yet come. Therefore, Matthew's Gospel clearly indicated that there would be a gathering of people on the end-expected day. The seven parables of the kingdom of heaven, as mentioned in chapter 13, tells us about ecclesiology in the Gospel of Matthew; Bornkamm's point of view is that owing to

Matthew's community being accepted as righteous, even the "wheat" will be accepted. A *corpus mixtum* will be separated at the final judgment.

Bornkamm emphasized that the end-expectation of Matthew's community was the coming kingdom of God. This end-expectation of Matthew was an important feature of judgment, which was not according to whether one was an Israelite or Gentile. The mission of Matthew's community focused on no division between Israelites or Gentiles.

However, the Matthean community was still very small and was cut off from the Israelite community.<sup>9</sup> The community was a mixed body<sup>10</sup>, which was to face the separation between good and bad. Bornkamm's interpretation of Chapter 18, claimed that it was constructed as the "Rule for the Congregation" under the strong influence of the basic principles of Jesus' teaching (Bornkamm 1983:92). This means that Matthew's community was organized by a new righteousness, which was not determined by the scribes and Pharisees. This new righteousness had to be lived out with an expectation of the Last Judgment. Through Bornkamm's analysis, it became clear that Matthew's community was considered to be an end-expecting eschatological group. Consequently, they required a new cultic or structural order for their congregation to abide by. Bornkamm viewed the Matthean community as a small group, which was not part of the Israelite community. Hence, the new sectarian community needed a new model for a congregation, which was hierarchically ordered, for the struggle with Israel was still the struggle within themselves (Bornkamm 1963:39). The Matthean community expected all the nations to appear inclusively before the expected day of universal judgment.

### **2.2.2 S Brown**

Brown's (1980:193-221) position regarding the salvation-historical view is that Matthew's Gospel was written to the Gentiles after the destruction of Jerusalem and that the mission which was still the main problem was that of unity within the community after 70 CE. Moreover, Brown believed that Matthew's community was a "Jewish-Christian" community and after 70 CE, considered to have been a Gentiles mission. This would imply that

Matthew's community had no reference to any Gentile mission prior to that.

However, Brown (1980:194) mentions a very interesting fact, that Matthew's "Judaistic" community had begun the Gentile mission, which should be considered as the background to the historical ministry of Jesus. Jesus proclaimed that he and his disciples were sent only to the lost sheep of Israel<sup>11</sup> (Mt 10:5-6). However, Matthew's interpretation is that Jesus had included many outcasts in his ministry, even the Centurion (Mt 8:5-13), and had table fellowship with many social or religious outcasts of Israel (Mt 9:19) (Perrin 1967:102; Brown 1980:195). This was Jesus' universal intention, to include the Gentiles in his eschatological salvation (by the Matthew's community). However, Brown (1980:196) believed that these above-mentioned directions in the great commission were not a form of authorization for the Gentile mission, but the ministerial endeavours of the Lord Jesus himself. This became the motive for Matthew's community's mission to the Gentiles.

We therefore move to Brown's view on the Gentile mission in the post-Easter community. According to Brown (1980:200-211), the Jerusalem-Christian community had authority over the Christian mission to the Gentiles and Paul recognized this as part of the Gentile mission, the privileged position of the Jerusalem community regarding salvation history (Rom 15:19) (see chapter 1). Moreover, Brown (1980:212) believed that the Matthean community was situated in Palestine<sup>12</sup> and that the Palestine "Jewish-Christian" community was under the leadership of the Jerusalem community during the "Jewish War" as well. Hence, the Matthean community's concern for the Gentile mission was later than 70 CE. Following the "Jewish War", the Matthean community moved from Palestine to a Greek-speaking area, probably Syria (see chapter 3). The community also started the Gentile mission there (Brown 1980:214). After the "Jewish War", the Pharisees were hostile towards Israelite-Christians and the Matthean community, when the latter started the Gentile mission. This mission divided Matthew's Christian community, as some members disagreed with it.

It is clear that Matthew's community had Israelite-Christian members and that after the "Jewish War" and the destruction of Jerusalem, they moved from Palestine, possibly to Syria, and started their Gentile mission. The First Evangelist himself directed the community

towards this mission. This approach accorded with Jesus' teaching about the universal mission mandate as the final scene of the Gospel (Brown 1980:217). This means that Jesus' proclamation of salvation was inclusive of all people, even the Gentiles.

### **2.2.3 U Luz**

According to Luz's (1994:42) point of view, Matthew Chapter 10, as a whole, was of fundamental importance to Matthew. In this chapter, we see Matthew's understanding of bringing Jesus' sacred teachings to Israel (Mt 8-9), as well as conveying the central aspects of his teaching to his disciples. Moreover, this description portrayed the future of Matthew's community. Luz's observation is that Matthew Chapter 10 has been interpreted historically and Luz focused particularly on verses 5-6 and 23. Luz believed that these three verses portrayed the special function of Matthew's narrative. Due to the fact that the focus of Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry was on the lost ones of Israel, although rejected by them, Matthew's community concluded it with Jesus' instructions regarding the missionary outreach of the followers of Jesus towards the Gentiles<sup>13</sup> (while the mission focus moved to the Gentiles, this does not indicate the abandonment of the mission to Israelites) (Mt 28:16-20) (Luz 1994:42; 1995:15).

Keeping Luz's arguments in mind, we will now turn to his salvation-historical perspective on the Gospel of Matthew. Luz's (1989:79-82; 1995:14-18) view is that the community of Matthew consisted of a variety of "Jewish-Christians", due to the fact that his community was originally in the land of Israel; after which they probably moved to Syria following the Jewish War (Brown supports a similar conviction). This brought about a new state of affairs amongst the community in Syria (a Jewish and Gentile mixed state, see Chapter 3) in an endeavour to commence the Gentile mission.

In turning to Luz' analysis of salvation history in Matthew, we will especially consider the genealogy and the great commission. The First Evangelist mentions four women (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah) in the genealogy in Matthew 1:2-17. Three of them were not Israelites and Bathsheba was married to a Gentile man (Hittite Uriah). Why did



Matthew include these four figures in the traditional genealogy? Luz (1995:26) pointed out that these Gentile women appeared in Jesus' line of descent because of Matthew's universal perspective.

The end of Matthew's narrative, 28:16-20, was also carefully examined by Luz (1995: 138-141). This passage is important in developing a proper understanding of Matthew's vision regarding the Gentile mission. However, according to Luz's (1995:139; cf Stuhlmacher 2000:19) view regarding the translation of the Greek term ἔθνη (all the nations/Gentiles, see footnote 7), it is not easy to relate it to all Gentiles, although it could be translated as such. Luz's perspective regarding the great commission as understood by the Gospel's writer, was that it was a volte-face (about-turn) (Luz 1995:140). The new duty of Matthew's community as it pertained to the Gentile mission, originated from the ministry of Jesus himself, as they considered Jesus' ministry to Israel a failure. Luz emphasized that Matthew had the Gentile mission in mind when he composed his Gospel. The community of Matthew was, in fact, inclusive of all nations in relation to salvation.

#### **2.2.4 D A Hagner**

Hagner's (1993, 1995) commentary drew on a wide range of sources in providing a salvation-historical perspective on the community. This primary method is redaction criticism, with few literary or narratological concerns. His analyses were carried out in terms of a transparency perspective. In the narrative of the Gospel of Matthew, without losing its historical character, the disciples themselves became the model (that which was spoken and demanded in pre-paschal transparency, of the present experience of the Christian members) with reference to Matthew's community (Hagner 1993:XIII). Matthew's community was a mixed one that included both "true" and "false" disciples (cf Mt 13:29-30, 47-50; 22:11-14). This mixed state created tensions in the community (see chapter 3). Hagner (1993:IXVI; 1996:30; Köstenberger & O'Brien 2001:108) argued that this tension between particularism (salvation only for the Jews, with a negative portrayal of the Gentiles) and universalism (an inclusive salvation for the Gentiles, with a negative portrayal of Israel and especially that of Israel's

leaders) in Matthew, as it is closely related to another polarity of the Gospel, which involved Israel and the church. It is significant that an anti-Judaism tone, together with an anti-Gentile tone, is prevalent in the Gospel of Matthew (see Hagner 2003:206-208). With Hagner's assumptions in mind, let us now consider his classification regarding Matthew's notion of particularism and universalism.

Matthew's particularistic stance was that Jesus sent his disciples to carry out the mission's objectives with a strict prohibition to "go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:5-6). Matthew depicted that Jesus stated this particularism to a Gentile woman, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24). The attitude of Jesus towards the Canaanite woman was different to that of his missionary instruction to his disciples in the mission discourse (Mt 10). He answered them, "you have great faith and your request is granted" (Mt 15:28). According to Hagner (1996:29), this was a harsh contradiction of his particularism towards the Israelite people. The attitude of Jesus towards the Canaanite woman<sup>14</sup> was similar to that of the First evangelist's of the day, when the Gentile mission was an undeniable reality within early Christianity.

On the other hand, we can also implicitly take note of Matthew's universalism throughout the Gospel in relation to Gentile women in the genealogy (Mt 1:5): the Magi from the East (Mt 2:1-12), the Roman Centurion (Mt 8:5-13), the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28), the parable of tenants and the marriage feast (Mt 21:33-43, 22:1-10), together with the Roman soldiers' confession (Mt 27:54).

All of the above universal passages focus on the judgment of non-believing Israelite. For instance, in the parables of the tenants and the marriage feast, Jesus said "therefore, I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruits of it" (Mt 21:43); "go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone" (Mt 22:9). The foregoing discussion has attempted to show that the Matthean community changed, due to the fact that particularism in Jesus and his disciples limited the ministry to Israel (Hagner 1996: 32). It is evident that Matthew's depiction of Jesus said, "and this Gospel of the kingdom will

be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Mt 24:14). Hagner believes that the hostility towards Israel was rather more intensified, compared to the other Gospels. This means that Matthew’s Gospel includes particularism as well as universalism (Hagner 2003:201; cf Holmberg 1998:421). With this difficulty in mind, let us turn to another possible understanding of Hagner’s point of view regarding the relationship to Judaism.

Hagner attempted to explain the divergent emphasis of the Gospel through the positioning of a plausible and realistic life setting for Matthew’s community. Over the past decades, the issue of the Matthean scholarship has been debated, whether the cessation of the mission was merely towards Israel or not. Hagner realized that the Matthean scholarship had made a decision, without considering Matthew’s readers and their *Sitz im Leben*. Before we start to deal with Hagner’s (1993:IXXIII-IXXVII) viewpoint concerning Matthew’s community, we have to take into consideration that Hagner believes the Gospel of Matthew was written after 70 CE and the location was probably somewhere in Palestine (Galilee) or perhaps more toward the north in Syria but, in any case, not necessarily Antioch. Hagner’s (1996:46-47) hypothesis regarding the Matthean community tension is that, when the Israelites became Christians, they were forced into a two-way struggle: with the hostility of their parent-body (non-Christian Israelite) and with the “Jewish-Christian”<sup>15</sup> community who separated from them. The reason for this hostility against the “Jewish-Christians” was that in the eyes of their Israelite kinfolk, the “Jewish-Christians” were disloyal to the religion of Israel and the Mosaic Law. Moreover, they were joining a pagan religion, the large majority of adherents being Gentiles. On the other hand, “Jewish-Christians” existed as a minority among largely Gentile-Christian followers of Jesus. The problem of the Gentile-Christians was their continued observance of Jewish law and customs which became a theological problem for them and hindered their fellowship and sense of unity. Thus, “Jewish-Christians” were struggling in their relationship with the Gentile-Christians and their understanding of the newness contained in and implied by the reality of Christ. Hagner (1996:49-50) emphasized that Matthew’s community partook of two worlds, the Israelite and the Christian. Even though

“Jewish-Christianity” was not yet a fulfillment of Judaism, they carefully considered maintaining a relationship with their spiritually broken non-believing brothers and sisters. Moreover, they were in need of unity with the Gentile-Christians. Hagner’s argument indicates why we are faced with twofold tensions in the Gospel of Matthew. Hagner (1996:53-60) focused on distinctive emphasis with regard to Matthew’s major themes such as the law, religious leaders, Israel, fulfillment, the kingdom of heaven, Christology, ecclesiology and salvation history. These themes can also be understood within the context of the Matthean community.

Hagner emphasizes that all of the above arguments have to be understood from the perspective of the *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew’s community. They apparently experienced considerable distress stemming from the allegations by the Jewish community, because they were Christians, and were considered to be disloyal to Judaism on the one hand, and on the other hand, had to learn that the truth of Christianity involved a movement towards salvation history. There was an inevitable degree of newness to the movement and the “Jewish-Christians” had to learn to balance the specialty of Israel with universality as the community increasingly became composed of Gentiles (Hagner 1996:67). We may conclude that Hagner’s view of salvation history depicts the universalism of Matthew’s community. Of course, the tone of particularism is in Matthew’s text, but according to Hagner, it is to be understood in the context of first-century Christianity. Redaction was applied to the Gospel of Matthew within the context of the tension in his community.

Finally, we look at one piece of evidence in Hagner’s (1996:67-68) hypothesis, namely his interpretation of Matthew 9:16-17. Matthew took up and continued from Mark 2:21-22: “no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse, and no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins”. Matthew was in fact redactionally altered from Mark’s “and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined” to “and so both are preserved” in Matthew 9:7. This means that Matthew arrived at the *co-existence of both particularism and universalism in the same Gospel*. Hence, we can see the inclusive situation in Matthew’s

community by studying Hagner.

### **2.2.5 Summary**

We have examined the salvation-historical concept of Matthew's Gospel. The above-mentioned scholars argue that the concept of salvation history was used by Matthew to show that God was preparing both the Israelites and Gentiles for salvation. Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry was to transform the Matthean community and as reflected in Matthew's Gospel, it was seen as the mission to Israel before 70 CE, and the reader, as a mission to all nations.

The eschatological and ecclesiological situation transformed the Matthean community into an end-expectation community, which had expectations of salvation for Israelites and all nations. The community's view of salvation was based on Jesus' inclusive ministry. Even though Matthew's community was a small group, it was still influenced by Judaism. These influences show us that the Matthean community, like its parent body (the Israelite community), was still a hierarchically structured society. The Matthean community was verge of being cut off from the Israelite community, but they still possessed Israelite social patterns of structure within the new teachings of Jesus. Moreover, there was tension between "Jewish-Christians" and "Gentile-Christians," as to whether their mission was restricted only to Israelites or was extended to Gentiles as well. According to this conviction, the narrative of Matthew's particularism as well as universalism is quite evident. Hence, the concept of salvation history can be applied to the Matthean community. The meaning of salvation implied that the community included all people, Israelites as well as other nations. The salvation-historical approach clearly indicates that the Matthean community was a hierarchically and inclusively structured society.

In the following section, we propose to examine Matthew's inclusive situation by focusing on the so-called transparency approach. We will ask how Matthew's understanding of Jesus' inclusive ministry continued to activate the disciples' community.

### **2.3 The transparency approach**

Around three decades ago, redaction criticism was popular among Biblical scholars. Its purpose was to determine the theology of the author. It also made a significant contribution to the theology of Matthew's Gospel, but ambiguous topics remained. One of the confusing topics in Matthew's theology was the First Evangelist's understanding of the disciples. Matthew's portrayal of the disciples and Israelite leaders was not historicized (Cousland 2002:270), but it was transparent in relation to the disciples' community. According to Luz (1983:98), "transparency" is one way of interpreting the disciples, according to the theology of Matthew's Gospel. Strecker (1962:206) states that Peter characterized the period of Jesus' life as a transparent model, having been involved in a Christian community. The twelve disciples had also been presented by Matthew as a typical example of individual members having been involved in the Matthean community (Van Aarde 1994:15). Therefore, the period of Jesus' life and the time of Matthew's community overlapped in the text of Matthew's Gospel (Barth 1963:111). In all probability, the First Evangelist includes in his narrative the "post-Easter community right back to the historical discipleship of Jesus without dissolving the disciples in past salvation-history, into the eschatological self-understanding of his own day" (Schulz 1967:217; see Luz 1983:98).

Kingsbury (1988:442-460, 443) discussed the concept transparency by using the model of leadership and argued that, with regard to the Gospel of Matthew, transparency characterized the historical-biographical approach, as it made a distinction between the primary reader of Matthew's Gospel and the intended reader. The intended reader was probably a person who was living as a post-paschal Christian, and was also a member of the early Christian community during the time the First Evangelist wrote his Gospel. By contrast, the primary reader would not be judged according to this leadership model, otherwise he or she would not have been a reader at all. The primary reader would have to be identified with a real-life contemporary of the earthly Jesus (Kingsbury 1988a:443). If we are correct in our argument that Matthew is considered to be biographical in the nature of his report, Matthew also probably reported historical issues in a biographical way (Stanton 1972:191-204; Kingsbury

1986a:9-13).

The First Evangelist immediately had some kind of relevance to his community after the Pre-Easter situation (in characters, events, words). There are three kinds of characters that are transparent in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus was transparent about his teaching and minister to Matthew's community (his disciples) (Kingsbury 1988a:446). The Jewish leaders were transparent in Matthew's community as well, as they were meant to be representative of the Pharisaic Judaism during the Post-Easter period (Kilpatrick 1946:113, 120-121; Meier 1979:27, 102, 176). The disciples were also transparent, due to the fact that their roles were considered important to the members of their communities (Thompson 1970:258-64).

In recent years, Van Aarde's (1994:15) view is that the disciples as "proto-apostles" were still analogical, reminiscent of the apostolic tradition in Matthew's community. This implies that the post-paschal commission of the disciples should be regarded as the continuation of the pre-paschal commission of Jesus (Van Aarde 1994:15; Minear 1974:31). The texts of the Gospel are testimonies of the creative power of the transmitted history of Jesus in the early Christian community (Luz 1994:24). Luz's (1995) views regarding this have been comprehensively discussed in his book, which was published a year later (English translation, but this book was originally published in German in 1993). In particular, Luz's (1995:62-70) interpretation of Matthew 8:1-13:30, concentrating on the situation of the parables of conflict where Jesus dealt with the Pharisees in his ministry, shows the transparency of the Pharisees. The ministry of Jesus was mirrored through and reflected by their lifestyle. Luz (1995:69-70; see 2001:87) correctly emphasized that Matthew did not separate Jesus' ministry from that of the post-paschal community. In other words, Matthew compiled his text, that did not distinguish between past and present with the detachment of modern historians (Luz 1995:70).

In this section, we look at the transparency perspective employed in the work of Matthean scholars concerning the community to whom Matthew ministered. This matter will be examined in the following two ways. The first considers the teaching of Jesus towards the members of this particular community, thus the *Sitz im Leben* of the Matthean community. It will be considered whether the teaching and practice of both Jesus and his disciples were

inclusive of all people (cf Israelites and Gentiles) in their pre-paschal commission. We will examine whether their society was hierarchical in nature. In the second place, the focus will be on the state of the community to whom Matthew ministered (the disciples' community), in order to determine whether it was an egalitarian structure or not. The hierarchical situation in Matthew's community will also be explored. A comparison between the pre-paschal commission and the post-paschal commission, touching on the egalitarian situation within this community, will be analysed.

The works of Van Aarde (1944), Riches (1996) and Sim (1998) will be discussed. All of them, in one way or another, emphasize the reading of Matthew's Gospel through the transparency perspective.

### **2.3.1 A G Van Aarde**

In his book *God with us* (1994), Van Aarde states that *God with us* is the dominant "ideological"/ theological perspective in the Gospel of Matthew. His study is divided into two main parts, beginning with an overview of Matthean scholarship as a model in supporting the proper interpretation of the complexity within both the community and the structure of the Gospel of Matthew. The second part is quite complex, embodying six of his essays within the field of narrative analysis. In part one, Van Aarde specifically develops the ideological theological perspective in Matthew's narrative.

Van Aarde concurs with Marxsen, who in his analysis linked and integrated the pre-paschal mission of Jesus and the post-paschal mission of the disciples (Van Aarde 1994:19). The plot consisted of two levels of time sequences in the narrative of Matthew's Gospel: the time of the pre-paschal commission of Jesus and the time of the post-paschal commission of the disciples. Many scholars have debated this issue of discontinuity (Walker 1967:114-47; Hare 1967:157; Green 1975:21-22; Clark 1980:1) and the notion of transparency (they consider that Matthew perceived a break between the time of the mission to the Israelites on the pre-paschal level and the mission of the disciple-community to the Gentiles on the post-paschal level). According to them, a discontinuity exists between the Israelite crowd, as the object of



Jesus' salvation ministry on the pre-paschal level, and the Gentile mission, as the object of the post-paschal level. The main evidence of discontinuity adduced by these scholars was that the focus of the ministry of Jesus was only directed at the Israelites during the pre-paschal level, and it changed to Gentile universalism on the post-paschal level. Van Aarde's (1994:137) view is that the commission of the disciples (the Matthean community) is both linked to the Old Testament, with specific applied reference to the Law and the Prophets. Van Aarde believes that the Law and the Prophets were continued through the commission of Jesus and the disciples, including the commission of Matthew's church, until the dawning of the parousia in Matthew's Gospel.

From a transparency perspective, Van Aarde approaches Matthew's theological narrative from a narrative viewpoint. A narrative is a discourse of language organization. A narrative therefore has its own closed narrative world and a writer (narrator) communicates his message to his reader by way of a narrative. According to Van Aarde (1994:143), the idea, *God With Us*, is the dominant point of view according to the theological perspective of the narrator in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew created an analogy between the pre-paschal mission of Jesus and the post-paschal mission of the community to whom he ministered (Van Aarde 1994:31, 34, 121).

The hypothesis of Van Aarde with regard to Matthew's transparency text is that the mission of Jesus was directed towards the crowds. Following the resurrection of Jesus, the community of the disciples expected the parousia in Galilee. According to Matthew, Galilee was a mixed "Gentile region" (Mt 4:16) where both Israelites and non-Israelites lived. The crowds came from the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan (Mt 4:25). Van Aarde (1994:124) emphasized that Galilee was the place where Jesus offered forgiveness of sin to Israelites and Gentiles. Galilee was also the place where the risen Jesus commanded his disciples to commence their mission to all nations, including Israelites (Mt 28:16-20). The mission of Jesus includes all people, who as sheep had gone astray (Mt 9:36) and who were lost (Mt 10:6). It is not God's will that even one of these little ones gets lost (Mt 18:12-14). Moreover, Jesus accepted the social-religiously ostracized Israelites and Gentiles. According

to Van Aarde (1994:122), Matthew portrays the ministry of Jesus as a form of compassion towards destitute and “sick” people (Mt 15:21-28, 29-31) and those who were hungry (Mt 12:13-21; 15:32-39), together with a willingness (Mt 26:39) to sacrifice his life for people (Mt 20:28; 27:50). Therefore Matthew’s depiction of the Jesus ministry, inclusive of all people, had no boundaries (Mt 9:19, 21; 22:37-40).

The life of Jesus on the pre-paschal level was continued in the life of the post-paschal community of the disciples. After the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the post-paschal ministerial activity started with the mission of the disciples to all people. According to Van Aarde (1994:122), the leaders of Israel opposed the ministry of Jesus. They remained his opponents (Mt 28:11-15), and the opponents of Matthew’s community on the post-paschal level. All these differences and oppositions were overcome by the mission of Jesus. Van Aarde (1994:86) points out that the relationship between Jesus and the underprivileged (social or religious outcasts) was reflected in the names ἀδελφοί and συνδουλοι (cf Mt 12:46-50; 18:15-20, 21-35; 24:49; 25:40). This would imply that the healing and teachings of Jesus were indeed inclusive of all people. On the contrary, the disciples did not comply with Jesus’ approach towards the underprivileged, as depicted by a name used for a disciple namely δουλός πονηρός (Mt 18:32; 25:36). The disciples therefore repeatedly represented a complex type of character in the Gospel of Matthew. According to Van Aarde, the narrator’s perspective on the disciples’ characters within Matthew’s community fulfilled a function on behalf of the ministry of Jesus on the post-paschal level. Various scholars are culpable in their denial of the disciples’ function during that period. Van Aarde also confirmed the view that the tendency of the disciples (Matthew’s community) was to deny their role of being helpers of Jesus on the post-paschal level. With regard to the Mission Discourse, as stated in Matthew Chapter 10, Matthew did not mention the successful return of the disciples from their mission, as was the case with Luke 10:17-24 (see Van Aarde 1994:88). The disciples’ function was to support the teachings of Jesus and the message that salvation was inclusive of everyone who is willing to submit to the control of God in his or her life. It is possible that the disciples’ community was inclusive of all people, even though it was not yet perfect in accordance with

the inclusivity of Jesus himself. Matthew depicts the disciples' community, especially in Chapter 18, in their actions and attitudes as not being egalitarian towards the underprivileged and their brothers in the community on the post-paschal level (see chapter 1). At this point, the disciples (the church leaders?) had a conditional approach of accepting the social and religious outcasts among the Israelite community (Van Aarde 1994:92,125). Moreover, Van Aarde's (1994:126) assumption is that if the attitude of the disciples (the church leaders?) were the same as those of the Israelite leaders (in neglecting the underprivileged) they were indeed blind leaders. This can be accepted as a fact. The disciples did not recognize that God's kingdom had an egalitarian character (that nobody was greater than another, cf Matthew 18:1-4), and that all were brothers in forgiving one another's sins. Therefore, the intention of the teaching of Jesus was inclusive on behalf of his followers. Although the Jewish leaders and the disciple community were not egalitarian in their approach, the perception of the egalitarian nature of the community of Matthew was directly compared to the hierarchy of the parent body (cf Sim 1998:140). It was an inclusive community, having embraced all the different groups of people. However, as stated, their inclusiveness was not perfect in that it did not include everyone, compared to the inclusive and egalitarian teachings of Jesus.

To summarize Van Aarde's point, the pre-paschal and post-paschal levels continued in Matthew's narrative. Thus, Jesus' teaching, of being inclusive of all people on the pre-paschal level, was intended to be followed in the community of disciples on the post-paschal level. However, Jesus' teaching of inclusivity was not continued in the community of his disciples on the post-paschal level: his disciples included all people, but was not an egalitarian-structured community, owing to the fact that their community was a community of disciples<sup>16</sup> with a hierarchical structure.

### **2.3.2 J Riches**

Riches (1996:45) begins his study regarding transparency by reading the narrative in Matthew, which clearly overlaps with the reflection of the Matthean community in relation to the stated

circumstances in the life of Jesus. He gives some evidence supporting this view, when Jesus referred to the notion of “church” in Matthew 16:18 and 18:17. Riches believes that the world of Jesus’ Galilean ministry had been clearly transported to the life of the Matthean community or other early Christian communities (Riches 1996:45). On the other hand, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark regarded the Pharisees as being in positions of authority. Matthew’s narrative describes a position of authority to the Pharisees, as well as to the chief priests in the time of the ministry of Jesus<sup>17</sup> (Mt 21:45). This would imply that the Pharisees indeed held a position of authority during the lifetime of Jesus. However, Mark had previously referred to the authoritarian positions of Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders, but not to those of the Pharisees (Riches 1996:45). The Pharisees held a position of authority after 70 C.E. Therefore, Riches pre-supposed an overlapping from the lifetime of Jesus with that of the Matthean community.

Riches explained the overlapping by focusing on “the Beatitudes” and “the Antitheses” in the Sermon on the Mount. In his interpretation of Jesus’ main teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (the beatitudes) in the pre-paschal commission, Riches (1996:78-85) mentioned Jesus as having been inclusive. Jesus preached salvation to poor, suffering people and social and religious outcasts. Riches (1996:80) emphasizes that the original teachings of Jesus included love (towards social or religious outcasts) and acceptance (salvation) towards everyone. His analysis of the original three beatitudes of Jesus focuses on the poor, the hungry and those that wept (this view accords with Luz 1989:227-229).

According to Riches (1996:79), the intent of Jesus’ beatitudes was to “proclaim the unrestricted grace of God to the disadvantaged, regardless of anything that they might have done in an endeavour to earn it.” The activities of Jesus and the focus of his ministry were to approach the poor and to unlock the kingdom of heaven to them. However, Matthew’s redaction was different to the teaching of Jesus; for example, Matthew 5:11-12 (the congregation who were persecuted) announced blessings to the disadvantaged during the time of the ministry of Jesus in the world. The redaction of Matthew stated that the blessing was designated for the congregation and not simply for the outcasts in the world. This redaction

leads to Riches' opinion that the teaching of Jesus was focused on the outcasts, being the poor and suffering people in the world, but that Matthew changed the focus of his congregational teachings, which then became the norm in his community. It is therefore contended that the ministry of Jesus was completely inclusive, compared to that of the Matthean community, which was only partially inclusive.

“The Antitheses” in the Sermon on the Mount illustrates a similar tendency. The focus of the original teaching of Jesus was on his command to love. In order to embrace and fully grasp the Law, we need to respect the teachings of Jesus. This implies that the Law was indeed under the authority of Jesus. However, the change Matthew brought about, stressed the continued significance of the authority of the Law for his community. The perspective of Riches regarding the interpretation of “the Antitheses” accords with the perception of Luz, that is, that the teachings of Jesus were indeed transparent (a continuum from Jesus' activity) to the time of Matthew's own redaction. The original teaching of Jesus emphasized the character of his commandments as love. Matthew's community, however, was considered to be a sectarian group. They were much more cautious about the application of the radical ethic of Jesus in their community (Riches 1996:84). The early Christian community had attempted to live by the teachings and preaching of Jesus. However, the circumstances changed in their post-paschal context. They were in need of a legal system to administer this new ethical role. This is the reason for Matthew's redaction of some of the original teachings of Jesus Christ. We can, thus, assume that the teachings of Jesus were indeed inclusive and that the disciple's community was less inclusive.

According to Riches (1996:67), the community of Matthew developed the forms of Christian ministry. Matthew's community was not actually an “original Christian community.” His community embodied the majority of the principles that Jesus preached, even though they also inherited certain ideas from Judaism. Therefore, the Matthean community contained both Christian and Israelite ideals as its foundation. Riches (1996:72) concluded that this is the reason for the existence of tension and conflict between this community and the Israelite leadership. Riches' view of the structure of the Matthean

community is that it is an egalitarian yet hierarchical community. This becomes evident in Chapter 18 where Matthew dealt with specific problems regarding discipline in his community. Members were in conflict with regard to their status and position within the community (Mt 18:1-5).

Jesus and his teachings were therefore inclusive pertaining to his pre-paschal commission but the Matthean community was hierarchical. The community of Matthew was not an egalitarian structured society.

### **2.3.3 D Sim**

Sim's (1998) point of departure was to prepare a survey on current scholarship regarding Matthew's community as it accorded with Overman (1990) and Saldarini (1994), contrary to Stanton (1992). Matthew favoured Judaism. On the one hand, the Gospel of Matthew considered itself to be "Jewish" rather than "Christian"; as a sectarian group in conflict with a parent body. The Matthean community was a Law-observant "Jewish" group, which was in conflict with the Gentile world, as well as with the larger "Jewish world" in the Diaspora. On the other hand, they felt threatened by the Law-free wing of the movement - a version of the Christian message to which the Law-observant author of Matthew's Gospel and his readers were vehemently opposed (Sim 1998:7).

As mentioned above, the Matthean community was considered to be a sectarian group, which originally hailed from Judaism. The Matthean community had a lot in common with the formative Judaism in the Israelite world (Sim 1998:115-16). This is, according to Sim's view on Matthew's community, a very important presupposition. This Israelite sect was not yet independent from the main body of Judaism. The Matthean community was thus an Israelite-Christian community living in the Gentile world. These viewpoints are, according to Sim, significant in understanding transparency regarding the Matthean community. In his book, Sim (1998) did not often mention the Matthean community's transparency. However, he discussed some issues of transparency in the teachings of Jesus pertaining to the pre-paschal commission, together with the continuation of the teaching of Jesus on a post-paschal

level in relation to the community of Matthew.

Sim's (1998:249) view regards the teaching of Jesus as being on the pre-paschal level. The Gospel of Mark demonstrated that Jesus' teaching was inclusive of all people such as Gentiles and that this effectively abolished the Israelite dietary (and purity) laws. According to Mark's perspective on Jesus, a barrier no longer existed in relation to the relationship with Gentiles. Moreover, Jesus strongly supported this stance amongst Israelites, for instance at the table-fellowship in Mark 7:1-30. The attitude of Jesus at the table-fellowship with his disciples created a problem with the Pharisees and some of the teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem. Jesus confronted them, because he abolished the Law. This indicates that the Law became an obstacle to the Gentiles or outcasts when they were entering a relationship with Jesus.

However, Matthew's revision of the conflict with the Pharisees (Mt 15:1-28) was similar in perspective to that of Mark's pericope. Sim believed that Matthew's description was more Israelite orientated than that of Mark. Mark, for example, primarily depicts the journey of Jesus to the Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon, where he entered a house and ate with a Syro-Phoenician woman (Mk 7:24-30). In contrast, Matthew depicts the Syro-Phoenician woman as coming from the Gentile land. This does, therefore, indicate that Matthew predominantly adhered to an Israelite view, whilst Mark's perspective was slightly different. Mark's version was that Jesus himself allowed the healing of the Gentile woman's demon-possessed daughter. According to Matthew's text, the Canaanite woman came to Jesus from the Gentile land of Tyre and Sidon (see Jackson 2002:27, 146; 2003:784-785) and she sought Jesus' assistance. More important is the fact that Jesus refused to heal the Canaanite woman's daughter and that Jesus answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Mt 15:24). Secondly, Mark depicted Jesus as declaring all foods to be clean and in doing so, abolishing the Jewish dietary laws, but Matthew emphasized that the Jewish Jesus and the Gentile woman were distinct, with the result that Matthew avoided the table fellowship between Jesus and the Gentiles (Mk 7:2 and Mt 15:2).<sup>18</sup> According to Mark, Jesus was inclusive of all people, but Matthean inclusivity was not found by Sim to be on a similar platform to Mark. We can assume that this

was the reason for Matthew's community having been less inclusive than that of Mark's. Sim emphasized that Matthew's community was, on a post-paschal level, considered to be a Judaistic sectarian group who faithfully abided by the customs of Judaism (cf the law and purity).

In order to clearly demonstrate the way in which Sim arrived at his conclusions, we need to consider Sim's perspective on the Matthean community within the framework of Judaism. Classified as a sectarian community, Matthew's community consisted of both good and bad members existing in the narrative as outlined by Matthew. The First Evangelist used a wide variety of antithetical or dualistic terms, which were enumerated as follows: Matthew contrasted the righteous with the doers of lawlessness (Mt 13:41-43), the righteous as opposed to the wicked (Mt 13:49), the righteous against the cursed (Mt 25:37, 41) and the faithful and the wicked (Mt 24:45-51). It is probable, as may be seen in all of the above points, that Matthew's intention was to describe his community as primarily being divided into two categories, the good (*'αγαθοί*) and the wicked (*πονηροί*), in Matthew 5:45; 7:17-18; 12:34-35; 22:10; 25:14-30 (Sim 1998:117). The Matthean community comprised of the righteous and the good: those who were faithful to God, those who were wicked and those who opposed the community. Sim maintained (1988:118-119) that it was the Jewish leadership<sup>19</sup> who opposed the community. We can assume that Matthew's community engaged in certain conflicts with the Temple leadership. This argument could lead us to the conclusion that Matthew's community was no longer considered a part of Israel. However, Sim's argument (1998:121; cf Overman 1990:142-47) was that Matthew's community was still in contact with the Temple leadership, such as the scribes and Pharisees. The Matthean community did, for instance, share a number of common religious practices with formative Judaism, which included almsgiving, praying and fasting (Mt 6:1-18). Sim, therefore, emphasized that the Law was central within Matthew's community. The observance of the divine statutes was of immense importance to them.

The conflict between the Matthean community and the Israelite leadership (scribes and Pharisees) centred on the interpretation of the Law. According to the Matthean community,



the command of love that Jesus taught was inclusive of all people, because everyone longed for mercy, as in the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23-35). According to Sim (1998:128-29), the teachings of Jesus relating to the commandment of love expounded the Mosaic commandments regarding murder and anger (Mt 5:21-26), adultery (Mt 5:27-30), divorce (Mt 5:31-32), oaths (Mt 5:33-37), retaliation (Mt 5:38-42) as well as love for one's enemies (Mt 5:43-47). As Matthew's community accepted this new commandment of love, they became a community characterized by a higher righteousness. This was the reason for the Matthean community having been hostile towards the Israelite leadership, owing to the First Evangelist's group believing that the scribes and Pharisees had lost sight of the true meaning of the Mosaic Law. Matthew's community maintained the true meaning of the Law (Mt 23:23) (Sim 1998:131; Saldarini 1994:141-3). Therefore, according to Sim's view, Matthew's community was more of a Law-observing group than the Israelites (of scribes and Pharisees) and there was a difference between Matthew's community and that of the Israelite groups. From Sim's discussion, we can assume that the First Evangelist's community continued to observe the Law (Jesus' new interpretation of Mosaic Law) (Sim 1988:134).

According to Sim (1998:141), the First Evangelist's community was a distinct, outside group, similar to the Gentiles and Law-free Christians<sup>20</sup> (like the Pauline communities). Sim believed that Matthew mentioned both the Gentile group (Mt 5:47; 6:7, 32) and the Law-free Christians (Mt 5:17-19; 7:13-27) in the narrative. In fact the Matthean community was still involved in Law-observant practices, but these were distinctive from the type of Judaism practised by the Scribes, Pharisees and the Law-free Christian community (see Chapter 1, where Matthew's Law-observant community, together with Paul's Law-free community, is discussed). Moreover, the Matthean community was involved in an anti-Pauline situation.

Sim's (1998) viewpoint regarding this situation was demonstrated in several ways. We will consider one aspect of it. Matthew's anti-Pauline view included the entire Christian movement in the First Century. Matthew perceived the movement of Jesus' followers in terms of a "mixed state" (cf Gundry 1994) of true and false members, as clearly presented in the parable of the tares in Matthew 13:36-43. This parable (Mt 13:36-43) includes the earlier tares

parable (in Mt 13:24-30). Sim (1998:203; cf Jeremias 1972:81-5; Davies and Allison 1991:426-7) argues that, “most commentators correctly attributed this complete pericope to the hand of the Evangelist.” Sim (1988:203-204) interpreted the parable of the tares in the following way:

Jesus the Son of Man sowed the good seed (the sons of the kingdom) in his field (the world), but the devil attempted to spoil this by sowing weeds (the sons of the evil one) among the wheat. The two must grow together until the harvest (the eschatological judgment), at which time the reapers (the holy angels) will gather out of the kingdom of the Son of Man all causes of sin and doers of lawlessness (τους ποιούντας τὴν ἀνομίαν) and throw them into the furnace of fire. The righteous, on the other hand, will be gathered into the barn (heaven) where they will shine like their (heavenly) Father. Since the kingdom of the Son of Man (cf 16:28;20:21) is most naturally identified with the Christian movement, most scholars agree that in this pericope Matthew is providing his view of the division within that movement.

Sim’s view of the parable of the tares is particularly important, as he argues that Matthew was speaking about the Christian movement and that it did not just apply to his community. Matthew significantly described the anti-Christian movement, which was considered different to such “doers of lawlessness.” Matthew’s conviction regarding Jesus’ teachings was not that they promoted lawlessness, but that they fulfilled the law. Matthew’s view of the Law-free Gospel did not differ from the teachings of Jesus, and moreover whosoever followed the Law-free stream would be in Matthew’s view, serving paganism. However, the Law-observing members of the Christian movement would receive eternal rewards (Sim 1998:204). Therefore, the Matthean community formed part of a community that belonged to the Law-observing Christian movement, whilst the Pauline law-free Christian movement was considered to be part of paganism.

This interpretation is still debated by many scholars (cf Manson 1949:195; Barth 1963:159-64; Segal 1991:21-22). However, our focus is on Sim's perspective regarding the place of the Law in both Matthew's community and the Pauline communities. If we accept Sim's view of the Matthean community as being a Law-observing Christian group and regard the Pauline community as a Law-free Christian community, we could then also assume that the teaching of Jesus was egalitarian in character (structure) and inclusive of all people. The Pauline-Christian community was less egalitarian and inclusive than that determined by the teachings of Jesus on a pre-paschal level (see Chapter 1). Matthew's community was also less egalitarian but still inclusive. According to Sim, evidence regarding this seems clear-cut when the function of the Law in each of the three groups is considered. The teachings of Jesus were perfectly inclusive and egalitarian in the eyes of the Law. The Pauline-Christian group was, however, less inclusive and egalitarian according to the Law (the Pauline mission was inclusive of all people, but the Jerusalem church was the major stumbling block to their mission Acts 11:1-2; 15:1-2). However, Matthew's community was not egalitarian, as the Law was still a powerful authority in his community. Similarly, this was also the case in the Jewish community. Matthew's community was therefore inclusive, but not egalitarian in its approach.

According to Sim (1998:209), Matthew's community structure was determined by a Law-free, as well as a Law-observing, way of following Jesus. This indicates that some of the members of Matthew's community were from a Gentile background, and were open to the Gentile mission. The First Evangelist's community, in all likelihood, continued to follow the inclusive teachings of Jesus on a pre-paschal level. We must therefore consider the mission of the disciple's community (the post-paschal disciple's community) toward the Gentiles from a transparency perspective.

Sim's definition (1998:248, 301) of the Gentiles in Matthew's community refers to those who had been converted to Christianity, and had also accepted submission to the Israelite notion of salvation. Ignatius's letter mentioned that "the Gentile Christian church and the Christian Jewish community of Antioch were in conflict with one another". The main

instruction received by this mixed state within the community was the Christian teaching of Jesus. It is important to realize the inclusive teachings of Jesus (to serve people) on the pre-paschal level, as they were a role model for Matthew's community on the post-paschal level (Sim 1998: 250).

However, according to Sim (1998:249), the First Evangelist's depiction of the Gentiles was that they were not equal to the Israelite members: For example, the Gentile and Israelite women who accompanied Jesus were not equal in terms of their rights, due to the fact that the law-observing Matthean community was not egalitarian in its approach. During New Testament times, the sectarian groups ranked their members hierarchically, putting proselytizing first in order to meet the basic requirements for admission (Sim 1998:254). Sim's view is that Matthew's community mainly targeted the Gentiles, but not in a way similar to the inclusiveness of all people within Jesus' ministry. The First Evangelist's problem with the Law-observing group was to avoid the inclusion of all people, just as "The Antiochene Christian-Jewish community of Matthew remained true to the tradition of the Jerusalem church" (Sim 1998:216).

#### **2.3.4 Summary**

The fore-going discussion has concluded that it is proper to regard the inclusive ministry of Jesus as transparent to his disciple-community, since the three groups involved in the teachings of Jesus' ministry: the people of Israel, the Israelites' leaders, and the disciples, have been interpreted from the perspective of the literary tendency of transparency. Matthew's narrative plot consists of two levels, the first at the time of the pre-paschal ministry of Jesus, and the second at the time of the post-paschal commission of the disciples. The earthly life of Jesus on the pre-paschal level continued in the life of the post-paschal community. Hence, this inclusive ministry of Jesus was transparent to his disciples' community. Contrary to this, Matthew's community was, as a sectarian group, on a post-paschal level. This indicates that the Matthean-Christian community, as a newly-founded community, inherited much from Judaism. The new issue of its recent foundation caused

much conflict within the local hierarchy. This was due to the Law-observing Christian members being structured hierarchically within Judaism, whilst the Law-free Christians were exempt. Hence, Matthew's community was indeed inclusive of all people within a partially hierarchical structure.

#### **2.4 A Structuralist approach**

The purpose of historical criticism (redaction, form, source) is to determine the formation of the text. For instance, the task of redaction criticism is to establish the theological position of the Synoptic Gospels in the sense that each Evangelist selected and compiled his material from the individual fragments of tradition (Conzelmann & Lindemann 1988:83). Historical criticism contributed to the examination of the individual nature of the Gospels by considering aspects of their language, form and historical religion (Van Aarde 1994: 26).

However, many scholars have realized that the problem of historical criticism is that it has not examined the immanent text itself, but "hidden texts" beyond the immanent text. However, a number of Biblical scholars, mainly from the United States, have focused on the internal meaning of the text (see Malbon 1992:23-24). Some scholars have also started to focus on the text, investigating the interrelated characters, settings, and actions in the plot, which have contributed to the interpretation of the narrative's meaning. This implies that the scholar's focus has moved from the historical to the literary (employing narratology, structuralism) in Biblical studies. Hence, the major influence of structuralism<sup>21</sup> on Biblical studies has been on exegesis and literary analysis. In Europe, on the other hand, French Structuralism has influenced Biblical literary criticism. Structuralism derived from linguistics and developments in anthropology, literature and other areas (Malbon 1992:25).

According to Saussure (1966:114), language functions within an inter-relationship between various facets of a sentence, as language is a system of inter-dependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others. These internal relations consist of two basic kinds. A linguistic unit stands in a linear or syntagmatic relationship to what comes before or after it in the sequence. A language involves an

underlying structure, which then makes sense with words combined according to the structural principles of a particular language. Thus, the structure of language is a study of the underlying ground rules of a language, as part of the immanent structure of approaches in the exegesis of the Bible text (Tuckett 1987:154).

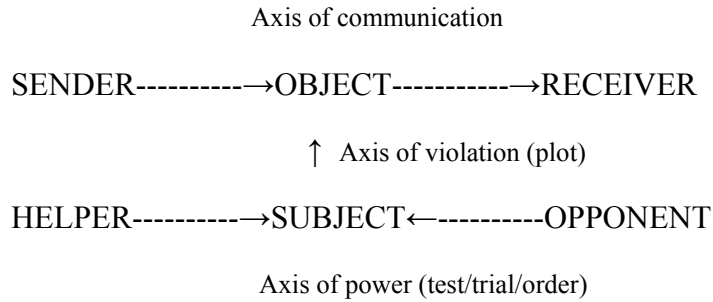
Structuralism has been an attractive approach for Biblical scholars and they have employed various structural approaches in the exegesis of the Gospels. These structural methods have shifted the emphasis to the analysis of the linguistic superficial structure and the structural patterns latent in the depth structure (Van Aarde 1994:27). Structuralism makes three affirmations about language.<sup>22</sup> One of them is that language is communication. According to Malbon (1992:25), in structuralism, language was modelled as communication from a sender, conveying a message to a receiver. Moreover, structuralism models literature as communication in the form of an author giving a text to a reader. It is very important to note that structuralists, in particular (like literary critics in general), focus on the text: “structuralist critics note that within a narrative text, a sender gives an object to a receiver” (seen from the perspective of redaction criticism, the process is different, because the focus of redaction criticism is on the sender or author) (Malbon 1992:25). Structuralism entails the study of the language of the text in a synchronic way. The history of the tradition within which the present text was composed also provides an interesting frame of reference for the proper interpretation of the model of the language: both communication and narrative, as language has been expounded by Greimas (1977:23-40). Greimas modified Propp’s (1968) theory, which was the predecessor of the structural analysis of narrative. Propp determined that in order to perform a proper structural analysis of a given text, it would be necessary to discover the underlying structural unity beneath the variety of particular stories and their character by studying, for example, the field of Russian folk-tales.

The Greimas’ commutation theory (semiotic theory) was subsequently applied to New Testament texts by Daniel Patte (1976, 1987; cf Long 1980). In his application, Patte did not take into account the linguistic surface structure, but analyzed the so-called “narrative nouveau” of the narrative structure (Van Aarde 1994:27). According to Galland (1976:14-21),

according to the narrative grammar theory of Greimas, Greimas' actantial model<sup>23</sup> describes syntax as a system as well as a process appearing in the narrative structure on two levels: as the deep structure and the surface structure<sup>24</sup> (see Van Aarde 1994:27; Long 1980:71-72). The representation of an actantial position constitutes grammar in the narrative structure.

The surface structure is the current shape of the language, which is generally referred to as the syntactical structure. The deep structure is beneath the surface structure and it serves to bring about the inter-relationships and interweaving of the language structure. The deep structure is the "real" meaning of the text, generally called the semantic meaning. The deep syntactic structures are generated by the base component and surface structures resulting from the operations of the transformational system. Therefore, both these levels are connected by the semantic and phonological components, as the former is concerned with semantics, the latter is concerned with the phonological interpretation. Moreover, the semantic component is associated with the deep structure, while the phonological and phonetic components are situated on the level of surface structures (Greimas & Courtés 1982:132). The actants of the narrative form is the subject/object and sender/receiver in the communication process. The narrative trajectory has a pre-determined way of incorporating the actantial role with the syntactic actants (inscribed in a given narrative programme) such as the subject of state and the subject of doing, but the functional (or syntagmatic) actants can be opposed to the syntactic actants (Greimas & Courtés 1982:5). The actant could assume a certain number of actantial roles in the logical sequence of the narration. Greimas has converted the operations of the fundamental grammar into simple narrative utterances consisting of an action, or function, and an agent of that action, or an actant. Moreover, Greimas has developed a catalogue of the actants, which include subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent.

During the heyday of structuralism, structural methods of textual analysis were conceived as promising critical approaches for understanding how the actions of characters in narratives are shaped into a plot. Greimas (1966:180-183) constructed an actantial model, expressed in the following way;



Greimas' identification of actants in the narrative structure is applied in the following way:

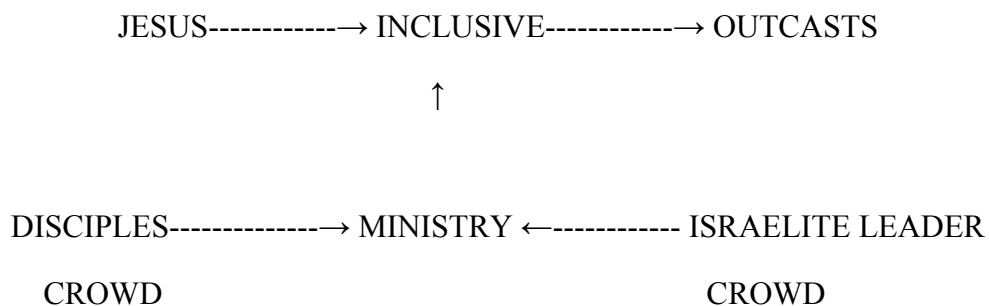
- 1) The sender is the one that possesses the object just prior to the point at which it is communicated to the receiver.
- 2) The receiver is the one who possesses the object until the end of the narrative.
- 3) The object is that which is placed in a predetermined spot of the narrative structure: we need to ask at the very beginning of the analysis, what is missing in the narrative, by whom or what are the objects transmitted? What is the place of communication (Calloud 1976:36)?
- 4) The subject is that which resolves the conflict caused by not knowing who (what) is performing the task in the narrative and who (what) permits the transfer of the object from the sender to the receiver.
- 5) The helper is the instrument supporting the subject in the accomplishment of the task. For instance, when Jesus was arguing with the Jewish leaders, the disciples came and supported Jesus in Matthew's narrative. The helper is not necessarily human in nature; many objects can become helpers in the Biblical narrative (for example, a citation of Scripture).
- 6) The opponent (as instrument) opposes the subject in the accomplishment of the tasks and opposes the transfer of the object.

This communication model of sender-message-receiver affords narrative critics a framework for approaching the text. Hence, each of these six poles on the grid represents an actant of the story. However, a structural analysis is not aimed at providing the meaning of the individual story, but is more concerned with analyzing how individual stories have meanings (Tuckett 1987:156). It is concerned with showing how the text makes sense and with the



mechanisms through which a text becomes meaningful, according to the rules governing the use of the language (Patte and Patte 1978:10; Tuckett 1987:156).

In this section, this communication model will be employed in the investigation of the inclusive community in Matthew’s narrative. Jesus functioned as a sender (protagonist), with the receivers having been the outcasts and the people referred to as the ordinary people in the narrative. The Israelite leaders were opponents (Kingsbury 1987:57; Cousland 2002:268), but sometimes the crowd might also have been acting as antagonists or, alternatively, having been on the side of Jesus Christ (Kingsbury 1988b:3), as were the disciples of Jesus, together with the other “helpers” of Jesus. The subject matter of the story is Jesus’ inclusive ministry (teaching, healing and driving out demons) (Kingsbury 1986b:4), together with the evangelistic endeavours of the disciples. The object of Jesus’ ministry is the outcasts, whether a child, Gentile, woman or disabled person. In Matthew’s narrative, the ministry and teaching of Jesus has an inclusive intent regarding Matthew’s community. However, the opponents of Jesus, the Israelite leaders, opposed this intent. We could, therefore, consider the community situation from two perspectives: Jesus’ inclusive perspective and the Israelite leaders’ hierarchical perspective in the following way:



The ministry of Jesus, consisting of teaching, healing and casting out of demons, pertains to the sending out of an inclusive message to outcasts. Outcasts received the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus’ healing and the realization of the kingdom of God. Yet, this inclusive teaching was rejected and opposed by the Israelite leaders, as well as some of the crowds. We will use the above model for the following review of recent scholarly works.

### 2.4.1 J D Kingsbury

The narrative of Matthew's Gospel focuses on the story of Jesus from his birth to his death and resurrection. The narrative of Jesus is in conflict with Jewish leaders; its plot is based on conflict. The purpose of discussing Kingsbury's work is to determine the inclusive ministry of Jesus in the midst of a conflicting narrative story.

Kingsbury emphasized that Matthew's narrative plot is the unfolding of the story of Jesus, which focuses on his conflict with the Israelite leaders. Kingsbury ( [1975] 1989:1-39, 40) argued that Matthew's narrative is divided into a beginning (Mt 1:1-4:16), a middle (Mt 4:17-16:20) and an end (Mt 16:21-28:20). As Matthew's narrative progressed, the conflict experienced with the Israelite leaders from the beginning to the end increased drastically, culminating in Jesus' death on the cross, followed by his supernatural resurrection. The conflict element was the central point to the plot of Matthew's narrative (Kingsbury 1986b:3). In Matthew's narrative, Matthew on the one hand describes Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, having received authority from God to save his people from their sins (Kingsbury 1997:16), whilst on the other hand, the Israelite leaders are the antagonists of Jesus. Matthew characterizes them as evil (Mt 13:38), while he describes Jesus as righteous (Kingsbury 1997:17). Kingsbury analyzed the conflicting stories in each passage. His analysis of Matthew 9 and 12 serves as a case in point.

Chapter 9 deals with the conflict which broke out in a cycle of four controversies: the first when some men brought a paralytic to Jesus (Mt 9:1-8); Jesus and his disciples eating with tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:9-13); the question as to why the disciples of Jesus did not fast (Mt 9:14-17); and finally, the event where Jesus performed an exorcism on a demon-possessed person (Mt 9:32-34) (Kingsbury 1997:18-20).

The first conflicting discourse, that of "Jesus and a paralytic man", was debated as supporting an inclusive salvation, with Jesus forgiving the man and his sins. Matthew mentioned that Jesus' healing included leading an unclean man to his salvation. Kingsbury (1986b:4) emphasized that Jesus' teachings, preaching and healing are all centred on a call to

Israelites to repent, in order for them to be blessed with salvation. The opponents (some scribes) of Jesus take umbrage at this act and charge him with blasphemy against God for having ascribed to himself the divine authority to forgive sins (Kingsbury 1997:19).

This passage does not indicate the supportive function of the others, but rather focuses on the inclusive attitude of Jesus toward a paralytic man through forgiveness of his sins, Jesus knowing the scribes' hearts (Mt 9:3). In the second place, "Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners" (Mt 9:9-13). Jesus' table fellowship with the tax collectors and sinners indicates that he indeed includes the tax collectors as well as sinners in his discourse regarding salvation. The Pharisees do not assail Jesus for his behaviour, but they ask the disciples of Jesus: "Why does your teacher eat with them"? (Kingsbury 1997:19) The disciples do not support Jesus. This passage also portrays that the intent of Jesus was certainly inclusive of both tax collectors and sinners, even though the Israelite leaders (Pharisees) do not include them (see Chapter 5). In the pericope, Matthew 9:32-34 ("Jesus casts out demons"), the Pharisees and crowds witness Jesus exorcising a demon. The crowds are amazed and say, "nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (Mt 9:33). The crowds support Jesus in driving out demons. However, the Pharisees, as the opponents of Jesus, state that "by the prince of demons Jesus casts out demons". Kingsbury included all of this in the preceding discussion (of Matthew 9), indicating that the conflict surrounding the ministry of Jesus is intense and that the Israelite leaders form an integral part of this motive of repudiation. This tension rapidly escalates to the point of irreconcilable hostility (Kingsbury 1986b:5). The perspective of inclusiveness as indicated in Kingsbury's discussion of Matthew 9 shows that Jesus' intention is, indeed, to include tax collectors, unclean men, demon-possessed men, as well as sinners. By contrast, the Jewish leaders do not include them. We will now consider Kingsbury's commentary on Matthew 12.

The conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders existed as a result of differences regarding issues of the Mosaic Law, such as breaking the divine command to rest on the Sabbath when the disciples picked some heads of grain to eat or when Jesus healed a sick man on the Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-8 and 9-14. The Israelite leaders confronted him about

observing the Mosaic Law. The teachings of Jesus dealt with the general issues of life, whilst the Jewish leaders expanded their teaching on the Law, focusing primarily on maintaining the Sabbath according to the prescriptions of God in Matthew's narrative. Kingsbury (1997:21) pointed out that these controversies were of value to Jesus. The aforementioned discussion shows that Matthew described the conflict with the Israelite leaders and Jesus in various passages. We will now examine the inclusive ministry of Jesus in the entire narrative of Matthew's Gospel.

According to Kingsbury (1984:3-36), Matthew developed his narrative by way of an evaluative point of view. Jesus is the protagonist in his narrative and Matthew considers Jesus' point of view from within God's evaluative framework. Kingsbury's perspective is that Matthew, in his narrative, depicts the way in which God perceives Jesus, together with Matthew's own understanding of Jesus as he moves the reader through the plot of the narrative (Kingsbury 1984:7).

We have stated that the teachings of Jesus were inclusive, even though his opponents did not accept this inclusiveness in their teachings of Jesus. We consider the disciples, together with the crowd, as having fulfilled an assisting function with reference to the teachings and ministry of Jesus. However, Kingsbury's (1986:103) argument concerning a narrative analysis of the role of the disciples in Matthew was that they were helpers of Jesus, yet were also in conflict with him. But the conflict between Jesus and the disciples was not quite the same as his conflict with the Israelite leaders. Matthew probably regarded the conflict between them as having originated from Jesus' teachings, which offered new insights and/or perceptions.

According to Kingsbury (1986:104), the narrative in Matthew was characterized by the fact that the disciples did not appear at all in the first part of the narrative (Mt 1:1-4:16). Only after Jesus started his ministry, did the disciples become involved in the evangelizing of people. In the second part (Mt 4:17-16:20), Jesus experienced relationship problems with his disciples, as they did not fully understand his instructions, arguably because they were people of little faith. Matthew portrayed the fact that Jesus' ministry to Israel, together with that of his disciples, created a new community, described inclusively as a brotherhood of the sons of

God and the disciples of Jesus. The reason for this was to engage in missionary activities (Kingsbury 1986:110). The disciples initially did not fully assist Jesus in his ministry because they had little faith and did not understand the divine authority in the way Jesus did. In the third part of Matthew's narrative (Mt 16:21-28:20), pure servitude constituted the essence of true discipleship. Matthew depicted the basis of the evaluative viewpoint as Jesus' devotion to God and as loving one's neighbour, even to the extent of suffering and death. The actual basis of the disciples from the evaluative viewpoint was self-concern, which was the exact opposite of the servitude taught, as Kingsbury (1986:116) said that "it was about being important, having status in the eyes of others, possessing wealth, exercising authority over others, overcoming might with might and saving someone's life, no matter what the cost." In summary, the ministry of Jesus' and his disciples consisted of teaching, preaching and healing people. Yet Jesus and his disciples were in conflict, due to the latter not having enough faith and wisdom to understand the divine authority of Jesus. Hence, the assistant function that the disciples were required to fulfill, faltered.

The crowd in Matthew's narrative (in a structuralist framework) was investigated by Kingsbury (1969) in *The parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A study in redaction criticism*.<sup>25</sup> According to Kingsbury (1969:25), Matthew distinguishes the crowds as one of the three major groups in his Gospel. When Matthew mentions the crowd, he was referring to and thinking of the Israelites. Hence, Kingsbury's (1969:24-28) view regarding the crowd was that they were Israelites, along with their Israelite leaders. The disciples of Jesus did not belong to the crowd. Due to the disciples being followers of Jesus with the crowd, they became implacable enemies of the followers of the Israelite authorities.

Matthew portrayed the function of the crowds differently from that of the Israelites, owing to the leaders they followed. Of course, both of them adopted contradictory attitudes towards Jesus. However, the crowd did not act contrary to Jesus in some passages. For instance, the Scribes stated that Jesus blasphemed (Mt 9:3), but they instead glorified God who had given such authority to men (Mt 9:8). The Pharisees accused Jesus twice of having cast out demons by way of the prince of demons (Mt 9:34; 12:24), and yet marvelled at Jesus' act of exorcism

(Mt 9:33), after which the chief priests and the Pharisees attempted to arrest him (Mt 21:45). However, they were afraid of the crowd, as the people believed he was a prophet. The Sadducees attempted to confound Jesus (Mt 22:23-8), but the crowds were astonished at his teaching (Mt 22:33) (Kingsbury 1969:25). All of the above passages state that the role of these crowds was to assist the ministry of Jesus.

In the passion narrative, Matthew identified that it was the Israelite leaders who authorized the death of Jesus. Within the passion narrative, the function of the crowds was to help the Israelite leaders in the crucifixion of Jesus (Mt 27:20-24). Moreover, the crowds cried out, “His blood be on us and on our children” (Mt 27:25), at the height of the trial before Pilate. Here, Kingsbury (1969:26) emphasized that the crowd’s function was to be considered in a neutral or even a positive light. He argued that Matthew’s use of *λαός* in 27:25 revealed a desire on his part to spare the crowds *per se* from the responsibility of shedding Jesus’ blood, which non-believing Israel was supposed to carry.

Kingsbury (1969:26-27) also pointed out that Matthew portrays certain crowds as directly involved in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus taught the crowds (Mt 4:23; 7:28; 9:35; 11:1) and healed their infirmities (Mt 4:23-25; 9:35; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2). In Matthew’s narrative, the ambivalent function of the crowds, assisting the ministry of Jesus, divides into two facets: as they support Jesus’ ministry and support the Israelite leaders. Kingsbury (1969:130) emphasized the function of the crowd as stated above, and his analysis was particularly sound in noting that “the function of Chapter 13 within the ground plan of Matthew’s Gospel was to signal the great turning point, where Jesus turns<sup>26</sup> away from the Israelite (crowds) to his disciples.” However, he did not mention, by way of a determinate historical narrative, exactly what kind of relationship existed between Matthew’s community and Judaism.

Kingsbury informs us that the ministry of Jesus was inclusive of all people, even though they struggled with little faith and did not, therefore, understand the divine authority of Jesus. Hence, the disciples sometimes could not assist Jesus in his ministerial endeavours. The crowds were also sometimes opposed to the ministry of Jesus and were not always supportive. It implies that Matthew’s community was not an egalitarian structure, but was inclusive

within a hierarchical structure.

#### **2.4.2 M A Powell**

Powell (1992:187-204) published an essay on Matthew's narrative structure in which he (1992:194) clearly indicated that there were two kinds of events mentioned in Matthew's narrative structure: the preaching of Jesus (Mt 4:17) and his passion (Mt 16:21). According to this perspective, the main plot of Matthew's narrative consists of God's plan and Satan's challenge. Powell (1992:199) believed that Matthew on the one hand depicts God's plan as saving God's people from their sin and stated emphatically that this plan would be achieved through the ministry of Jesus (Mt 1:21). Jesus was presented as the Son of God, God with us (Mt 1:23), and God was pleased with Jesus (Mt 3:17). On the other hand, Satan soon appeared and opposed the ministry of Jesus. Satan challenged Jesus on divine authority (Mt 4:3, 6) and tempted Jesus to worship other gods (Mt 4:9-10). The plot of Matthew centres on Satan being in continual conflict with God's salvation plan. As the narrative continues, it indicates which way God's salvation plan would be carried out.

When Matthew's Jesus started his ministry of proclaiming the nearness of the Kingdom of heaven and calling sinners to repentance, the Israelite leaders intensely opposed every aspect of his ministry. They charged his ministry with blasphemy and tried to attribute his exorcisms to Beelzebub (Mt 9:34, 12:24). Jesus' message of salvation was inclusive of all people, even though the Israelite leaders did not recognize this inclusiveness. Powell emphasized the fact that the conflict between Jesus and the Israelite leaders was the essential reason for opposition between God and Satan in Matthew's narrative (Powell 1992:202).

The function of the disciples in Matthew's narrative was opposite to that of the Israelite leaders. The disciples were assistants in the ministry of Jesus and did not appear in Chapter 1 to 4 in Matthew's narrative. When Jesus began his ministry, the disciples appeared, as having represented the fulfillment of God's plan in the salvation of people through Jesus. Powell (1992:202-203) emphasized that the disciples were sinners whom Jesus had called to become part of a new community in order to perform the will of God (Mt 9:13, 12:49-50). As with

Jesus, they were given authority to drive out demons and were sent to proclaim the message that the kingdom of heaven would soon be coming (Mt 10:7). Though they were useful in assisting the ministry of Jesus, Powell's perspective was similar to that of Kingsbury (as discussed in the section above), arguing that the disciples had too little faith (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). When Jesus predicted his passion, the function of the disciples changed and was no longer that of assisting the ministry of Jesus. Nevertheless, they assisted the Israelite leaders in accomplishing God's plan of including all people (Mt 16:23). Powell (1992:203) was firmly convinced that Satan utilized the Israelite leaders in an attempt to thwart the ministry of Jesus in calling sinners to repentance. Satan tried to work through the disciples in a devastating attempt to prevent Jesus from dying on the cross, in order to prevent the sinner having faith and being reconciled with his Father who saves.

Powell determined that Matthew's main plot deals with the conflict as a result of God's salvation plan for all sinners. The plan of Jesus was inclusive for all sinners though Satan tried to prevent the will of God being fulfilled through the Israelite leaders who were opposed to Jesus' ministry. The function of the disciples was to faithfully support the ministry of Jesus, though they offered him little assistance, as can be seen in the passion narrative. In spite of these issues, it seems clear from Powell's work that Matthew's narrative of the ministry of Jesus was inclusive of all people.

### **2.4.3 Summary**

Both Kingsbury and Powell imply that the ministry of Jesus was inclusive of sinners and religious outcasts in Matthew's narrative. However, the leaders of Israel were antagonistic towards Jesus. They tried to prevent Matthew's understanding of what Jesus has done in God's plan of salvation. Kingsbury and Powell also emphasise that the disciples had "little faith" and, accordingly, could not understand the divine authority, which Jesus bore. The crowd was supportive towards Jesus' ministry and the Israelite leaders. After Jesus' resurrection, the disciple community adhered to the ministry of Jesus, even though they were not completely inclusive as Jesus himself.



## 2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the current body of scholarly work from the perspective of salvation history, which is transparent and structuralist in its approach. The focus of this chapter has been on the structure of Matthew's community. Some scholars are convinced that the social-structure of the Matthean community was egalitarian in nature. However, the above discussion has concluded that Matthew's community was not egalitarian, but nevertheless inclusive.

The focus of Jesus' ministry in Matthew's narrative was salvation for Israelites and Gentiles and the Matthean community's focus was eschatological and ecclesiological. Hence, the community was open to the salvation of all people, not only Israelites. The Matthean group was inclusive of all people in the new community (separated from the Israelites' community), having embraced Gentiles and religious outcasts. Hence, Matthew's community was universal in its attitude towards salvation. The Gospel clearly indicates that there would be a gathering of people at the end-expected day.

The ministry (teaching) of Jesus was regarded as inclusive. The post-Easter disciple community remembered Jesus' teaching, and considered them as separate from the Temple authorities as its parent body. As we have discussed, the Israelite society was, indeed, hierarchical (cf Lenski 1966:214-296). Matthew's community may have weakened the impact of Jesus' inclusive teaching by operating within a Judaistic framework. This perspective became evident using a structuralist approach, owing to Jesus' ministry being inclusive of all people, whilst the leaders of Israel continued to exclude the Gentiles. However, his disciple community was not part of an egalitarian structured society as Matthew's community was still involved in a hierarchical structure similar to the Israelites' community.

A structuralism approach also shows that the focus of Jesus' inclusive ministry was the crowd, while the antagonists were an obstacle to Jesus' inclusive ministry in Matthew's narrative. The Israelite leaders maintained the Law within their traditional hierarchical social structure. However, the ministry of Jesus included all people. Jesus' ministry was reflected in

Matthew's inclusive community.

The conclusion of a salvation history, transparency and structuralist approach that was applied above indicates that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society, but an inclusive community for all people. We will now proceed to the next chapter to discuss the social location of the Matthean community.

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<sup>1</sup> The salvation-historical category has usually been the approach of German scholars. The transparency category has also been employed by Matthean scholars, as in the pre-Easter and post-Easter perspectives of Matthew's Gospel. Greimas' communication model has been used in narratology. According to Van Aarde (1994:245), the communication model shows that the poetic function of narrative corresponds to the notion of plot and that the notion of plot also includes the emotive function (connotative function). The poetic function gives attention to the message of the narrative. It does not refer directly to the reality outside the text. It is selected, rearranged and interpreted in the message. Therefore the message provides for looking at extrinsic horizons, as a window.

<sup>2</sup> Strecker (1962:86-123) pointed out the importance of salvation history in the "historicizing" view of Matthew, who consciously distances himself from the "sacred past" of the "life of Jesus".

<sup>3</sup> The Matthean community is an eschatological community of God. They expected the coming of the kingdom of God. The evidence in which chapter 2 presents Jesus as the "King of the Jews" (verse 2), the eschatological Ruler of Israel (verse 6). Owing to the malevolent designs of Herod (verse 13) and Joseph's fear of Archelaus (verse 22), there is an occasion during which Jesus has to recapitulate in his person, by order of God (verses 12-13, 19, 22) and in fulfillment of OT prophecy (verses 6,15,18,23), the history of Israel as it relates to such types as Moses but especially Jacob (Israel) (Kingsbury 1973:455). Matthew certainly composes his document with ecclesiological concern.

<sup>4</sup> The public ministry of the earthly Jesus is under geographical and national limitations, because the gospel is to be preached only to Israel, and only in the promised land. Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; and 28:16-20 belong to Matthew's special material. Both Matthew 10:5-6 and 15:24 are expressions of Matthew's limited view of Jesus' public ministry as belonging to the territory and the people of Israel as Jesus sent his disciples only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and not to the Gentiles and Samaritans (Meier 1975: 204).

<sup>5</sup> Joubert's work concerns the function of the *Birkath Ha-Minim* in the period of the destruction of the temple during the *Bar Kochba Revolt*. He discussed the endeavours of earlier scholars (Katz 1984:63; Wilson 1989:67; Fritz 1988; Hartin 1991).

<sup>6</sup> In order to understand the gospel narrative, for instance, the resurrection of Jesus narrative, one should assume that it was transparent to the Christian community in the post-paschal period (see VanAarde 1989:221).

<sup>7</sup> Malina's (2002:608-631) work, using an in-group (we) / out-group (they) approach to Romans is helpful in understanding Judeans and Gentiles. He believes that the Mediterranean world was ethnocentric. Paul was also a typical Mediterranean ethnocentric person. When he took up the task of spreading God's gospel, he made it quite clear that the world was divided into Israelites (in-group) and non-Israelites (out-group). This in-group and out-group division is a form of boundary drawing that constitutes a fundamental dimension through ethnic terms such as common blood, common language, common way of life and common worship. Moreover, Malina believes that the New Testament writings are definitely ethnocentric. Malina divided Judean people into five terms: *Hebrew, Israelite, Benjamin, Pharisee, Judean, Dispersion, Greek* (see for more detail 620-621). The word Gentiles is the Israelite in-group designation for all people other than Israel. This means that Israel possesses the people of people and a divine disposition as well as a divine ascription. According to ethnocentrism, Israel was the chosen nation. Hence, Paul's assessment of the world in terms of "Judeans and Gentiles" is a typically Israelite in-group, ethnocentric language characteristic of ancient Mediterraneans. Paul's mission to the Gentiles is best understood as a high context phrase, meaning Israelites dwelling in the geographical regions outside of Judea in an ethnocentric social context. Paul's view of Gentiles was certainly that they were not Israelites. It is a very important view, in this thesis, that the Gentiles were not Jewish people who were living in Judea and outside of Judea, as all other nations. I believe that Matthew's understanding of

salvation was that it was exclusive to Jews. Matthew's community was an inclusive mission to Gentiles.

<sup>8</sup> New Testament authors use words of the δικαιοσύνη word group in different ways. "Righteousness" occurs in almost all the New Testament books, especially in Matthew and Paul (Romans). Matthew and Paul use δικαιοσύνη in a different way: for instance, God's saving activity or ethical demand. In the case of Matthew, Matthew's use of "righteousness" has been debated in two ways by scholars (Hill 1967:124-28; Strecker 1971:153-58, 179-81, 187; Luz 1989:177-179) as referring to ethical demand. However, at least two scholars (Fiedler 1970:120-43, Giesen 1982:237-41) argue that in Matthew the word refers to the δικαιοσύνη, a gift dependent upon God's saving activity. In contrast, both the above views do not seem satisfactory for the following reason: righteousness is not used only in one way. Most scholars agree that Matthew depicts that sometimes the word righteousness is to be understood as a gift and in other instances as ethical demand (Schweizer 1975:53-56, Meier 1976:77-80, Reumann 1982:127-135, Brather 1989:228-235, Hagner 1992: 101-120). If we argue rightly, we look at the possibility of Matthew's usage of righteousness as gift of salvation and ethical demand. Matthew 5:6 remarks, "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled". The word δικαιοσύνη here has most often been taken in the ethical sense. Let us turn to another possible understanding of this word in its context. The Beatitudes in Matthew's gospel are addressed to those who are under persecution, because verse 3 and 10 mention their common expectation of the kingdom of heaven as in the eschatological sense (see Hagner 1992:112). Hence, the ethical sense of δικαιοσύνη, of hunger, is also to understand salvation in an eschatological sense in the Matthew context.

<sup>9</sup> Bornkamm's earlier position is that Matthew's community was still part of Judaism (see his essay "End-Expectation and Church in Matthew"). But this view changed later where he noted that the Matthean community had to be cut off from the Jewish community: see his essay "The authority to 'bind' and 'loose'".

<sup>10</sup> The definition of a mixed body is that the Matthew community is mixed with Jews and Gentiles and even outcasts such as women (27:55), the blind men (9:28), little ones (10:42), tax collectors and sinners (9:10), a man with leprosy (8:1), and so on.

<sup>11</sup> However, it is not Jesus' saying, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own (Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:190).

<sup>12</sup> Brown's view of the Matthean community's location is that Matthew's Gospel mentioned "the cities of Israel", "the land of Israel" (Mt. 2:20) and the original sense of logion (Mt. 10:23) in Brown (1980:213 n 91).

<sup>13</sup> Luz's perspective has also changed, due to the fact that his first perspective was that Israel rejected the Gospel and that the focus of the mission then shifted to the Gentiles; however, he confirmed that this was not simply a distinguishing factor between the previous mission to "Israel" and the eschatological mission towards the Gentiles. According to his evidence: "in the Matthean narrative it is part of the sending of the disciples during the life of Jesus, but even the interpreters of the ancient church noted that many of Jesus' statements were fulfilled only after Easter. Modern interpretations often question whether our interpretation should be limited to the time of the Matthean church's mission to Israel, which from Matthew's perspective is already in the past. It is claimed that Matthew repeated it in a different form in the context of the Gentile mission of his day (Mt 24:9-14) and that especially verse 23, referring back to verses 5-6, makes a pronouncement that may no longer have been relevant for the Matthean church. However, the literal repetitions from verses 18 and 22 in 24:9, 13-14 show that the sending of the disciples to Israel "back then" must have had a meaning for the Gentile mission of the church in the present" (Luz 2001:87).

<sup>14</sup> If Jesus allowed the Canaanite woman to follow him, it implies that she could become a member of Matthew's community (cf Jackson 2003:787).

<sup>15</sup> According to Brown (1983:74-79), during the first century, Israelites and Gentile Christians were divided into four types of theological distinction; 1) full observance of the Mosaic law including circumcision; 2) those who did not require circumcision, but required converted Gentiles to keep some Jewish observance; 3) those who insisted neither on circumcision nor observance of the food laws; 4) those who furthermore saw no abiding significance in the Israelite cult and feasts. Hagner accepted Matthew's community as belonging to group three.

<sup>15</sup> Van Aarde's view of Matthew's community is that it is the disciples' community. The situation probably created a leadership problem. This is the reason why the community was not completely egalitarian, but still

included people of all the nations.

<sup>17</sup> This verse is not really one of Jesus' saying. Matthew borrowed it from Mark and used it in his Matthean community context (see Funk and the Jesus seminar 1998:234).

<sup>18</sup> Matthew's text tells us "why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't they wash their hands before they eat" (Mt 15:2), but the Markan text records: "some of his disciples eating food with hands that were unclean, that is unwashed (7:1). This means that Matthew confines the argument to the single issue of hand washing but the Markan text, sees Jesus abolishing the dietary and purity laws of Judaism.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew refers to Jewish leaders in the narrative as the Herodians, the Sadducees, the high priests, the elders and the scribes and the Pharisees. All these groups are different from each other, but Matthew includes some aspects of Jewish leadership in his narrative (Van Tilborg 1972:1-6; Kingsbury 1988b:115-127).

<sup>20</sup> The definition a Law-free Christian, is that the Gentiles who were converted and became members of the Christian community needed to observe Judaism (cf baptism, purity and circumcision). However, the Law-free Christian community need not necessarily observe.

<sup>21</sup> Structuralism was not originally used in the study of the Bible. It is an approach to a wide range of disciplines of any structured system and is basically concerned with the analysis of the structure of a system, including linguistics, anthropology, politics, mathematics and many other subjects (Tuckett 1987:152).

<sup>22</sup> Firstly, language is communication. Secondly, language is a system of signs in structuralism. Thirdly, the focus of structuralism is on language as a cultural code.

<sup>23</sup> The term actant is linked with a particular conception of syntax, which interrelates the functions of the elementary utterance.

<sup>24</sup> Calland's analysis of Greimas's theory of narrative structure is divided into three levels: the deep level, the superficial level and the surface level. However, the superficial level and the surface level are similar. Therefore, this study employs only two structural levels: as the deep and surface structure.

<sup>25</sup> We consider an old book of Kingsbury, but his view does not differ in more recent works.

<sup>26</sup> According to Van Aarde (1994:80), the ministry of Jesus does not turn away from Israelites, it is a so-called change from Israelite particularism to Gentile universalism.

### Chapter 3

## THE SOCIAL LOCATION OF MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY

### 3.1 Introduction

The perspectives of the Matthean scholars regarding the community of the First Evangelist have been studied in the previous chapter. Through their endeavours, these scholars have attempted to explain the circumstances of Matthew's inclusive community. It is essential to obtain clarity regarding Matthew's emphasis on inclusiveness prior to any discussion about Matthew's social situation at a macro-sociological level. This chapter refers to the social location of the Matthean community. This topic will be considered in four sections.

In the section 3.2, the date on which Matthew communicated with his community is considered. The date is important in order to understand the inclusiveness of the situation within the community. If the date of the ministry of Matthew were to be determined, it would have to be after 80 CE, the community would have been separated from its parent body (consult Chapter 2 in this regard). It is therefore assumed that this community was no longer operating within the synagogical tradition without tension, as well as that the salvation was accessible to all nations. Moreover, a date after 80 CE would be supported by the location of the Matthean community. If the date of Matthew's Gospel was before 70 CE, the community would have been situated somewhere in Palestine in a traditional Israelite context. If we accept this view, the Matthean community would probably not be in a situation of inclusiveness. Israelite society was not inclusive of all people. Therefore, whether Matthew's Gospel was written before 70 CE or after 70 CE is an important factor.

In this section, we will also deal with the location of the Matthean community. Matthean scholars (see 3.2.2) have suggested many places where the First Evangelist's community could have been written. All the places, which have been suggested by Matthean scholars are looked at. The reason for this is that the location could imply that Matthew's social situation was either inclusive or exclusive of both Israelites and Gentiles. Therefore, I will look at all the places suggested for the Matthean community and attempt to confirm which location was

home to Matthew's community's inclusive situation.

In section 3.3, the social stratification of Matthew's community is considered. This social stratification provides some clues as to the social structure of the community. Many Matthean scholars suggest that the community was an egalitarian society (refer to Chapter 1), but if Matthew's community had strong social stratification, it would be necessary to argue that the community was not an egalitarian structured society, but rather hierarchically socially structured. This survey attempts to determine the social stratification within the inclusive situation of the local community at hand.

In section 3.4, the community-related social stratification of the members of the community is addressed with regard to what kind of social classes were present within that community. The characteristics of the community to whom Matthew ministered would reveal whether this community was indeed inclusive of all social classes or not.

In section 3.5, the social circumstances of Matthew's community in the city of Antioch are considered. The city of Antioch was a large city of the East Roman Empire and the Israelites in diaspora had already settled there. Hence, the city of Antioch was subject to both Israelite and Gentile influences. It is assumed that Matthew's community was a mixed group of people and that the social stratification (of Israel) was reflected in the social organization of the city of Antioch.

These four foci are regarded as essential for an understanding of Matthew's Gospel at a macro-social level and especially of the community as an inclusively structured society.

### **3.2 Date and location**

Most scholars agree that Matthew's Gospel may have been written in the period between 60-100<sup>1</sup>CE (see Davies & Allison 1988:127-138). However, it is still being debated whether the Gospel was written before 70 CE or after 70 but before 100 CE. Confirmation for either of these views can be considered in terms of both the internal and the external evidence to the Gospel. The perspective of the early church tradition regarding the date of Matthew is very different from, and as a matter of fact directly opposed to, that of modern scholars. The early

church believed that Matthew was the First Gospel to have been written. The first clear statement of the order of writing of the Synoptic Gospels occurs in a document from Irenaeus, *Adv Haer* III.1.1. According to France (1992:26), the priority of Matthew was accepted by at least a part of the church before the end of the second century. He argues that Matthew produced his Gospel in Hebrew, which is the language of Israelites, while Paul and Peter were ministering in Rome. Mark produced his Gospel after the death of Peter and Paul, with particular reference to the preaching of Peter. Moreover, Luke recorded the Gospel as having been preached by Paul, without any chronological connection to Matthew and Mark (France 1992:26).

From that time on, the tradition of the priority of Matthew was accepted until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In contrast to this view, most modern scholars deny this earlier perspective, saying that Matthew was written after Mark. This perspective indicates that the Gospel of Matthew was not written earlier than 70 CE (France 1992:83). Consequently, there are two possibilities for a date for Matthew, either before 70 CE or after 70 CE.

### **3.2.1 Date of writing**

#### **3.2.1.1 Before 70 CE?**

Various recent scholars have supported the dating of Matthew before 70 CE (Michaelis 1948:15; Reicke 1972:121-34; Robinson 1976:100-109; Maier 1979:9-11; Ellis 1980:487-502; Gundry 1982:599-609). In this section, the Gospel of Matthew is considered to have been written before 70 CE.

First, one needs to determine whether the Gospel of Mark was written earlier than the Gospel of Matthew. This question gives rise to the notion that Mark may have been the most original Gospel, rather than Matthew. One of the reasons for this argument is that Mark's literary style is less complicated than that of the other Gospels. The theory of the priority of Mark was proposed by Wilke (1983), Weisse (1983), Holtzmann (1863) and Lachmann in 1835 (see France 1989b:21). According to Stoldt (1980:147-54), Lachmann suggested that both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke depended on Mark's literary style. He also maintained



that the order of the narratives in the Gospel came from Mark. All these views support the assumption that the Gospel of Mark has literary priority. This theory was developed by Holtzmann and the idea spread quickly (see France 1992:21). For that reason, Mark's literary priority is considered here.

The first argument is that the Gospel of Mark seems to be the shortest of the Gospels, compared to the other Gospels such as that of Matthew and Luke. Why would Mark omit so much material if Matthew and Luke were his basic sources? Of the 18,293 words that appear in Matthew, are there 7,392 that have no parallel in Mark, and of the 19,376 words that appear in Luke, 10,259 have no parallel in Mark (Tyson & Longstaff 1978:169-71). Moreover, if Mark copied all of the material in his Gospel from Matthew and Luke, it remains hard to understand why Mark would omit so much material from his Gospel.

Stein (1988:49-50) has a very good explanation for the argument of Mark's omission. He suggests that Mark's omissions confirm that his Gospel was not an abridgement of Matthew and Luke. The most important evidence is that the Gospel of Mark is, in its total length, considerably shorter than that of either Matthew or Luke. However, when one compares the common pericopes of the Synoptic Gospels, it becomes evident, as Stein (1988:49-50) mentioned, that of the fifty-one examples of narratives listed in the Synoptic Gospels, Mark was twenty-one times the longest. Of the fifty-one examples, Matthew had eleven times the longest, while Luke had ten times the longest.<sup>2</sup>

Streeter (1961:157) argued in line with Augustine's view that Mark could not be regarded as having abbreviated Matthew, because Matthew's pericopes are usually shorter than Mark's when the two Gospels are compared. An analysis by Sanders (1969:85) raises two principal arguments against Streeter's view. In the first place, if Mark used Matthew, he would have omitted Matthew's teaching material for the sake of a purely verbal expansion. However, Mark's "pure verbal expansions" are not equal in value to the length of Matthew's teaching material. He expanded the narrative verbally. Notwithstanding, Mark included a lot of Matthew's teaching material without producing a Gospel longer than Matthew's and Luke's. Streeter (1924:158) maintained that Mark's omission was not possible and that if Mark is the



oldest Gospel, “the verbal compression and omission of minor detail seen in the parallels in Matthew has an obvious purpose, in that it gives more room for the introduction of a mass of highly important teaching material not found in Mark”. Thus, Mark is the priority Gospel and the argument is that Matthew and Luke used certain extracts of which Mark made good sense.

The second argument concerning Mark’s literary priority is Mark’s poor writing style. Mark’s writing style contains incorrect grammar and colloquialisms. When one compares the Synoptic Gospels, there is clear evidence that Mark has lesser writing skills. There are several instances of incorrect grammar and colloquial expressions in the Gospel of Mark, which are not contained in Matthew and Luke. So for example, Stein (1988:52-3) discusses the question put to Jesus by the rich young man concerning the commandments. He analyses the statement in Mark 10:20 “all these you observed (ἐφύλαξάμην) since my youth.” The verbs which are parallel in Matthew 19:20 and Luke 18:21, “observed” (ἐφύλαξα), are different. Mark used an incorrect verb form: “an aorist middle, while Matthew and Luke changed the verb form to the correct aorist active.” This change of the verb by Matthew and Luke is more understandable than it would be namely in the case of Mark. Stein (1988:53) mentions another example, word “pallet (κράβαττον)” in Mark 2:4. Mark used this term as a slang expression for “pad”. However, Matthew and Luke changed this term to the more satisfactory “bed (κλίνη)” in Matthew 9:6 and “bed (κλινίδιον)” in Luke 5:19. These different words were Markan terms and were far more acceptable when they were later used by Matthew and Luke. The above examples show that the later writers improved on the grammar and style of the source. Therefore, the poor writing style in the Gospel of Mark supports the argument that Mark’s Gospel was written prior to those of Matthew and Luke. Another argument regarding Mark’s poor writing style is the Aramaic expressions in the Synoptic Gospels. The Gospel of Mark contains more Aramaic expressions than that of Matthew and Luke. Stein (1988:55-7) analysed seven clear Aramaic expressions in Mark.

As part of my reasoning, I will deal with some examples in this analysis. The most prominent is the expression used in the naming of the disciples. Matthew 10:2 says: “The names of the twelve apostles were these: first, Simon, who was called Peter, and Andrew his

brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.” Luke 6:14 says: “Simon, whom he named Peter and Andrew his brother, and James and John.” Mark 3:14-17 comments: “James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, whom he surnamed *Boanerges*, which referred to sons of thunder.” The second example is “the deceased daughter of the synagogue ruler, Jairus”, Matthew 9:25 says: “But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.” Luke 8:54 states: “But taking her by the hand he called, saying, child, arise.” Mark 5:41 says: “Taking her by the hand, he said to her, ‘*Talitha Cumi*’”, which means, little girl, I say to you arise.” The first two narratives introduce Aramaic expressions used by Mark (Stein 1988:58). Of course, Matthew also used Aramaic expressions such as “*Golgotha*” (Mt 27:33; 15:22). However, there is no such strong evidence stating that it is used in the Gospel of Mark as well. For instance, in Mark 11:11 the word *Corban* is used, in Mark 14:36 *Abba*, in Mark 15:34 *Eloi Eloi*.

Why are these examples of various Aramaic expressions found in Mark and not in Matthew and Luke? One can assume that the Aramaic expressions are omitted by Matthew and Luke, because Matthew and Luke were trying to make sense in their parallel accounts from their point of view in the light of the circumstances of their Greek-speaking audiences (Stein 1988:58). It is commonly accepted that Greek was the common language at that time in Palestine. Moreover, many places and people’s names were changed to Hellenistic names. One example is the names of Jesus’ disciples. Some of them were called by their Hellenistic names, like Andrew and Philip. Even where Luke omitted the Semitic word or translated it into Greek, he used similar qualifications, “the mountain called Olive-yard”, “the place called Skull”, “the gate of the temple called Beautiful”, “the so-called Zealot” (Cadbury 1968:128). The Synoptic Gospels were written in the common language of Koine Greek. Matthew and Luke avoided Aramaic expressions. Matthew and Luke therefore used more proper Greek expressions, suggesting again that Mark’s was the first Gospel.

The final argument concerning Mark’s priority is the various difficult readings in Mark. This implies that the Gospel of Mark is more difficult to understand than that of Matthew and Luke. Two instances of Mark’s “hard” readings are considered here. Firstly, some of Mark’s

narrative underscored the apparent limitation of Jesus' power or influence. The same healing narrative of Jesus is portrayed in a different way in the Synoptic Gospels. According to Mark's portrayal, Jesus lacked enough power to heal all. For instance, Matthew 8:16 mentions that Jesus healed "all" who were sick. According to Luke 4:40, "Jesus laid his hands on 'every one of them' and healed them". But Mark 1:34 says "and he healed 'many' who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons". The above comparison reveals Mark's limiting references to the healing power of Jesus. Matthew and Luke mention the healing power of Jesus to "all" or "every one of them", while Mark mentions this power as only having pertained to "many". This expression therefore implies that Jesus did not heal all the sick people. Mark underscored that the people he ministered to, thought that Jesus was not able to do miracles. They therefore did not accept those miracles he had performed. Nevertheless, they believed Jesus had laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them, as Mark 6:5 attests.

Another instance of Mark's harder readings is the negative descriptions of the disciples. Matthew and Luke usually abstain from negative descriptions of the disciples, even though Mark describes many in an antagonistic way, for example, in Mark 4:13 ("and He said to them, do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all these parables?"), Mark 10:14 ("when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them..."). It is clear that the image of the disciples portrayed by Mark was more negative than that of Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke consequently omitted or changed the negative impression Mark left regarding the disciples in the narratives he mentioned.

Mark's literal priority is not accepted by F C Baur and his associates. According to the perspective of Baur, the Gospel of Matthew was regarded as the most primitive among the Synoptic Gospels. Because of this perspective, especially concerning the teaching material, he expected to find some authentic evidence for Jesus among all the later and fable additions (see France 1992:21). Baur did not support his conclusions on literary grounds. His view originated from his historical reconstruction of the pattern of early Christianity. He concluded that the Judaistic character of Matthew represented the original Palestinian Christianity.

However, Baur's theory of the priority of Matthew is not supported by modern scholars, because many of the modern Matthean scholars have not accepted his perspective on the origin of Matthew. He believes that Matthew originated from primitive Judaism. Many Gentile sources on Matthew's Gospel are available. During the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, the belief in the priority of Matthew was overthrown. Current scholarship has accepted the priority of Mark's Gospel.

Because of the above reasons, the priority of Mark has been confirmed but the question that still remains is when the Gospel of Mark was written. Mark has been dated to three different decades. These include 40 CE, 50 CE or 60 CE. The view that the Gospel of Mark was written around 40 CE has been supported on the basis of historical and papyrological considerations. One of these considerations is the phrase; "When you realize the abomination that causes desolation standing with it" (Mk 13:14). One can carefully evaluate this phrase on the basis of historical considerations. According to Torrey (1947:261-262), the historical background of the words "abomination causes desolation" is the attempt in 40 CE of the Emperor Caligula to have his image set up in the Jerusalem temple. Torrey believes that the Gospel of Mark was written after this event.

Another argument comes from O'Callaghan (1972:91-100), who has compared the Gospel of Mark and three papyrus fragments among the Qumran texts (7Q5; 7Q6,1; 7Q7), dated 50 CE. He claimed that these three papyri were similar in content (see Mk 6:52-53, 4:28 and 12:17). In his view, the Gospel of Mark is older than the above Qumran papyrus fragments. However, most scholars have argued that even if O'Callaghan's view is correct, it would only prove the existence of the above manuscripts at this date of tradition at which time they were incorporated into Mark (Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:97).

The strongest case for the dating of Mark to 50 CE does not come directly from Mark, but from the relationship of Mark to the Luke-Acts. The argument is that the final pericope of Acts was that of Paul languishing in prison, even though he was a Roman citizen. This is very important, because according to Carson, Moo and Morris (1992:97), Luke published his work at about 62 CE. This would imply that the Gospel of Luke was written sometime before 62

CE. If we accept the perspective of the scholars mentioned above that Luke has used the canonical Mark, Mark must have been written at the latest before 60 CE (see Harnack 1911). Many contemporary scholars favour the argument that Mark was written in the sixties (Hengel 1985:12-28; Stock 1989:6-8; see Guelich 1989:xxxix). They propose two reasons for the date of Mark. Firstly, the words that refer to persecution may be important for internal evidence in Mark. Mark has strongly emphasized the principle that the disciples followed on the way as Jesus was taken to the cross. This emphasis most probably came from some situation where Christians were persecuted in Rome. Nero's famous persecution of Christians in 65 CE (Hengel 1985:12-28; cf Telford 1999:12-13) is especially relevant here. Secondly, the reference to Mark in chapter 13 regarding the destruction of the temple is important. The background situation of this chapter may be found in Palestine during the Jewish revolt against Rome and thus it must be dated between 67 and 69 CE (Hengel 1985:14-28).

The final argument concerning Mark's dating for the late seventies (Guelich 1989:xxxix). This view argues that Mark 13 reflects the actual experience of the sacking of Jerusalem by the Romans (see Kümmel 1975:98; Vorster 1988:112-113). However, this is not accepted by some and is disputed by others because Mark 13 does not appear to reflect any situation concerning 70 CE in Jerusalem (for example, the Jewish War). The prediction of Jesus concerning the war is read as a stock image from the Old Testament and Israelite imagery about the besieging of cities rather than as referring to the situation of the siege of Jerusalem (Reicke 1972:121-33; Robinson 1976:13-33). Another argument is that Jesus could not have predicted the course of the events of the siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE. According to Guelich (1989:xxxix), the best interpretation of Mark 13 suggests that the Roman military actions against Israel referred to, the occurrence in 67 CE, before the final siege of Jerusalem under Titus in the summer of 70 CE. Moreover, Marxsen (1966:134-136) held the view that Mark 13:14 refers to the Jewish War. This view is supported by Perrin (see Vorster<sup>3</sup> 1988:113), the prophecy of the devastation (Mk 13:2) alludes to the Jewish War, and that Mark wrote his Gospel after the event.

From the above arguments regarding the dating of Mark, it is obvious that several dates

have been proposed for the late fifties, the middle sixties or seventies. Some scholars have accepted the middle sixties as the date by which Mark's Gospel was written. However, if one considers the assumptions regarding the end of Acts and the priority of Mark to be valid (Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:99), one is led to conclude that Mark wrote his Gospel during the late fifties. Mark did not mention the persecution (which was pertinent to the known circumstances of his readers) because it was always possible for Christians during New Testament times to endure some kind of persecution (Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:99). If one considers accepting the above perspective regarding the literary priority of Mark, it is probable that Mark may have been written during the late fifties, sixties or somewhere in the seventies. Meanwhile the only confirmation that we have is that Mark is the priority Gospel. The assumption remains that the Gospel of Mark was written earlier than the Gospel of Matthew. Hence, Rist (1978:5-7) argues that the only important reason why one would favour a date for Matthew after 70 CE would be the assumption that the matters depended on Mark.

Whichever date is considered for the Gospel of Matthew, there is no clear evidence to substantiate such a date. There is no convincing evidence pertaining to any specific time. However, several conclusions can be drawn as to what the most likely setting for the Gospel of Matthew was in the Israelite and Gentile Christian scene during the first century (France 1992:90)

One more argument to deal with, is to determine how early the Gospel of Matthew was written. Robinson (1976:101-107) is of the opinion that Matthew's Gospel was written before 62 CE. He points out two forms of evidence. Firstly, we are aware of Christians who lived in the period of 50 to 60 CE. The second form of evidence is the discourse concerning the temple tax (Mt.17:24-27). According to Robinson, the Christians endured persecution in the period preceding 70 CE. This is confirmed by the records of Eusebius and Josephus regarding the martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother in 62 CE, but this is not echoed in the New Testament. Another issue is the names mentioned in the New Testament. These names confirm the fact that these people were living at that time.<sup>4</sup> However, the name of Simeon was never mentioned. If Simeon was the "son of the man" who led the mother church at Jerusalem

after 62 CE, this is not mentioned in the New Testament (Robinson 1976:106-107).

The other argument concerns the Matthean community's attitude towards the offering of the half-shekel tax for the maintenance of the temple (Mt 17:24-27). Looking at the date of the Gospel of Matthew on the basis of allusions in the discourse is crucial. Robinson's perspective is partly founded on the statement Jesus made to Peter regarding tax payment. This implies that Matthew's Gospel might have been written prior to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. After that date, the Israelites had to pay temple tax to the temple treasurer, Jupiter Capitolinus, in Rome (Josephus *BJ*. 218; Robinson 1976:104).

Based on evidence such as this, it is indeed possible that the Gospel of Matthew may have been written prior to 62 CE. Most of the New Testament scholars do not agree with Robinson's perspective. However, none of the arguments presented above are conclusive, even though a date prior to 70 CE appears to be the most probable date, given internal evidence in the Gospel, together with relevant external evidence. The date of Mark is probably around early 70 CE.

### **3.2.1.2 A date after 70 CE?**

The discussion regarding the time of the composition of the Gospel of Matthew is dominated by two important independent pieces of evidence, namely the influence of the Gospel of Mark on Matthew and Matthew's discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem (Mt 22:7). Scholars agree that the Gospel of Mark was written round about the time of the Jewish war of 66 to 70 CE (see 3.2.1.1). This fact, however, is not sufficient evidence to confirm that Mark knew of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (Hengel 1985:7-28). The claim that the composition of the First Gospel occurred after 70 CE is supported by scholars such as Kilpatrick (1946:7), Luz (1989:93), Harrington (1991:8), Hill (1972: 48-50), Meier (1979:13; 1983:17), and Sim (1998:33-40).

Hagner (1993:ixxii-ixxv) points out two perspectives relating to the Gospel of Matthew as having been written prior to 70 CE. Firstly, it is generally accepted that the final break in the relationship between Matthew's community and the synagogue took place around 85 to 90



CE. There are references to the hostility between Israelite and Christians, particularly around 85 CE. This dating is not a drastic oversimplification. The hostility had already arisen when the Gospel was written (France 1989b:100; Hagner 1993:ixxiii; Gundry 1994:601). Secondly, Matthew's Gospel reveals that the author had some knowledge of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The thrust of the argument is that Matthew 22:7 does not provide the sole and sufficient proof that the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, needs to be dated after 70 CE. The reason is that the temple and Jerusalem were not yet destroyed (Hagner 1933:ixxiv; Gundry 1994:602-606; Robinson 1976:19-25). The main argument of these scholars is that the emphasis of the First Evangelist is on both the temple cult (Mt 5:23-24; 9:13; 12:5-7; 17:24-27; 23:16-22) and the Sadducees (Mt 3:7; 16:1, 6, 11-12; 22:23, 34). This suggests that the Gospel of Matthew was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. The Sadducees were yet to sustain a potent political-religious force (Gundry 1994:436).

Scholars' view on Matthew 22:7 is that this is not sufficient evidence that the First Evangelist wrote his Gospel after 70 CE. The reference to "having burned the city" may be an indication of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, but according to Gundry (1994:436), Matthew's editorial insertion in verse 7, referring to the destruction of the city, did not mention the fate of Jerusalem at the hand of the Romans. While verse 7, on the basis of Isaiah 5:24-25, concerns the burning of the city, this was standard language of both the Old Testament and the Roman world, describing punitive military expeditions against rebellious cities (see Section 3.2.1.1; Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:77). In addition, Gundry's (1994:437) interpretation of Matthew 22:1-14 is that the first two invitations refer to the Old Testament prophets, while the burning of the city is a symbol of God's judgment on his people. This invitation refers to the mission of the community to all nations, after the resurrection of Jesus. These verses seem to indicate that the Gospel presupposed the period when Jerusalem and its temple were still standing. Gundry (1994:607) points out the hypothesis that the date of Matthew may have been prior to 65 to 67 CE (Gundry 1994:607).

However, this verse may have been redacted by Matthew after the destruction of Jerusalem at the close of the Jewish war. This reflects some transparency for the disciple's community



(in the post-paschal period). The Gospel of Matthew formed the basis of the records during the period of the life of Jesus. Matthew narrates a story which had a historical setting prior to 70 CE and which needed to have credibility amongst his readers. The First Evangelist wrote his Gospel with proper knowledge of the 70 CE pre-historical context of Judaism, which was considered to have been a temple cult, apart from the influence of the Sadducees (see Sim 1998:36). Sim did not accept this perspective, as he proposed, contra to Gundry, a date for Matthew's Gospel in the period between 70 to 100 CE. He argues that Matthew incorporates earlier material. This would imply that when the First Evangelist composed his Gospel (after 70 CE), he inserted all the early documents (Sim 1998:36). Sim (1998:36) also claims that Matthew was a creative author who composed the narrative according to a story, which had a set historical context, prior to 70 CE.

In the parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1-10), a king sends his servants to call those who are invited to the wedding feast of his son. Some refuse the first invitation. Then he sends more servants with the same invitation. The intended guests again refuse to come. They pay no attention; instead, they go off, one to his field, another to his plan of business. The others seize the king's servants, mistreat them and kill one of them. The king is very angry because of this and sends his army to destroy those murderers and burn their city. The servants then go out into the streets and gather all the people they can find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall is filled with guests. Sim (1998:34) distinguishes three invitations in this narrative. The first invitation is that of a king who sends his messengers to call those who are invited to the wedding feast. Those who are invited reject the invitation. The second invitation is that of a king who sends, a group of his messengers to extend this same invitation. Unexpectedly, these guests also reject the invitation, in fact, they persecute the servants and kill some of them. With the third invitation the king sends his messengers to call many people, both good and bad, to join in the ceremonial feast he has prepared. Sim's (1998:34) perspective is that "the king and his son represent God and Jesus respectively and that the wedding feast symbolize the kingdom of heaven". He considered the messengers of the king to have been Christian missionaries, on the first and second occasions respectively. These

missionaries invited Israelites to accept God's salvation (Sim 1998:34). The reason for the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was the severe mistreatment of these missionaries. The third invitation contained a new mission in the post 70 CE period, the Gentile mission. Consequently, Sim interprets the third invitation as a sign that Matthew looked back on two important historical events, the failure of the Israelite mission and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Matthew then related these historical events to one another in his own mission plan, with the effect that Matthew's Gospel should then be dated to after the Jewish war.

In the parable of the wedding feast, the king "sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city" (Mt 22:7). This narrative of the destruction of their city could be considered to be a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem at the end of the Jewish war (Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:76). The parable of the wedding feast most probably depends on reality. If the above view is correct, the Gospel of Mark should have been written around 65 to 70 CE and the Gospel of Matthew could probably have been written at least some time after 70 CE.

Other scholars attempted to use the wedding banquet parable to determine the date of Matthew as between 70 to 100 CE. Meier (1983:11-86) argues that the first Christian generation of the Antiochene church setting surfaced around 40 to 70 CE. The second Christian generation of the Antiochene church emerged around 70 to 100 CE. He believes that the community of Matthew formed the second Christian generation. Hence, he claims that the best choice of date for Matthew's Gospel is between 80 to 90 CE. He notes that the parable of the wedding banquet of Matthew's Gospel (Mt 22:1-14; contrast Lk 14:15-24) does seem to contain some suggestion of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Meanwhile, Matthew's church had already broken away from the synagogue (see Chapter 2). In view of the above, Mt 22:7 was rewritten to make explicit reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (Kilpatrick 1946:6; Meier 1979:13; Luz 1989:92). The reason for the above perspective is that Matthew's Gospel was not written immediately after the Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem. In this case, 85 CE should be considered as a possible date for Matthew's Gospel (Meier

1983:16). Moreover, Ignatius of Antioch used the Gospel of Matthew in his letter at a date far into the second century. Ignatius died no later than 117 CE (Meier 1983:17). Meier (1979:13) also postulates that Matthew's community in the beginning consisted largely of Israelite Christian members, but that the community had already included Gentiles (Mt 28:16-20). Therefore, the best choice for the date of Matthew is between 80 and 90 CE, when the community was a mixed one.

To summarize, the date of Matthew's Gospel was probably around 80 to 90 CE. The reason for the conclusion in this study is that the Gospel of Mark was probably written earlier than the Gospel of Matthew. If one accepts that the date of Mark was about 70 CE, it is logical that the Gospel of Matthew was written after 70 CE. This would best fit the argument for the inclusive structure of the Matthean community (including Israelites and Gentiles). In the next section, the location of the Matthean community is explored.

### **3.2.2 Location of Matthew's community**

The Gospel of Matthew does not mention explicit information regarding the actual location of where the Gospel was written. There is a general agreement among scholars that the Gospel was written in the eastern part of the ancient Mediterranean, somewhere in Palestine (which includes Palestine, Trans-Jordan, Caesarea Maritima, Phoenicia, Alexandria, Syria and Antioch). Various scholars have done extensive research on all of the above-mentioned areas. It is, however, not easy to confirm where and what the original location of Matthew's community was. It should be noted that the circumstances at the date of the writing of the Gospel were in direct relation to the location of Matthew's community. The location of the Gospel is important for this study, as it is important to show which location would provide the best example for Matthew's inclusive structured society. The social situation of the inclusive structure of the Gospel is therefore considered in terms of the location of Matthew's community. The different places proposed as Matthew's location are discussed below.

### 3.2.2.1 Palestine?

According to ancient perspectives, the Gospel of Matthew was written in Palestine. The Ancient Fathers said that the Gospel of Matthew was initially written in Aramaic (Wenham 1978:112-34). Hence, they also presupposed that it was written in Palestine. The surmise was based on the tradition that Matthew wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic. One can see many features of Palestinian origin, for example, the inclusion of Aramaic words without any translation or explanation (Mt 5:22; 6:24; 27:6), the assumption of a certain amount of Israelite background, the bilingual character of the text forms when the Old Testament is cited, as well as the adoption of figures of speech for literary purposes that are typically Semitic rather than Greek (Carson, Moo & Morris 1992:75). According to France (1989:91), a Palestinian origin would apparently fit the Jewish character of much of the contents of the Gospel and its particular concern with the teaching of the Pharisees. Another scholar, Overman (1990), holds the view that the location from which Matthew's community originated was Galilee. According to Overman (1990:153), the stage of Matthew's community was in direct conflict with formative Judaism and its emerging authorities. Matthew and his community claimed the same tradition, the same authority and the same roles as formative Judaism. Matthew's community came into direct confrontation with formative Judaism. The central members of such formative Judaism were the Pharisees, who were strongly influenced by the situation in Galilee. One could therefore conclude that Overman's view regarding the origin of Matthew's community supports Galilee.

However, there are some problems regarding the above perception. Of course, the Gospel of Matthew contained some Aramaic words and the language of the text also reflects the location of the Gospel, but Matthew was actually written in the ordinary, common language of the members of his church, namely Greek (Meier 1983:19). While one cannot deny the fact that Aramaic was the primary language of most of the people in Palestine (Sim 1998:41), Matthew appeared to have written to a more widely Greek-speaking area outside Palestine. It might be that some Aramaic words have been used in the Gospel due to the fact that the author was a Greek-speaking Israelite Christian.

One needs to look at the perspective of France (1989:84-85) regarding Matthew's Israelite characters. It is not necessary to accept the notion that the Israelite characters in Matthew refers to Palestine as a context of its origins. A possible perspective may be that if Matthew's community originated outside of Palestine, they could still, as a group of people, have had their own character. Hence, the perspective of France is only one of the possible arguments.

Finally, one needs to look at the idea that Matthew's community was situated in Galilee. Overman's (1990:158-159) argument dealt with the real conflict between Matthew's community and formative Judaism (especially with regard to the Pharisees) in Galilee. He believes that Galilee was an attractive place for formative Judaism, due to the central role it played in early rabbinic Judaism. Apart from this, one should consider the circumstances of the Pharisees who were living outside Palestine. According to Sim (1998:60), the Pharisees had already moved right across Gentile countries. The Pharisees were well known outside the holy land, not just in the Diaspora. One could therefore assume that the formative Judaistic movement was not only present in Palestine, but that it also had source influence on the Israelite community in the Diaspora. This is a possible reason for the conflict between Matthew's community and formative Judaism in Galilee. Hence, Palestine is not regarded as the best option for the inclusively structured community of Matthew.

### **3.2.2.2 Alexandria?**

Brandon (1951:217-43; see Van Tilborg 1972:172; France 1989b:93) was the first to suggest that the place of origin of the community of Matthew was located in Alexandria. Based on this argument, he argues that Matthew is an expression of the peculiar situation of the "Jewish-Christian" Jerusalem church after 70 CE. This hypothesis was only formed after the rejection of Streeter's view that Matthew was located in Antioch (Brandon 1951:217-21). His rejection is formulated on the basis of two considerations. In the first instance, in the city of Antioch, the Christians were at the centre of various liberalizing movements. The circumstances of liberal Christianity in Antioch was not in harmony with the limiting of the Israelite and anti-Gentile sentiments within Matthew's Gospel (Brandon 1951:219). Secondly,

“when full weight is given to the fundamental differences which exist between the Lukan and Matthean records, the fact of Luke’s connection with Antioch irresistibly demands that the sphere of Matthew be located far from the Syrian city.”<sup>5</sup> If one assumes that Brandon is correct regarding the place of the origin of Matthew’s community, Alexandria, a city far from “the Syrian city”, seems to be a good option. Alexandria was a city with a large Israelite population. Moreover, these Israelite communities were wealthy. Indeed, they had many synagogues and accordingly they possessed special advantages (Brandon 1951:221). Furthermore, some evidence in favour of Alexandrian “anti-Semitism”, as described by Philo and Josephus, was, to a certain extent, present in the circumstances within the community of Matthew’s Gospel (Brandon 1951:221).

Brandon’s view has nevertheless not gained wide acceptance in the scholarly circles today. There is no agreement about the Christian movement in Alexandria after the “Jewish war”. The main problem with this argument is our almost total lack of knowledge about the origins of the Christian community in Alexandria (Davies & Allison 1988:139; Meier 1982:19). Sim (1998:50) provides an analysis of Brandon’s perspective regarding the origin of Matthew’s community. According to Brandon (1951:25), the Christian tradition in Alexandria in the New Testament can be traced to the narrative of Apollos in Ephesus in Acts 18:24-25. Apollos is mentioned as an Alexandrian Jew with a good knowledge of the Scriptures. He had presumably acquired his knowledge of Christianity from his own city.

I would like to raise a particular problem arising from Brandon’s view. It is difficult to accept the narrative of Apollos as evidence of the Christian movement in Alexandria. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, but he knew only of the baptism of John the Baptist. Following this instruction relating to the teaching of Jesus, some additional instruction was granted to him by Priscilla and Aquilla. This would imply that Apollos did not yet know much about Israelites and Christianity. From this passage in Acts, it seemed clear that no information regarding any particular Christian movement in Alexandria has been granted to us. This narrative reveals an apologetic movement on Luke’s part to promote the superiority of the Pauline Gospel over its Alexandrian counterpart, which was represented by the

influential Apollos (Sim 1998:50). However, one should not disregard the reminiscences in the tradition of Philo, which portrays both Israelites and the Israelite Christians in Alexandria.

It appears thus that the evidence regarding a Matthean community in Alexandria is slight. There is in fact no sufficient evidence to prove that the location of Matthew's community was there (Sim 1998:50). The above discussion clearly indicates that the location of Alexandria does not lend itself to an inclusive structure of society. There is no strong evidence of a Christian movement or Christian community there.

### **3.2.2.3 Caesarea Maritima?**

Viviano (1979:533-546) suggests that the great harbour city of Caesarea Maritima could have been the location of Matthew's community. The city was originally situated in Samaria. This city, however, did not have any long-standing historical association with Samaria, because this port became the capital of the province of Judea (Viviano 1979:534). Viviano (1979:542-543) mentions four reasons why he thinks Matthew's community was in Caesarea Maritima. Firstly, the city was close to Jamnia. This implied that it would have been easy to establish contact with Matthew's community and accordingly with formative Judaism. He believed that this was a very possible reason for Matthew's conflict with Judaism, which in the Gospel is best explained by Matthew's community being in close proximity to Palestine. The late Patristic tradition in itself provides a reference to the above view. However, this is not concrete evidence for the location of Matthew's community. The universal ascription of Matthew to Palestine is derived from a problematic tradition regarding the Semitic origin of Matthew's Gospel. Moreover, Viviano himself observed the uncertainty of this tradition, as Eusebius does not connect the school at Caesarea with Matthew or Matthew's school, and, of course, he lived in that city (Viviano 1979:543-544; Davies & Allison 1988:141). Therefore, this view fails to provide conclusive support for Caesarea as the ideal place for the translation and redaction of the Greek text of the Gospel of Matthew.

Viviano's (1979:541) second argument in favour of Caesarea Maritima as an important centre in Samaria is, according to him, that the history of Christianity in Caesarea began with

the ministry of the apostles. This is related to some narratives of particular Christian activities at Caesarea, which included the ministry of the evangelist Philip, as recorded in Acts, as well as the narrative of Cornelius and his family in relation to a vision given to Peter, including the imprisonment of Paul (Acts 8:40; 9:30; 10:1, 24; 11:11; 12:19; 18:22; 21:8-16; 23:23, 33; 25:1-4, 6, 13). Philip's enthusiasm to evangelize seemed evident as he went to a city in Samaria to proclaim the good news regarding Christ (Acts 8:5); he also appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea (Acts 8:40). Furthermore, the narrative by Peter regarding the conversion of Cornelius bore proper evidence regarding the Gentile nature of the Christian movement in Caesarea (Acts 10:1-11:18) (Sim 1988:46). Several visits of Paul to Caesarea were also mentioned in Acts. His activities there included discussions and debates with, for example, a Grecian Israelite, with the effect that people of Caesarea tried to kill Paul, after which his brothers consequently took Paul down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). When Paul landed at Caesarea from Ephesus, he went up and greeted the Caesarean church and then went down to Antioch (Acts 18:22). Paul and his company reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the Evangelist, one of the Seven (Acts 21:8). All of the above passages from Acts underscore an active Christian movement, including formal evangelism amongst the Gentiles, as arranged from Matthew's local community.

Over and above those passages, there is Luke's perspective regarding the Christian movement in Caesarea. Regarding this issue, two problems arise. The one is that if one considers accepting the account by Luke as historically accurate, it should be assumed that his church had a Law-free orientation. This argument does not appear convincing as proof that the church at Caesarea was part of Matthew's community. Matthew's community was still a continual Law-observing community (see Sim 1998:47; Chapter 1 and 2). Meier (1983:20) expressed a similar view:

If one holds that some sort of historical event lies behind the narrative of the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10, then the church at Caesarea Maritima arose



partly through the conversion of a pagan centurion and his household. This early state of Caesarean Christianity was difficult to have reconciled with some of the early strata of the Matthean tradition, which were stringently and narrowly Jewish.

The Christian movement was thus probably present in Caesarea, but there is no sufficient proof of a connection with the composition of Matthew's Gospel in the first century.

Thirdly, prior to the Israelite revolt, the city of Caesarea was predominantly Gentile and accordingly a Greek-speaking city, even though there was a large Israelite population. The revolt in 66 CE also caused some political tension there. This view was due to Caesarea being the location of the origins of Matthew's Gospel. Viviano (1979:540) himself suggested this view, and Forester was similarly convinced. According to Forester (1975:17), the Israelite population in the city was at this stage very limited. Josephus recorded a massacre of Israelites in Caesarea Maritima in 66 CE. Josephus (*Jewish War* 2. 284-292) narrates that the Gentile neighbours performed a massacre on the Israelites in Caesarea at the start of the first revolt. This massacre resulted in the moving away of all the Israelites from Caesarea to a safer place. It was thus impossible for Matthew's community to live there continually. Accordingly, I have reservations regarding Matthew's missionary discourse, which concerns his avoidance of the towns of the Samaritans and other Gentiles (Mt 10:5). It is possible to conclude from this that Matthew's community did not have a proper relationship with any Samaritan town (Streeter 1924:502).

It is very difficult to accept Caesarea Maritima as the exact location for the origin of Matthew's Gospel. The conflict situation with Judaism is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover, the Matthean community was Law-observing. These objections show that the Matthean community did not have contact with this Samaritan town. Hence, Caesarea Maritima is not a possible location for the Matthean community, which was a mixed state of Israelites and Gentiles as an inclusively structured community. Viviano (1979:533-546) has made only one positive proposal in this regard and this was based on a somewhat contrived argument from a few Patristic statements.

#### 3.2.2.4 Trans-Jordan?

Slingerland (1979) suggests that the Trans-Jordan was most probably the location of Matthew's community. According to Slingerland (1979:18-28), the Trans-Jordan referred to some location across the Jordan River to the east side. This view may support the two texts in Matthew 4:15 and 19:1. These represent Matthean redaction and reflect the geographical perspective of the First Gospel. One other point of evidence is Matthew 4:25.

The first text cited the geographical perspective of Matthew 4:15 which comes from an Old Testament source, the Masoretic text of Isaiah 8:23. Slingerland's (1979:23) view is that if the source of Matthew 4:15 is the LXX of Isaiah 8:23, then Matthew has removed the Greek word *καί* before *πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου*. Then he changed the perspective to an eastern one. This implies that the omission of the Greek word has created the same impression as it would if one replaced "beyond the Jordan" with the "region of Zebulon", "Galilee of the Gentiles", etcetera. All these details suggest that they shared a western perspective of looking across the eastern river (Slingerland 1979:22-25). The second issue is that if Matthew 19:1 is Matthew's source, it confirms that Matthew's Gospel was written somewhere east of the Jordan. Slingerland's evidence of this view is that Matthew has followed the Marcan source, which is Matthew 19:1 *Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τοὺς λόγους τούτους, μετήρην ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὰ ὄρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου* ("when Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan"). This verse is based on Mark 10: 1: *Καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ἀναστὰς ἔρχεται εἰς τὰ ὄρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας [καὶ] πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου* ("Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan").

Slingerland's (1979:21-22) argument is that Matthew and Mark had different geographical perspectives. Mark's Gospel mentions the traditional western perspective that Jesus in Mark has two destinations, one on "this" side of the Jordan (Judea), and the other one across the Jordan (*trans Iordanem*). Judea is not on "this" side of the Jordan, but Judea is across the Jordan (*Iudaea trans Iordanem*) on the west side of the river. Matthew has omitted the

Μαρκαν καί, - this omission in Matthew's Gospel indicates that the Gospel was written somewhere on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Therefore, Slingerland (1979:26) suggests that Matthew was composed at Pella, a city of the Decapolis, after the Jewish war. The city of Pella represents the continued struggle with Judaism, as well as the internal struggle between Christians and Gentiles regarding the Law.

Slingerland has strongly argued that those two Matthean texts, if both of them were redactional, provided significant indications regarding the location of Matthew's origin. Matthew 4:15 do not necessarily represent Matthew's geographical setting, due to the fact that this verse is a quotation from the Old Testament (France 1989b: 94). Matthew 19:1 provides one possible view regarding the location of Matthew's community to be the eastern side of the Jordan River. Sanders (1992:352 n 13), however, says one cannot decide whether Pella was indeed the place of the origin of the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover, Matthew 19:1 merely repeats Mark 10:1, even though the original Mark 10.1 does not include the Greek word καί, "the mountains of Judea (and) beyond the Jordan."

Slingerland's interpretation of πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου is certainly plausible in Matthew, even though another interpretation of this text is also possible (Sim 1998:43). The expression "beyond the Jordan" was probably generally used for the territories to the east of the Jordan River (Hagner 1993:73). This means that one finds this expression in a number of contemporary texts, which include John 1:28; 3:26; 10:40; Josephus, *Antiquities*, 7:198; 12:222; 14:277. This phrase stands independently and indicates those areas on the east of the river in the Trans-Jordan (Sim 1998:43), even though without the καί in these two passages "beyond the Jordan" is not used to qualify either "Judea" in Matthew 19:1 or "Galilee" in Matthew 4:15 (Davies & Allison 1988:383).

Davies and Allison had a solution to this problem and suggested that "beyond the Jordan" indicated the area south-east of the river, as described in this text. This would imply that Matthew's perspective of these geographical regions are divided into four sections. The centre of this world view would be Jerusalem, while the surrounding four areas is Galilee to the north-west, the Decapolis to the north-east, Judea to the south-west and "beyond the Jordan"

to the south-east.<sup>6</sup> This interpretation is the most logical explanation for Matthew's redaction in this passage (Sim 1988:44). Slingerland's interpretation of these two passages has therefore provided a sound basis for other scholars.

One more problem is that this text indicates a possible situation for the composition of Matthew's Gospel after the "Jewish war" in the region of the Decapolis. This argument was suggested by Sim (1998:45), who asserted that the environment of the Trans-Jordan was not influenced by the circumstances resulting from the conflict between the Israelites and the Romans. Josephus reported that all the cities (which included Philadelphia, Gerasa, Pella, Scythopolis, Gadara and Hippos) in the Decapolis were attacked and damaged by violent Israelite forces (*Jewish War* 2.458-9). These events caused them to turn to violence once again, which led to the killing and imprisonment of many Israelite citizens by the Gentile residents in these cities (*Jewish War* 2.466-8, 478). This would most probably not have been the ideal context for the writing of Matthew's Gospel, or for the establishment of any Israelite community. In his hypothesis Slingerland does not accept such a historical consideration, but it strongly suggests that Trans-Jordan is not an inclusively structured society as was the Matthean community.

### **3.2.2.5 Phoenicia?**

The southern Phoenician coastal cities such as Berytus, Tyre or Sidon were suggested by Kilpatrick (1946:124-34; see Blair 1960:43) as the province where Matthew's community originated. Kilpatrick formulated this perspective after he had rejected the Antiochean hypothesis. He refutes both the arguments of Streeter's Antiochene hypothesis (see 3.2.2.2 Alexandria). The first argument is that the city of Antioch was an important Pauline center, but this fact has only become clear as the influence of Paul became evident in Matthew. Secondly, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, had no thorough relationship with the Israelite Gospel of Matthew (Kilpatrick 1946:133-134; Sim 1998:43). It is important to look at the relation between the thought of Matthew and Paul. Most scholars dispute the claim that Matthew's perspective does not always correspond with that of the apostle (Sim 1998:199, see Chapter 1;

Matthew and Paul agree on most of the theological perspectives, but this was not always accepted). According to Meier (1983:62-63), the theologies of Matthew and Paul are amazingly similar. He has analysed certain aspects of their theology to confirm this perspective. This includes (a) that they accept the mission to the Gentiles without circumcision, which implies that they shared a perspective similar to that of the universal mission; (b) that they made radical moral demands centred on radical love; (c) that “both consider the death and resurrection of Jesus to be the pivotal eschatological event of salvation history”; (d) that “both sustain to the revelation of God in Jewish history and the Jewish Scriptures, while exalting the definite revelation brought by Jesus Christ.” He therefore found strong Pauline elements in Matthew’s Gospel, even though they basically stood in agreement on the fundamental issues of the state of Jesus Christ. Matthew was more conservative than Paul and each of them accordingly supported a different Christian perspective in the early church (France 1989b:111). The location of Antioch will be considered at a later stage.

Kilpatrick (1946:130-134) rejects the perspective regarding the location of Antioch and he suggests a number of arguments, which support a Phoenician province. His first suggestion for the location of Matthew’s community is that it was situated in a harbour city. One significant point regarding this perspective is that Matthew was written in a harbour city, somewhere amongst a community like that of Phoenicia. This argument is based on Kilpatrick’s (1946:132) interpretation of the parable of “the healing of the two demon-possessed men” in Mark 5:13 and Matthew 8:32. Mark described the sea of Galilee as ἡ θάλασσα Matthew described the waters as ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι. Kilpatrick argues that Matthew did not use θάλασσα to indicate the Sea of Galilee, but the Mediterranean. His second suggestion related to the narrative of the Canaanite woman. She was described as “Ἑλληνίς, Συροφαινίκισσα τῷ γένει” (a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia), that is, a woman living in Phoenicia with pretensions to a Greek background (Mk7:26). In Matthew 15:22, she was described as “γυνὴ Χαναναία” (a Canaanite woman). This would therefore imply that this term is “not with the Greek but with the Semitic World”. Why did Matthew alter the term in this way, to describe her as a Canaanite woman? This term in Matthew related to the more

Semitic country-side, referring to the less Hellenised inhabitants of the Phoenician peninsula (see Jackson 2002:83-84). According to the argument, Matthew was produced in one of the coastal Mediterranean cities, while he has in effect redirected the non-favourable implications of the story from his own community to the conservative villagers somewhere in Phoenicia (Kilpatrick 1946:133). Kilpatrick (1946:132-133) proffers one more argument, that the province of the Phoenician ports was Greek-speaking, while the country-side of that province still had a Semitic character and speech. Matthew was therefore written in Greek, with a Semitic explanation.

In response to these arguments of Kilpatrick, one notes that in his first argument, he referred to the story of the Gadarene demoniacs (Mt 8:32). His interpretation of Matthew's description was that the complete herd of pigs rushed down towards the water of the Mediterranean Sea, where they drowned. It is, however, difficult to accept such a view, due to the fact that the Sea of Galilee is here clearly indicated to us as a sea, with no clear distinction between Matthew and Mark to be discerned at this point (Sim 1998:49). Therefore, this perspective does not provide strong evidence that Matthew's community was situated at a coastal city in Phoenicia. One should, furthermore, consider Kilpatrick's arguments regarding the Canaanite woman as related to Semitic character and speech. Matthew has changed the words to "Canaanite woman," because he himself mentioned his community as having been in a Semitic world (cf Jackson 2002:84). If one agrees with the above view, one must still resolve the question of whether the province of Phoenicia was only of a Semitic background during the first century Palestine. At that time all Palestine was under Roman power and speaking Greek with a Semitic accent. Kilpatrick's argument regarding Matthew was that Matthew changed the Semitic word because it was not accepted in Matthew's community in Phoenicia. Moreover, we do not have much knowledge regarding the Christian communities at Phoenicia during the first century (Sim 1998:49). If there were Christian communities, they were most probably very small, due to the fact that only one passage in Acts referred to a Christian having lived in Tyre (Acts 21: 3-7) and Sidon (Act 27:3). Therefore, it is not easy to accept Kilpatrick's view regarding the location of Matthew's origins to have been in

Phoenicia.

The above argument indicates that the location of Phoenicia is only a reflection of the Semitic background and it had very small Christian communities. This means that Phoenicia is not likely to have been the location of the Matthean community as a mixed state and inclusively structured society.

### **3.2.2.6 Syria?**

A more popular location of Matthew's community among Matthean scholars (Kümmel 1975:119; Hill 1972:50-52; Goulder 1974:149-152; Filson 1977:14-15) was somewhere in Syria (outside Antioch). This would imply that the statement "somewhere in Syria" did not include the city of Antioch, but that it referred to some part of the Syrian countryside. There was a stronger argument for a location in Edessa and its surroundings, which was supported by the view that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek, and also presupposed a Greek readership (Sim 1998:52).

Bacon (1930:15-23) suggests that Matthew was written in a city in the north-eastern Syrian hinterland, probably Edessa. His main argument for this hypothesis is that Matthew informed some "targuming" explanation in his Gospel. This is regarded as evidence for him to be responsible for conspicuous Christian communities in north-eastern Syria.

Kennard (1949:243-246) also suggested the location of the Matthean community to have been a north-eastern Syrian city; he believed that the gospel spread to this north-eastern Syrian city from Antioch. The above perspectives became apparent after the rejection of Streeter's hypothesis regarding Antioch. More recently, Osborne (1973:220-235) has supported the notion that Matthew was composed in Edessa, which was part of the Aramaic-speaking Diaspora in the border area between Palestine and Syria. Osborne's view is that the city of Edessa was the most important place in towns of Matthew's original material and that it was the meeting place with eastern religious traditions. He suggests that eastern religious traditions influenced Matthew in the writing and composition of his Gospel. Therefore some narratives (M materials) of Matthew's Gospel do not appear in the other Gospels.

The above scholars claim that Matthew's community was in Edessa, but there is not enough evidence for the origin and development of the Christian movement in this city. None of these scholars produce any necessary evidence for the location of Matthew's community in Edessa or in the Syrian countryside (Sim 1998:52). Matthew wrote in the most commonly used Greek language of ordinary people in the city of Antioch, because that city was the main Hellenistic learning centre. The ordinary people did not use Greek in the countryside, with the result that the common language of Edessa was Syriac (Meier 1983:21). Moreover, Meier's (1983:21) point of view is that "the earliest full literary texts preserved from Edessa are in Christian Syriac, and references and fragments indicate that pre-Christian literature was also written in Syriac."

To refer to Osborne's (1973:222-223,225) arguments regarding the eastern religious traditional influences at Edessa, he claims that Peter might have been the founder of the Edessa church, that the story of the Magi in Matthew 2 came from Zoroastrianism, while the five precepts in Matthew 5:21-48 were borrowed from Buddhism. However, to me, it seemed like all of them have merely indulged in speculation (see Davies & Allison 1988:143). It is unnecessary to accept the Edessa hypothesis in terms of Matthew's location of origin.

Gnilka (1986:515) has suggested one more city in the Syrian countryside, Damascus, to be a possibility. The city of Damascus was an important centre of commerce for the Israelites. Damascus was also an important place in New Testament times, as this was where Paul met Jesus Christ as Lord, and after his conversion he became a member of the Christian communities. However, Paul no longer stayed there, even though later on it developed into a center of rabbinic learning and Scriptural study. Moreover, the Greek language was not commonly used in Damascus (Meier 1983:20-21)

The evidence is that the common language of the countryside of Syria was not Greek, but Matthew wrote in the most commonly used Greek language of ordinary people of the city of Antioch. Moreover, there is not enough evidence for a Christian movement in Syria. For that reason, Matthew's community could not have been somewhere in Syria as it was a mixed and inclusive community.



### 3.2.2.7 Antioch in Syria?

The most interesting support favours Antioch, the capital of Syria, as the place of origin for the composition of the Gospel of Matthew (Kraeling 1932:130-60; Metzger 1948:69-88; Meier 1983:22-27; Luz 1985:73-74; Kingsbury 1988b:115; Sim 1998:53-61). The surroundings of Antioch included ordinary people who spoke Greek, a large population from the Israelite Diaspora, and Antioch had one of the earliest Christian communities outside of Palestine and a church founded by Israelite Christians, around 30 CE (Longenecker 1985).

The classic statement that Matthew's community was located at Antioch, came from Streeter (1924:500-23). He had seven main reasons for the location at Antioch, which I will consider in the following discussion. The first argument, from the patristic tradition, is that the witnesses of both Papias and Irenaeus had a negative predisposition towards Matthew's community as having been located in the vicinity of Palestine. They do not accept it as a fact that the Gospel of Matthew was produced in Rome or in Asia Minor, due to the fact that they most probably thought that it came from the eastern part of the Roman empire, having Greek as a basis.

The second argument of Streeter was that the Gospel of Matthew was originally anonymous. This anonymity suggests that it was originally compiled from various sources for the use of certain churches with reliable witness or authority, and then some people or committees produced it with a special title. Moreover, in Streeter's view, Matthew's Gospel would not have been accepted by apostolic authority and it was not sponsored by one of the great churches such as those in Rome, Ephesus or Antioch.

The third argument presented by Streeter is that the role of Peter is important in Matthew's Gospel, as is his status in Antioch (Gal 2:11, according to church tradition Peter was the first bishop there) (Davies & Allison 1988:144). His main argument concerns the role of the Petrine church in Antioch, where Peter is standing between the leader of the Jerusalem church (James) and its Judaic influence and the antinomianism of certain followers of Paul (Sim 1998:53-54). Peter was moderate in Antioch and he is also prominent in Matthew.

Fourthly, there was a large Israelite population in Antioch. At that time, the city of Antioch was the main base for the earliest Christian Gentiles mission. Antioch was therefore a mixed state, including both Israelites and Gentiles. These dual pictures are clear in Matthew, which unified the Christian mission message, as well as the anti-Gentile missionary message.

Streeter's fifth significant argument was the interpretation of the term "monetary" in Matthew 17:24-27. This implied that Antioch was the location of Matthew's Gospel, due to the fact that Antioch and Damascus were both considered to have been the official starting places of origin to the two equal didrachmae.

Sixthly, Ignatius, who was the bishop at Antioch during the early second century, cited Matthew in his epistles. Streeter (1924:500-523) claims that in Ignatius' seven short letters there were about fifteen passages, which looked like reminiscences of Matthew, together with the fact that the use of his language was normally closer to Matthew's vision. When Ignatius wrote about "the gospel" (*Phil* 5:1-2; 8:2), it might just be that this was a reference to the Gospel of Matthew (Davies & Allison 1988:144). According to Sim (1998:54), this means that Ignatius recognized only one Gospel in his time in Antioch, and Streeter considers this to have been Matthew's Gospel. One further interesting argument, according to Streeter (1924:500-523), was the fact that Streeter had examined "the Gospel" (*Didaché* 15:3). The result of his study was that "the Gospel" according to Matthew had certain references to "the Gospel" by Ignatius. Therefore it is probable that the Gospel of Matthew was the only accepted Gospel in Antioch at that time.

The six arguments mentioned above formed the basis of a considerable cumulative force for two further arguments. His first hypothesis was the critical analysis of the sources of Matthew's Gospel as "the Petrine Compromise" (Streeter 1924:511). This means that the dogmatic position of Matthew was considered to have been in between the Law-observant party of James in Jerusalem and the Law-free gospel of Paul in Antioch. According to Sim (1998:54), Matthew was following the earlier example of Peter in order to make peace between the two factions. Therefore, Streeter's argument is clear that the very nature of Matthew's Gospel itself contains the proof for its composition in Antioch. Another argument

he was concerned about was that after the Jewish war, an upsurge was evidently present due to an apocalyptic speculation. In this case, the apocalyptic features of the Gospel of Matthew suggest that the best place for the apocalyptic circumstances of the community was in Antioch.

Streeter's hypothesis of Matthew's location at Antioch is supported by several modern scholars and it has also been accepted internationally (Meier 1983:22-7; Gundry 1994:609; Davies & Allison 1988:143-7). However, all of Streeter's arguments were not valid for Matthew's community in Antioch. Therefore, one can examine Streeter's arguments pertaining to this issue. With regard to his first argument regarding the patristic tradition, if one does not accept Palestine to have been the location of the Gospel, one has to look for some eastern provenance (Sim 1998:55; Davies & Allison 1988:144).

Streeter's next argument concerns the anonymity of Matthew. The original readers did not concern themselves with the issue of the authorship of the Gospel, as it was the only significant thing to the Christian community. Consequently, Streeter made a useful point in that the apostolic authority of the Gospel must have been supported by a major and influential church. Whether it was not accepted by the important churches to the west of Jerusalem and at Caesarea in the east, Antioch does seem to be the only plausible alternative (Sim 1998:55).

The third argument, which dealt with the position of Peter in Matthew's Gospel has been disputed. It is true that Matthew gives a special place to Peter in his composition, including the fact that Peter was also active at Antioch, where Paul described his conflict with Peter (Gal. 2:11-14) (Meier 1983:24). Matthew's concrete explanation of Peter provides the evidence for the location of his community to have been in the capital city of Syria. This position was questioned by Luz (1985:74). Whether Matthew's community in Petrine Christianity was not necessarily in Antioch. According to Sim (1998:56), Luz's argument is not sufficient proof that Peter was an important member of the church at Antioch and accordingly also influential in the Jerusalem church during the apostolic council. This is not significant evidence at all for a position of importance in any other Christian church in the eastern part of the Roman Empire. This would therefore imply that Matthew's representation of the Petrine Christian traditional picture was the only one, which seriously maintains the

location of Antioch. Therefore, Streeter's view of Matthew's community does not necessarily place it in Antioch, but it is still a matter of probability (Luz 1985:74).

Streeter's fourth proof for the location of Antioch concerned the large Israelite population. This large population in itself could not be sufficient evidence that Matthew's community was indeed situated in Antioch. In the first century Israelites were widely spread all over the Roman Empire, in areas which were under Syrian control and in Alexandria among other places. This may therefore imply that the large Israelite population in Antioch could be a possible indication that Matthew's community was situated there, even though it is not really possible to confirm that Antioch was indeed the city of the location of Matthew's community (Sim 1998:56).

Fifthly, Streeter himself has very limited evidence regarding an official start (which is the didrachmae in Mt 17:24-27) at Antioch and/or Damascus. Streeter's argument regarding the actual commencement was the exact equivalent to the two didrachmae, to have been in Antioch and Damascus only. This point is not easily accepted by scholars, because Streeter did not mention any evidential documents (France 1989b:93 n27).

Sixthly, Ignatius was the first father of the Antiochean church who used Matthew. He cited Matthew's material at least three times (Meier 1983:24-5). Ignatius considered Matthew's Gospel to have contained proper evidence favouring the location of the community in Antioch. This is indeed a possible view regarding Matthew's location, even though this theory does not necessarily provide support to the place at which Matthew was written. It is thus most probable that Ignatius had an acceptable knowledge of the Gospel, excluding a reference pertaining to the geographical setup of the territory.

In the following discussion, Streeter's final two points are considered. His argument is that according to Matthew, the function of Peter was that of a mediator between James at Jerusalem and Paul at Antioch. Accordingly, one can accept that Matthew described the function of Peter in his Gospel very prominently. However, Matthew's description of Peter's role was inconsistent (see Nau 1992:112-138). The three larger and unique Matthean Petrine passages are the episodes of Peter walking on the water (14:28-31), Peter's confession to

Christ (16:17-19), as well as the episode of Jesus and Peter addressing the issue of temple tax (17:24-27). Bacon's (1917:1-23) observation of the above passages was that Matthew portrayed Peter as a surrogate Paul, dispensing Paul's answers to questions and conditions prevailing in his community. Kilpatrick (1946:37-40), who was the first to publish a redaction-critical approach to Matthew's Gospel and who also investigated Matthew's portrayal of Peter, concluded that Matthew described Peter according to legal regulations in the church, even though Matthew did not even mention the relationship between James and Paul. However, Streeter's real claim was not that Peter acted as the mediator between James and Paul. His argument was that an Antiochene provenance was suggested by Peter's status, in that the church and Matthew strongly promoted Peter. This probably indicated Peter's status in Antioch in accordance with a deep and proper relationship with Matthew's community.<sup>7</sup>

Streeter's final argument for Matthew's location in Antioch related to the development of the eschatology within the Gospel. This view was related not only to Streeter's own perspective, due to the fact that many Matthean scholars agree with Matthew's emphasis on the apocalyptic eschatology (Sim 1996:181-221). However, Streeter's argument regarding Matthew's eschatological orientation does in itself not render as sufficient proof, due to the fact that he was not completely successful in his attempt to explain the apocalyptic eschatology in a convincing way. One problem was the resurrection of the apocalyptic conjecture, which was the result of the "Jewish war". The war was hardly limited to Antioch. This provided evidence regarding the location of Matthew's Gospel, even though it did not definitively place it there. Moreover, it is not certain whether Matthew's emphasis on apocalyptic eschatology has sufficiently explained the local circumstances of Matthew's Gospel (see Sim 1998:57).

Streeter's arguments are thus in favour of the location of Matthew's Gospel in Antioch. The above arguments for the Antiochene provenance with reference to the Matthean community can be summarized as follows: It distinguishes between negative and positive arguments. The negative arguments relate to Antioch and Damascus and pertain to the question as to whether

the same two financial officials have an identical status or not, as Matthew 17:24-27 does not support such evidence. His other arguments regarding Matthew's location in Antioch were not convincing (Sim 1998:58). It might be that many scholars have agreed with this view, without any intense investigation. However, the number of arguments Streeter presents provides adequate evidence to favour Matthew's location at Antioch. Streeter's positive arguments are these: they confirm the Petrine connection to the Gospel. Peter fulfilled an active role in Antioch, and the later Patristic tradition has confirmed his long-standing association with the church there (Sim 1998:59). Therefore, Matthew in his Gospel promotes the prominent function of Peter. Streeter presents another good piece of evidence, namely that, according to the Patristic tradition, the original production of Matthew came from the Eastern Church (see Davies & Allison 1988:142). Matthew probably seemed to have been written from an eastern perspective, which came from and included a large Israelite population, as well as a Greek-speaking city, even though one cannot confirm that this was indeed the place of origin and location of Matthew's community.

### **3.2.2.8 Summary**

In section 3.2 the date and location of the Matthean community was discussed. The date of Matthew's Gospel was probably after 70 CE. I argued that Mark was written around 65 to 70 CE, as the Gospel of Mark was written earlier than Matthew. Therefore, the Gospel of Matthew was written somewhere between 80 to 90 CE. This is important for the location of Matthew's community. Whether one accepts that the date of Matthew is earlier than 70 CE or not, one cannot explain the conflict between the Matthean community and formative Judaism. It is a very strong reflection on the Gospel of Matthew. Formative Judaism arose after the "Jewish War" in 70 CE. It is not possible to view the mixed state of the Matthean community as writing before 70 CE. The result of the above discussion implies that the location of the community is in Antioch. All other locations, which scholars have suggested as the place for Matthew's community seem problematic. Some places have no evidence of a Christian movement. Other places have no Israelite or Hellenistic background. The best option is

Antioch. However, the city of Antioch was not Israelite territory, but it was an important city to Israel and Israelite culture was reflected there. This means that the population of Antioch was a mixed state similar to the Matthean community. In addition, the Matthean community was hierarchically structured like the society in Antioch. However, the hierarchically structured community was not egalitarian in nature. These findings support my hypothesis that the Matthean community, located in Antioch, represented the characteristics of the social stratification of Israelite tradition. Below, the social stratification of the Matthean community is discussed in detail.

### **3.3 The social stratification of the Matthean community**

According to Lenski (1966), the Roman Empire of the first century CE represented a typical agrarian society. An agrarian society displayed a gap between those who belonged to the elite (classes with authority) and those who had little or no access to any authority. Also in Matthew's community, a huge gap existed between rulers and subordinates within a set of hierarchical positions (see Vledder 1997:98; Saldarini 1988a:20-27, 39-45; Duling 1992:101; 1993:650-651; cf Rohrbaugh 1993a:383). Matthew's community shared the characteristics of an advanced agrarian society (see Duling 1992:101; 2002:526-532; Vledder and Van Aarde 1994:511; cf Van Eck 1995:211-214).

The difference between simple and advanced agrarian societies is that advanced societies went beyond the so-called horticultural societies, because of large advances in technology and production, which in the field of agriculture refers to instruments and processes such as ploughs, weed control, the harnessing of animals (see Lenski 1966:190-193; Lenski, Lenski & Nolan 1991:158-201; Duling 1992:100). However, advanced agrarian societies were not very different from simple agrarian societies, but were more advanced than simple agrarian societies in some areas. For instance, advanced agrarian society was the first to have used ordinary everyday tools and implements. Secondly, advanced societies could more adequately combat the disadvantages caused by famine, plagues, poor sanitary conditions, and mortality. Finally, regional and local economics were more specialized in an advanced society than in a

simple agrarian society. The economy was connected to political power and the urban elite. Vledder (1997:99) refers as follows to such a society: “This group was strengthened by taxation, growth in commerce, weakening kinships and the growth in expendable people.” Exploitation of the peasants was the rule (Vledder 1997:99; see Duling 1992:101). One of the outstanding features of an agrarian community was the hierarchy that existed between people in upper class positions and the common people. One can assume that the Matthean community also displayed large differences in their stratification, as a typical advanced agrarian society of the first century Mediterranean community.

From the perspective of social stratification, people who occupied a certain class were distinguished from those in another. According to Eldridge (1971:87), class status could basically have been divided into three basic classes in the following way: the proper class refers to the state of the differentiation of property holdings, an acquisition class referred to class situation of the class members as primarily determined by the opportunities with reference to the exploitation of services on the market. The social class structure was composed of the plurality of the class statuses of the members. Thus, a society was divided into a number of social strata and was hierarchically arranged (Bryant 1983:366). Lenski (1966:3) outlined such a social stratification in the following way: those who belonged to a class were connected to some strata according to their structural relationships of society. Hence, social stratification referred to the structured inequalities between groupings of people (Giddens 1996:212).

In this section, the social stratification of Matthew’s community as well as its hierarchical structure is dealt with. This study is based on the works of Rohrbaugh (1993a; 1993b) and Vledder & Van Aarde (1994). Before entering upon a discussion of the social stratification of the Gospel of Matthew, one has to confirm that the location of Matthew’s community was urban (see above 3.2.2.7, which postulates that the Matthean community was located in Antioch). However, according to Meeks (1983), Jesus’ ministry often reflected the village culture of Judea and Galilee, even though Matthew’s community was urban (Brown & Meier 1983:23; Stark 1991:189; White 1991:218).



### 3.3.1 The urban elite<sup>8</sup>

The Matthean community as an advanced agrarian society was divided into upper and lower classes. The upper classes included the rulers, retainer, merchant and priestly classes (the urban elite).<sup>9</sup> The lower classes were the peasants, artisans, the unclean class and the expendables (the urban non-elite) (Lenski 1966:214-296; Rohrbaugh 1993a: 383; Saldarini 1988a:39-45). Lenski (1966:215-216) said that the agrarian rulers enjoyed “proprietary rights in virtually all the land and business in their realm, with differences existing in the magnitude of these rights.” The rulers controlled all the classes and had far-reaching powers in their territory. They were separated from the other classes. Due to the fact that kings and emperors never ruled all by themselves, they were in need of support from the governing classes (a small governing class always shared the responsibilities of government with them) (Lenski 1966:220). The governing class was around two percent of the population and benefited directly from important offices in the central government (cf Lenski 1966:219, 225; Saldarini 1988a:40; Rohrbaugh 1993a:383; Van Aarde 1993:532). According to Duling (2002:528), the ruling class and the governing classes in Palestine included procurators and their families, the Herodian client kings together with their families, some high priests and a few other priests, which included a few Sadducees, lay aristocrats, including a few Pharisees (Van Eck 1995:213-214).

In the case of Matthew’s narrative, the ruling class included the chief priests and the elders. The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees were mentioned with the chief priests and elders, but were part of the retainer class (Rohrbaugh 1993a:384 cf Saldarini 1988:161,172; Vledder & Van Aarde 1994:514). In the passion narrative, the scribes are mentioned twice as part of the complete leadership within Judaism (Mt 26:57, 59; 27:41), who with the elders and chief priests (Mt 16:21; 20:18) were the enemies of Jesus in Jerusalem. The scribes fulfilled a political function (Saldarini 1988a:161). Vledder & Van Aarde (1994:514) demonstrated that the Pharisees did not belong to Jerusalem’s urban elite, for the same reason, that they only fulfilled a political function in the passion narrative. This perspective was supported by Van

Tilborg (1972:5; see Vledder & Van Aarde 1994:514). The Pharisees were closely connected with the chief priests (Mt 21:45; 27:62); “the chief priests and the Pharisees” have to be identified with “the chief priests and the elders of the people” (Mt 21:45; 21:23) and the “chief priests that met with the elders” (Mt 27:62; 28:11-12) in the context of the Gospel. However, one cannot ignore Duling’s view (see above) that a few of the Pharisees and the scribes also belonged to the urban elite.

The ruling class and the governing classes in the Gospel of Matthew included (see Duling 1992:103; Vledder & Van Aarde 1994:513): Herod (Mt 2:1), the Magi (Mt 2:1-12), the rulers of Judea (Mt 2:6), the chief priests (Mt 2:4; 16:21; 20:18; 21:15, 23, 45; 26:3, 14, 47, 51, 59; 27:1, 3, 6, 28:11), Archelaus (Mt 2:22), the rulers’ families (the crowd maybe regarded as the family of the ruler) (Mt 9:18,25), the King (Mt 10:18; 11:8; 18:23; 22:2, 5, 11, 13; 25:34, 40, 45), Herod the tetrarch and Philip (Mt 14:1, 3), Antipas (Mt 14:1, 9), the rulers of the Gentiles and high officials (Mt 20:25), men going on a journey (Mt 25:14, 21, 23, 26), and the high priest Caiaphas (Mt 26:3, 57, 62, 63, 65). This governing class included in the second place the chief priests and the teachers of the Law (scribes) (Mt 2:4; 20:18; 21:15), a physician (Mt 9:12), the owner/landowner (Mt 13:27; 20:1,11; 21:33), elders (Mt 15:2; 16:21; 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57; 27:1, 3, 12, 20, 41; 28:12), the elders, chief priests and the teachers of the Law (scribes) (Mt 16:21; 27:41), a wealthy/rich young man (Mt 19:16, 22; 27:57), the chief priests and the elders (Mt 21:23; 26:3, 47; 27:1, 3, 12, 20; 28:11-12), the chief priests and the Pharisees (Mt 21:45; 27:62), the chief priest and the whole Sanhedrin (Mt 26:59), and Pontius Pilate (Mt 27:2, 13, 15, 19).

### **3.3.2 Retainers**

About five per cent of the population belonged to this group, those who served the ruling and the governing classes. The urban elite usually employed a small army, and consisted of bureaucratic government officials, various kinds of servants, religious leaders, educators etcetera. These individuals and their families constituted what might be called the retainer class (Lenski 1966:243; Vledder & Van Aarde 1994:514). They did not have the same power

as the elite, but to some extent they shared the life of the elite, as some retainers became very powerful, after which they moved into the governing class (Saldarini 1988:41). Whenever an individual retainer lacked power, one person could easily be replaced by another. Many scribes and the Pharisees were members of the retainer class in their capacities as bureaucrats, minor officials and local leaders. Levi (Matthew) the tax collector, for example, fitted into this class (Saldarini 1988a:42; Rohrbaugh 1993a 385; Van Aarde 1993:532; see Van Eck 1995:211).

The retainer class (see Duling 1992:103; Rohrbaugh 1993a: 380-395; Vledder 1997:123) is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew in the following contexts: as teachers of the Law (scribes) (Mt 2:4; 5:20; 7:29; 8:19; 9:3; 12:38; 13:52; 15:1; 17:10; 23:2, 13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29); Pharisees (Mt 3:7; 9:11, 14, 34; 12:2, 14, 24, 38; 15:1, 12; 16:1, 4, 6, 11, 12); Sadducees (Mt 3:7; 16:1, 4, 6, 11, 12); as an officer (Mt 5:25); as a Centurion (Mt 8:5, 8, 13; 27:54); as tax collector(s) (Mt 5:46; 9:9, 10, 11; 10:3; 11:19; 17:24; 18:17; 21:31, 32); as teachers/scholars (Mt 23:24); as attendants of Herod (Mt 14:2); as foremen (Mt 20:8); as Herodians (Mt 22:16); as disciples of the Pharisees (Mt 22:16); as those who arrested Jesus (Mt 26:57); as soldiers (Mt 27:27; 28:12) and as guards (Mt 26:58; 28:4,11).

The centurion and the tax collectors were the retainers of the Roman Empire, but they were regarded as part of the so-called unclean class as far as the Israelite community was concerned (see Chapter 4; Vledder 1997:123 n33). One needs to merely consider Matthew's depiction of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes in their communities. Van Tilborg (1972:6) states that Matthew did not wish to create any distinction between the various groups. All of them were considered to be leaders amongst the Israel people, as they formed the most constant opposition to the ministry of Jesus, which was inclusive of all urban classes but not necessarily of the elite. Some of them (the Israelite leaders) belonged to the urban elite class; they had no independent power, but they had indirect political power. Lenski (1966:243-248) stated that this group of retainers often gained their political power when the governing classes ceased to be effective and the rulers left matters in their hands. They used this power to oppose the ministry of Jesus, but remained part of the urban non-elite class, and they

therefore maintained the stratification within their society.

### **3.3.3 The urban non-elite**

The urban non-elite was the underprivileged classes of advanced agrarian societies. They consisted of the merchants, the peasants, the artisans, the degraded, unclean and expendables (see above, Van Eck 1995:212). These are discussed in the section regarding the merchants, the peasants and the artisan class.

The merchant class could not be clearly distinguished from either the ruling or the lower class as the merchants generally belonged to a low prestige group without any direct power. However, the merchant class stood in a marketing relationship to the governing class, while the ruling class also needed them to provide the materials required to continue their luxurious lives (Lenski 1966:250-256; Saldarini 1988a:42-43).

The peasant class supported the state and the privileged classes. This class consisted of a substantial majority (the labour force) of the population. They were heavily taxed (around 30 to 70 percent) and were kept under control, but they gained power whenever a labour shortage occurred and they were in this sense also of invaluable military importance during times of war (Lenski 1966:266-276; Saldarini 1988a:43; Van Eck 212).

The artisan class was not very different from the peasant class, and a considerable overlap always existed between these two groups. Lenski (1966:278) puts it as follows: the artisan class was “originally recruited from the ranks of the dispossessed peasantry and their non-inheriting sons and was continually replenished from these sources.” This class consisted of not more than three to seven percent of the population and along with the unclean class, discussed below, (Lenski 1966:279; Saldarini 1988a:43), most of the artisans were probably employees of the merchant class. They were not wealthy and did not have power (Lenski 1966:279-280). Jesus was from this class, together with the fishermen, like Peter, Andrew, James and John, who were considered not to have any influence in society (Saldarini 1988a:44).

Members of the urban non-elite in the Gospel of Matthew included (see Duling 1992:103; Rohrbaugh 1993a: 380-395; Vledder 1997:126) the following: Joseph (Mt 1:18-Jesus was a carpenter's son), and carpenters were considered to be part of the peasantry, so that Jesus was considered to have been a peasant, Mt 13:55), Mary (Mt 1:18; 27:56), Simon Peter and Andrew as fishermen (Mt 4:18), James and his brother John, sons of Zebedee (Mt 4:21), the city-dwellers (Mt 8:34; 11:20), a merchant (Mt 13:45), the fishermen (Mt 13:48), as Peter (he alone mentioned, Mt 14:28,29; 15:15; 16:16,22,23; 17:24-26; 18:21; 19:27; 26:33-37,58,69,73,75), Peter, James and John, the brother of James (Mt 17:1), the mother of Zebedee's sons (Mt 20:20), money exchangers (Mt 21:12), Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons (Mt 27:56). The urban non-elite class fulfilled an important function in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus included these kinds of people as disciples in his inclusive ministry.

### **3.3.4 The unclean, degraded and expendable classes**

Two classes are discussed from this section: the unclean and the degraded and expendable classes. There is not a big difference between them. The unclean and degraded classes were clearly in a lower and more inferior class than the common people (Lenski 1966:280-281). This class engaged in lower class and heavy work under dangerous conditions, such as rickshaw pullers, carriers, miners, the poorest of labourers, tanners, and prostitutes (Lenski 1966:281; Rohrbaugh 1993a:387; Van Aarde 1993:533). It has already been mentioned that the centurion (Mt 8:5-13) and the tax collector (Mt 9:9-13) were a part of the retainer class, but were made members of the unclean class as far as Judaism were concerned (see above 3.3.2).

The expendable class was at the bottom of this class system in the agrarian society. They constituted around five to ten per cent of the population and had no place or function in society. This class was landless and itinerant with no normal family life and a high death rate (Saldarini 1988a:44). According to Lenski (1966:128), the expendable class included "a variety of types, ranging from petty criminals and outlaws to beggars and underemployed

itinerant workers, and included all those forced to live solely by their wits or by charity.” Both of these classes lived outside the city walls in an agrarian society (see Vledder & Van Aarde 1994:517).

The unclean, degraded and expendable classes in the Gospel of Matthew (see Duling 1992:102-103; 1995:369-370; Vledder 1997:128) were the following: the sick (Mt 4:23, 24; 8:16; 9:12, 35; 10:8; 14:14, 35), the paralytic (Mt 4:24; 8:6; 9:2, 6), the demon-possessed (Mt 4:24; 8:16; 8:28-34; 12:12; 15:21-28), the epileptic (Mt 4:24; 17:15), the poor (Mt 5:3; 11:5; 19:21; 26:9, 11), the man with leprosy (Mt 8:2; 10:8; 11:5; 26:6), Peter’s mother-in-law, a sick woman (Mt 8:14), a sinner (Mt 9:10,11; 26:45), a bleeding woman (Mt 9:20-22), the blind men (Mt 9:27,28; 11:5; 12:22; 15:14,30-31; 20:30; 21:14), a dumb man (Mt 9:32; 15:30,31), the deaf (Mt 11:5), the lame/crippled (Mt 11:5; 15:30-31; 18:8; 21:14), the man with the withered hand (Mt 12:10), the Canaanite woman and the demon-possessed woman (Mt 15:22), the eunuch (Mt 19:12), children (Mt 19:13), the tax collectors and the prostitutes (Mt 21:31-31), robbers/bandits (Mt 21:13; 27:38,44), and Barabbas (Mt 27:16,21).

### **3.3.5 The rural peasants**

The rural peasants were part of the lowest class, together with the urban non-elite, with the only difference being that they lived in the rural areas. They were engaged in primitive industries like farming and extracting raw materials. They comprised of the freeholders, tenants, day labourers and slaves (Vledder 1997:128-129). This class had the burden of supporting the state and the privileged classes, with the result that this responsibility fell on the shoulders of the common people, the peasant farmers, who constituted a substantial majority of the population (Lenski 1966:266). The rural peasant class is important for this study as the religious movement of Jesus started in these rural areas, and members of this peasant class became his disciples.

The peasants in the Gospel of Matthew included the following: Jesus (the protagonist of the Gospel story), people (Mt 3:5; 8:27; 22:10; 13:27; 18:23-25; 20:27; 21:34, 36; 22:3-10; 24:45-50; 25:14-30), the crowds (Mt 5:1; 7:28-29; 8:1, 18; 9:8, 33, 36; 12:46; 13:2, 36; 14:13-

19; 15:10, 30-39; 17:14; 19:2; 20:29, 31; 21:8-11, 46; 22:33; 23:1), different women, bandits, eunuchs, slaves, tenant farmers, as well as fishermen (Duling 1995a:369-370), slaves/son (Mt 8:6, 8; 12:18; 14:12; 21:15), Peter's mother-in-law (Mt 8:14), the disciples of Jesus (Mt 8:21-25; 9:37; 10:1; 12:1, 9, 49; 13:10, 36; 14:15-18; 15:2, 12, 23, 32, 33, 37; 16:5, 13, 20, 24; 17:6, 10, 14, 19, 24; 18:1; 19:10; 14:23, 25; 20:17; 21:1-2, 6, 20; 23:1; 24:1, 3; 26:8, 19, 20, 36, 40; 26:56; 27:64; 28:7, 8, 16), the disciples of John the Baptist (Mt 9:14; 11:2,7; 14:12), day labourers (Mt 9:37, 38; 10:10; 20:1, 8, 9), the twelve apostles (Mt 10:2-4), fishermen (Mt 13:48), those who were in the boat (Mt 14:33), tenants (Mt 21:35-41), the servants of the high priest (Mt 26:51), Simon who came from Cyrene (he contacted the Gentiles in Cyrene, see Vledder 1997:130 n71), the bystanders at the cross (Mt 27:39, 47) and Mary Magdalene (Mt 27:56; 28:1).

### **3.3.6 Summary**

The community to which Matthew ministered was an advanced agrarian society, as well as a highly stratified society. The Matthean community was trapped in a hierarchical state, as different interest groups were present (see Duling 2002:528). Various groups called the urban elite (the rulers and governing classes), formed the upper classes in Matthew's community. The urban elite class was prominent and controlled the society. Examples from this class is Caesar (the ruler of the Gentiles), Herod (the ruler of Judah), Archelaus (the high priest), Caiaphas-a landowner, as well as other high officials (see 3.4.1). The retainer class was not the same as the urban elite, but they were also regarded as an upper class. The function of the retainer class was to support the urban elite. This group comprised of people such as the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Sadducees, the centurion, the tax collector, the disciples of the Pharisees, as well as a soldier (see 3.3.2). Most of these classes did not accept the teachings of Jesus on his inclusive ministry. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Scribes were the antagonists in the Gospel of Matthew.

The lower classes of this advanced agrarian society were formed of the unclean and degraded class, as well as the rural peasantry. The urban non-elite, called ministerial

instruments, were Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, the fishermen, Mary, the mother of James and Joseph. The human vessels considered to have been unclean were classed together with the Gentiles, the man with leprosy, Peter's sick mother-in-law, the bleeding woman, the demon-possessed, the paralytic man, the blind, the sinner, the dumb and deaf, the Canaanite woman, the prostitutes, the robbers, the centurion (as seen from the perspective of Israelism), and so on. The peasant class included Jesus and his family, the disciples of John the Baptist, the people, Jesus' disciples, the slaves, the tenants, the day labourers, Mary and Magdalene, as well as the other Mary, together with the servants of the high priest. Jesus' position as a peasant was discussed by Crossan (1991), and Vledder and Van Aarde (1994:521). The evidence in support of this view is that Jesus' father was a carpenter, and thus as a result he and his family were considered to be part of the lowest strata of their society. This is, however, not important for this study, even though it did in fact confirm that Jesus came from the lowest strata in Palestine society.

This clearly implies that, indeed, the Matthean community was highly stratified. The argument is that a stratified community is not an egalitarian one. Rather, it was a hierarchically structured community. One can conclude from the above discussion that the date of the Matthean community was around 80 to 90 CE, while the location of the community was possibly the city of Antioch. Its stratified structure is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew. Furthermore, the city of Antioch was a mixed state consisting of Israelites and Gentiles. It was the best place for an inclusive ministry.

### **3.4 The constitution of Matthew's community**

Scholars have argued that Matthew's community consisted of a mixture of Israelites and Gentiles who had been cut off from the main Judean community (see Chapters 1 and 2). It is therefore important to consider what kind of Israelites and Gentiles there were in this community. The social stratification of Matthew's community was closely related to the composition of his community. In Section 3.3, the discussion of the social stratification of the community provides important background information regarding the various interest groups



involved in the quest for inclusiveness, which is to be investigated. The aim is to consider the attitudes of the various members of the community with regard to the inclusion of the urban elite and the urban non-elite as related to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew's narrative.

### **3.4.1 The Israelite leaders**

To define a leader in the first century Israelite world, is not simple. In Matthew there is little or no distinction between the Israelite leaders, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes, the High Priests and the Elders (Van Tilborg 1972:1-6; see Kilpatrick 1966:101-123; Winter 1961:111-113). The High Priests and elders do not appear centrally in Matthew's narrative (in his framework their function was not considered to be very important). The High Priests and elders probably controlled issues that affected the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes (Mt 26:3; 27:47). Hence, they are not considered to have been in direct connection with the ministry of Jesus, unlike the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes, who were generally intensely related to the ministry of Jesus. The Israelite leaders who were prominent included the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes and functioned as the antagonists in Matthew's narrative. The function of the antagonist in a narrative is usually to obstruct the protagonist's mission (Van Aarde 1994:76). Moreover, Saldarini's (1988b:200) point of view is that "the Pharisees, Scribes and Jesus were all integral parts of the Galilean society. Their religious activities were embedded in the political organization of the society and had immediate and important political, social and economic repercussions for all social classes."

In this narrative more emphasis has been placed on the Pharisees as opponents of Jesus than in the Gospel of Mark. This opposition against Jesus emerged around his teaching pertaining to the observance of the Sabbath, together with his prescriptions on the utilization of food and guidelines regarding purity in Matthew (Mt 9:6-13,14-17; 12:1-14). The Pharisees in Matthew's narrative had a wider function and a closer relationship with the Scribes than was the case in the Gospel of Mark. The Pharisees as a group challenged the authority of Jesus, having been declared and generally acknowledged as religious and social leaders, and they henceforth argued with him regarding the interpretation of the Law (Mt 9:31-34; 12:22-

30; 19:3-9). The Pharisees as a group had a huge influence in their society and it was this power that they used to indoctrinate the people with reference to their acknowledgment and adherence to the various social norms. When Jesus started his religious movement and the crowd followed him, the religious authority and the social power of the Pharisees was challenged. That Matthew described the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in his Gospel seems obvious. Jesus condemned the insincere and ostentatious public behaviour of the Pharisees (Mt 5:20; 16:6; 23:1-39). He regarded them as the spiritually blind who led the people astray (Mt 23:24). Another issue regarding the Pharisees, which Jesus condemned was their lack of love. In his ministry, Jesus included both tax collectors and sinners, even though these were excluded by the local religious leaders (Mt 9:9-13). Hence Matthew depicted that Jesus called upon the Pharisees to be the leaven amongst the people (Mt 16:6-12). One can thus conclude that the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders arose due to the fact that they had disregarded the main teaching of Jesus, which of course included the love commandment in Matthew's narrative (Saldarini 1988a:170; see Du Rand 1998:284).

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Sadducees are mentioned only twice, in relation to the Pharisees<sup>10</sup> (Mt 3:7; 16:1-12). Matthew designed that the Sadducees and Pharisees united to oppose Jesus. Matthew's account regarding this issue is different to that of Mark and Luke, which only records that the Sadducees questioned Jesus concerning the resurrection (Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-40). According to Saldarini (1998:167), in his account relating to these passages, Matthew did not make a particular distinction between all the Israelite groups as evidence for his personal conviction in his narrative. It seems evident that two leading Israelite groups represented the mainstream of opposition against the ministry of Jesus in and through the early church (Hatina 1995:74; cf Meier 1976:19). Matthew did not combine the two groups whenever the opportunity arose, but appears to have selected a gulf between Jesus and his followers on the one hand and a variety of Israelite groups with their leaders on the other, in order to develop a broad based narrative (Stanton 1993:136-137).

In the first place, John the Baptist attacked the Sadducees and Pharisees as the crowd came to him for baptism (Mt 3:7-10). The crowd knew that the Sadducees and Pharisees were

groups who formed a part of the leadership, which articulated and promoted a perspective on Israelite life in competition with Jesus and John the Baptist (Saldarini 1998:167). John the Baptist immediately attacked them as a brood of vipers (Mt 3:7). This implies that both groups opposed Jesus and the community of his disciples.

In the second place, Jesus warned his disciples against the false teachings of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, which formed the leaven of religious deception (Mt 6:12). This verse can be compared with Mark 8:15 and Luke 12:1. In Mark, the leaven represents the Pharisees and Herod, while in Luke the leaven refers to the Pharisees only. Hence, Matthew depicts the two leading groups as symbols of erroneous teachers and therefore as enemies of Jesus.

Matthew granted the Scribes<sup>11</sup> more importance in his narrative than the Gospels of Mark and Luke. The Scribes were the main opponents of Jesus in the narratives, even though they were exclusively described as members of the community to which Matthew ministered. The Scribes were, amongst other things, teachers, jurists, lawyers and even members of the Jerusalem Council. According to Matthew, they often sought the company of the high priest and were therefore associated with Jerusalem, where they were associated with the government (see Mt 2:4; 21:25). The Scribes themselves only appear in a couple of passages (Mt 7:29; 8:19; 9:3; 13:52; 17:10), but they also appear in Matthew's narrative together with other Israelite leaders at other stages.

The verses in Matthew 7:29, 9:3, 13:52 and 17:10 describe the function of the Scribes in relation to Jesus as negative. The authority of the Scribes conflicted with the teaching of Jesus (Mt 7:29), while their teaching related to Elijah (Mt 17:10). They thought that Jesus had blasphemed when he told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven (Mt 9:3) (Saldarini 1988a:159). Only in two passages are the Scribes (Mt 8:19; 13:52) mentioned together with Jesus in a positive sense in Matthew's Gospel. When a "Scribe" came to Jesus, stating that he would follow Jesus, Jesus replied by stating the difficulty in following him. This passage indicates the way in which Matthew depicts some of the Scribes as having a positive relationship with Jesus and consequently being interested in becoming his disciples. This means that the Scribes accepted Jesus as a fellow educated person and as a superior from

whom they could learn (Saldarini 1988a:159).

Moreover, Matthew refers to the Scribes who had accepted Jesus as follows: “every teacher of the law has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 13:52). This implies that there were Christian Scribes in Matthew’s community and that they most probably had a teaching function within the Christian community. This assumption seems evident because the Scribes were accepted as teaching authorities within the Israelite society (Saldarini 1988a:160). Matthew chapter 23 also mentions the function of the Scribes as legitimate teachers within both the Israelite and Christian societies. These Scribes were in general rejected by the Jews: “I send you prophets and wise men and Scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town” (Mt 23:34). This statement also has a parallel in Luke, as “prophets and apostles” (Lk 11:49). According to Saldarini (1988:160), the prophets were also originally rejected, as is evidenced from part of Q’s polemic against the rejection of the prophets in Judaism. The wise men and Scribes were a reflection of this, as Matthew and Luke adapted this statement in order to fit the Christian circumstances during the late first century. Matthew conceived the prophets, the wise men and the scribes as being leaders and teachers within Matthew’s community prior to formative Judaism. Henceforth, the office of a Scribe remained an important one within Matthew’s community (Saldarini 1988a:160).

It is clear that some important Israelite leaders were opponents of Jesus in Matthew’s narrative. However, there was not one single character or group amongst the religious leaders (the upper stratification of the Matthew Gospel) that opposed Jesus: his antagonists were combined in Matthew, from amongst several groups, and his opponents shared similar traits<sup>12</sup>. The Israelite religious leaders were portrayed in an unfavourable light from the beginning to the end of Matthew’s narrative. They were depicted as religious leaders, but they had no God-given authority to lead the people (Carter 1996:240). Moreover, they had rejected God’s plan of salvation for the people. Hence, no Israelite leaders belonged to Matthew’s community except for a number of Scribes.

### 3.4.2 Other members from the upper stratification

The Gospel of Matthew also mentions other members of the community who came from the upper levels of the social hierarchy. Examples of these include the rich young man (19:16, 22), the rich man Joseph of Arimathea (Mt 27:57), the centurion (Mt 8:5,8,13; 27:54), as well as the tax collectors (Mt 5:46; 9:9, 10, 11; 10:3; 11:19; 17:24; 18:17; 21:31, 32). The rich young man and Joseph of Arimathea probably came from the governing class, while the centurion and the tax collectors came from the retainer class. In this section, the centurion and the tax collectors are not considered due to the fact that they were seen from a Jewish perspective and they also belonged to the non-urban elite class (see above 3.3.2). The non-urban elite class members who had been present in Matthew's community will be considered, however.

The rich young man came up to Jesus and asked: "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus replied that he should obey the commandments. The young man responded by stating that he had kept to them since he was a boy (see Mk 10:20). Jesus answered, "go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and come, follow me". We are told "When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth" (Mt 19:16-22). The young man had kept the commandments since he was a boy, which therefore implies that the young man's framework of reference was Judaism. In comparing this same parable with the accounts of Mark (10:22) and Luke (18:23), it seems clear that the young man never became a member of the Christian community. Neither of the Synoptic Gospels mentions that this young man actually became a disciple of Jesus.

However, one additional passage does grant us an insight about the rich man, as a member of Matthew's community (Mt 27:57). The Gospel of Matthew states that Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man and indeed a disciple of Jesus. According to Mark (15:43) and Luke (23:50,51), Joseph of Arimathea was a prominent member of the Jerusalem Council (who had not consented to their decision and action regarding the crucifixion of Jesus). He gave his own tomb for the body of Jesus to be buried in (Mt 27:60). Matthew recalls from Isaiah 53:9 that "they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death" (see France 1985:403). This upper class man followed the teaching of Jesus and became his secret disciple in the

Matthew narrative. We can assume that Joseph of Arimathea had a high and profound authority because he “attended to Pilate, during which he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him” (Mt 27:58). This scene is most probably intended to let us know that some of the members of the upper class also followed Jesus.

It seems quite evident that some members of the urban elite did follow the teaching and ministry of Jesus in Matthew’s narrative. In Matthew’s narrative, however, the majority of them were opponents of Jesus. We have learned that Matthew portrayed a few of the Scribes, (enemies of the historical Jesus) who, together with the rich man, became followers of Jesus. The upper classes on the whole excluded themselves from Jesus’ religious movement.

### **3.4.3 The non-urban elite members of Matthew’s community**

The purpose of this section is to determine whom Matthew depicted as the non-urban elite members of the community to whom he ministered. It seems clear that the non-urban elite classes included peasants usually living in rural areas, apart from the degraded, unclean and expendable classes. The members of the non-urban elite in Matthew’s community are divided into three sections, namely the peasants, the unclean (the degraded and expendables), as well as the Gentiles. Recent social historians have concluded about Matthew’s community that his followers were a sectarian group. One of the important arguments in this regard was that any sect was considered to be a marginal<sup>13</sup> group (Overman 1990; Balch 1991). Dulling (1995a: 358-359) believes that Matthew’s community was a marginal group and that the author of Matthew was deeply concerned with them. Hence, marginal figures in the Gospel of Matthew are considered below.

#### **3.4.3. 1 The crowds**

In the Gospel of Matthew there are fifty references to crowds. The crowd was considered to be a peasant class in the agrarian society (see Carter 2000:127). Kingsbury (1969:26-27) recognizes that Matthew distinguishes the crowds from their leaders and the crowds, as sharing directly in the ministry of Jesus. Most of the peasant class followed Jesus and even

though the crowds did not belong to the Christian community, they were to be associated with their leaders (Kingsbury 1969:28). Kingsbury's arguments have raised some questions regarding the crowds. Two such questions are: Was the crowd Israelite or Gentile or possibly a group consisting of both Israelites and Gentiles? In which way were the people in the crowd related to the ministry of Jesus, considering the fact that the crowd had gone along with the leaders of Israel?

One can consider the first argument concerning the identity of the crowd. Certain Matthean passages such as Matthew 4:25 appear to presuppose that at least some sections of the crowds were Israelites, while other passages like Matthew 15:29-39 probably represent Gentile crowds in the ministry of Jesus. One should consider Matthew's geographical references to the Gentile world. The examination below takes into account a variety of data within the Gospel of Matthew.

When Jesus started teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God and healing sicknesses among the people, the news about Jesus spread all over Syria and large crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him (Mt 4:23-25). In Matthew's selection, the regions of Galilee, Jerusalem and Judea are accepted as "Israelite" places, while the debate as to whether Syria, the Decapolis, as well as the area beyond the Jordan where Israelite or Gentile still continues. The region of Syria is mentioned only once in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 4:23-25). According to Trilling (1964:135; see Cousland 2002:56), Matthew only mentions Syria in the context of a limited region in the north of Galilee. He argues that Matthew mentions Galilee together with Syria to the north, after which he then refers to Galilee (lower Galilee) and Syria (upper Galilee) respectively. Moreover, Matthew describes the nature of Jesus' ministry and added these references to Syria that the ministry of Jesus was spreading across the country. Matthew 4:24 refer to the healing by Jesus, while Matthew 4:25 identifies the provenance of these followers of Jesus (Cousland 2002:57). Hence Syria is not mentioned in this context as a proof of the origins of his followers. However, the inclusion of Syria by the evangelist is simply an indication of the provenance of the Gospel. According to Carter's

(2000:125) interpretation, Matthew's reference to Syria may reflect the Gospel's origin, as a significant Israelite population existed in both Syria and its capital Antioch. The reference to Syria also continued to include the Gentiles, who were last noted in the phrase "Galilee of the Gentiles" in Matthew 4:15. Matthew might have referred to Syria in the context of Jesus' ministry because he started his preaching at Antioch in Syria. The teaching and preaching of the good news through the ministry of Jesus was not only for the Israelite crowd. Matthew narrates that the ministerial activities of Jesus reached outside of the Israelite environment to the whole of the Gentile environment, including Syria. The missionary activities of Jesus attracted Israelite and Gentile people from Galilee, Jerusalem and Judea, as well as from Syria (Davies 1993:48).

Matthew also mentions the city of Decapolis in Matthew 4:25. The region around the city of Decapolis was Hellenistic in its cultural orientation within a Semitic setting (Du Plessis 1998:64). According to Cousland (2002:58), ten Greek cities were involved, namely Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippo, Dion, Pella, Galasa and Canatha. Alexander Jannaeus had conquered and imposed Israelite customs upon the cities of Dion, Scythopolis and Gadara. Pompey operated amongst these cities, which were re-established as Greek cities and granted municipal autonomy to them (see 3.3.4; Josephus, *Ant.* 13:393-397, 14:74-76). Hence, the population of the region of Decapolis was mixed, with both Israelites and Gentiles (see an extended discussion regarding this below). Members of both of these groups followed Jesus in Matthew's depiction on the narrative. During the reign of Herod the Great, both the cities of Hippo and Gadara were under his authority, but after his death, the city of Hippo became an independent state, which was later attached to the province of Syria (Cousland 2002:58). The above discussion has attempted to show that Matthew understood the crowds to have been primarily Israelite, even though many Gentiles were included in his community (see Van Aarde 1994:82; Minear 1974:39-40).

In Matthew's Gospel, the term "Israel" fulfils an important function, as Israel refers to the people of Israel (Mt 2:6; 9:33; 10:6; 15:24,31; 27:9) (see Chapter 2; Harvey 1996:234-238). The first reference is in Matthew 2:6: "who will be the shepherd of my people Israel". The



majority of the other references to Israel in the Gospel were in the context of Israel's being the people of God. Two more instances of Israel being associated with crowds occur, namely Matthew 9:33 and 15:31. In Matthew 9:33, the crowds had observed the miracle healing of Jesus together with the casting out of a demon; after which the people replied "never was anything like this seen in Israel" (Mt 9:33). This reference to Israel did not only include the geographical context of Israel (Harvey 1996:235 n34), but most probably also included the totality of God's dealing with his people through the ministry of Jesus in Matthew's depiction (Hummel 1966:144). Hence, these crowds were examples of God's including the Gentiles in the people of Israel in Matthew's community.

The pericope of Jesus' teaching of the four thousand (Mt 15:29-39) also indicates an association of the crowd with Israel, where the crowds glorified the God of Israel in Matthew's community. According to Cousland (2002:71; France 1989b:234), "the use of the appellation God of Israel has frequently been taken as an indication that the crowds here were Gentiles, since, it is alleged [that the] Jews would simply praise God." The feeding and healing took place from the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. Hence, this place is situated in a Gentile territory (cf Mt 8:28-34; 16:13). However, the argument about the "God of Israel" is not accepted by many scholars, due to the fact that while the Israelites themselves hardly ever used the term "the God of Israel", the non-Israelites almost never used this expression (Cousland 2003:71). It is, however, a fact that Jesus attended to certain areas of the Gentile world during his ministerial journeys in the Matthew's Gospel. One cannot ignore that crowds followed Jesus from these Gentile provinces. Moreover, many Israelites lived within some of these Gentile provinces. The crowd was therefore mainly Israelite, even though it included an admixture of Gentiles (see Sabourin 1982:305-306; Smillie 2002:86-87).

Next, one needs to discuss the geographical location of the inclusive ministry of Jesus in Matthew's depiction. The key concern is whether the geographical location belonged to Gentiles or Israelites. According to Lohfink (1983:276; see Wire 1991:100), Matthew regarded Galilee, Judea and Perea as Israelite, and he did not mention Tyre, Sidon and Idumea, due to the fact that these other places were Gentile. This view is not accepted by Krieger

(1986:98-119). The name “Palestine”, mentioned in the first Gospel, was only a reality in the period of the post-70 CE period. Judea was a Roman province’s name in Matthew’s Gospel and the Gospel reflects a post-70 situation. Judea, Samaria, Perea and Idumea were then consolidated into Palestine. This consolidation accounted for Matthew’s not having mentioned Idumea and Samaria in and through his reference to and mentioning of the area beyond the Jordan (which was also the region of Judea). Moreover, Matthew 19:1 (“Jesus left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan”) does provide some evidence that Matthew, in his time, referred to the area beyond the Jordan as Judea (Krieger 1986:104-105). This perspective is nevertheless not sufficient evidence for a proper conclusion.

The Gospel of Matthew does not provide much reflection on the political situation of the post-70 CE period. Matthew was at that stage most probably more concerned with the political topography of Judea than with the idea of the spiritual wealth of God’s people. This would imply that the territory of Palestine was no longer important at that time, as Judea was already under the rule of the Roman Empire, as well as influenced by Greek culture. For instance, Galilee had a mixed population of Israelites and Gentiles, and Matthew called Galilee the countryside of the Gentiles (Sim 1998:220).

The mixed crowd consisting of the multitudes described in Matthew had followed Jesus since the beginning of his inclusive ministry. The multitudes came from various places such as Syria, the Decapolis, Trans-Jordan, Galilee and Judea (Mt 4:25). This verse reflects the ethnic character of the Christian community near the end of the first century, as it would appear to the Israelite purists to whom Matthew ministered (Smillie 2002:76; see Mcknight 1990:93-94). Moreover, Smillie’s (2002:88) interpretation of Matthew 4:24-25 is that Galilee and the ten Greek cities as well as Jerusalem and Judea and the area beyond the Jordan (all of the above cities do by way of a historical excursus grant some indication of the number of non-Israelites in the area) are a description of an inclusive people (a detailed discussion on this issue follows in Chapter 4). The crowd, which followed Jesus in Matthew’s depiction 4:25, composed of mixed peoples, can be linked to Matthew 5:1 (“so seeking the crowds”).

According to Smillie (2002:88), “the multi-racial crowds of Matthew 4:25 were the crowds of Matthew 5:1 who made up the audience for the Sermon on the Mount.” Smillie (2002:88) believes that there is no break in the syntax of the verses between Matthew 4:25 and Matthew 5:1. Hence, the crowd in this narrative in Matthew consisted of both Israelites and Gentiles, with the Israelites of course forming the majority.

The above views are supported by Van Aarde (1994:80-86) and Minear (1974:39-40). Minear (1974:39-40) argues that the Israelite crowd includes the Gentiles as a group in the pre-paschal period and that the mission to the Israelite crowd is a continuation of the Gentile mission during the post-paschal period in Matthew’s narrative. Van Aarde (1994:82) understands Minear’s argument as signifying no “discontinuity” between the pre-paschal level and the post-paschal level. Van Aarde (1994:82) believes that “the mission to the Jewish crowd on the pre-paschal level fulfills a type of *transparency* which relates to the disciples-commission during post-paschal period.” This discussion clearly confirms that in the Gospel of Matthew, the crowds include both Israelites and Gentiles in their community.

### 3.4.3.2 Gentiles (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)<sup>14</sup>

One can now move to another important question. Were there any people with some Gentile background within the Matthean community? This issue has been debated for years and is still debated today. The Israelite Christian community did not have any Gentile missionary projects and did not have much contact with the Gentile world. It does, however, seem apparent that at least some people with a non-Israelite background belonged to the Matthean community. The Gentiles as such were portrayed reasonably positively in Matthew’s narrative, as, for example, with the centurion of Capernaum (Mt 8:5-13), the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28), as well as everybody else included in the universal mission (Mt 28:19). Most Matthean scholars agree that Gentiles were present within Matthew’s community. Nevertheless, there is a problem with this latent presence of some Gentiles, together with a certain anti-Gentile perspective in Matthew’s Gospel (cf Mt 18:17). This anti-Gentile perspective creates the impression that the community in general did not like the Law-free

Gentile community. Any members of the Matthean community who were not Israelite by birth must have converted to Judaism in general, since Matthew clearly supported the Law-observing mission to the Gentiles (Sim 1998:247-248).

Before discussing this subject, one should consider the Gentile characters in Matthew's Gospel. The Galileans fulfill a very important function in the narrative and they symbolize the relationship of the Matthean disciple-community with the non-Israelite world, as signaled by the presence of certain Gentile members in this community.

Sim's (1995:21; see Senior 1998:8) point of view is that Matthew and his Israelite community were open and friendly towards the Gentile world in his narrative, even though the community largely avoided contact with the surrounding Gentile society. Sim has analysed this Gentile story within Matthew's Gospel as the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1-17), and certain anti-Gentile sentiments (Mt 5:46-47; 6:7-8, 32; 18:15-17). The first four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus are Gentiles who were brought into the messianic line and viewed favourably by Matthew in the Gospel, a preview of the church's future with the Gentiles. Possibly one or more of the women were converts to Judaism in the later Rabbinic tradition. It is therefore misleading to accept these women as Gentiles, even though they were not fundamentally Israelite. Hence, Matthew's inclusion of these four women in the genealogy of Jesus was designed to emphasize something other than their Gentile origin (Sim 1988:220; see Johnson 1988:152-179; Brown 1979:71-74). However, the genealogy defines the relationship of the main character to the past and shows something important about the present time of the Matthean community. It provides information about the setting or the origin of Jesus, and suggests that his followers were at the centre of God's purpose for his people (Carter 2000:53). The genealogy of Jesus is inclusive, as it extends from Israelite to Gentile territories (for example, Babylon), encompassing males and females, Gentiles and Jews, powerful kings, as well as little, powerless women (Carter 2000:54). Hence, the genealogy of Jesus suggests that the writer had a theological agenda, a sociological and pastoral motive, as well as making a narrative contribution.

In respect of the women in the genealogy, it is not clear whether all of them were indeed

Gentiles. We are, of course, sure that Rahab (Josh 2) was a Canaanite, that Ruth (Ruth 1:4) was a Moabite and that Tamar (Gen 38:1-6) was a Canaanite. Bathsheba might have been an Israelite, but she married Uriah, the Hittite, which linked her to the Gentiles (2 Sam 11:3). Sim (1998:218-219) does not clearly mention that these women in the genealogy of Jesus were included due to the fact that they were from a Gentile background. Matthew's intention regarding the genealogy of Jesus was inclusive of both male and female, Gentiles and Jews, members of the elite and the non-elite, as part of his community. The Gentile women in the genealogical narrative were clear signs from Matthew that at least some members of his community were Gentiles.

Other passages that include an anti-Gentile trend were linked to the admonition to love your enemies (Mt 5:46-47), the Gentile manner of praying (Mt 6:7-8), the Gentiles, who were anxious about worldly issues, being frowned upon (Mt 6:31-32), the treatment of the tax collector and the Gentile (Mt 18:17). Sim (1995:28) believes that these verses reflect Matthew's very negative attitude toward Gentiles, namely that they were irreligious people who provided a negative role model. Sim concluded that one problem was avoided here, namely that these verses were redacted in terms of the current viewpoint. This means that these anti-Gentile verses represented older, more traditional material, which Matthew included in his Gospel (Senior 1999:9). The references to Gentiles in Matthew are surely authentic. Smillie (2002:76) believes that this perspective needed support from "the late first century *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's redactional activity, which would have sought some justification for a Gentile mission within the lifetime of Jesus." This view is based on the fact that Matthew's community moved out from within Judaism. Of course, this historical assumption suggests that there might not have been many Gentiles during the lifetime of Jesus, although it is asserted that the depiction of the positive behaviour of Jesus towards the Gentiles has been influenced by Matthew's contemporaries, who had a positive policy towards the Gentiles (Smillie 2002:76).

Jesus' positive attitude towards the Gentile ministry was transparent within the community amongst which the disciples lived and ministered. Moreover, according to Sabourin

(1982:307), the life and ministry of Jesus in Galilee was proleptically announced with reference to the future development of the disciple community for the great mission to all nations.

The positive statements concerning Gentiles in Matthew's Gospel are explored next. This would imply that one needs to reach a more subtle understanding of Matthew's perspective regarding the Gentiles and the Gentile mission's requirements. Senior (1999:14-18) has provided a detailed analysis of 18 texts related to positive statements regarding Gentiles in Matthew's narrative.

(a) In the opening verse of the Gospel, Matthew declares that Jesus is the "son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1). The function of Abraham as the father of the nations in the New Testament text presupposes that Matthew intended to stress the mission of Jesus as including the Gentiles.

(b) The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew includes women who were both Gentiles and "outsiders." This implies that Matthew also intended the group (to whom Jesus ministered) to include Gentiles. It is easy to determine positive statements about Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew, as has already been discussed above.

(c) The infancy narrative also mentions the Gentiles (Mt 2:1-12) in a positive manner, with the Gentile magi first seeking Jesus, after which they offered gold and incense and myrrh to Jesus. A further emphatic support of this conviction was that Jesus and his mother escaped to the Gentile land of Egypt (Mt 2:13). The fact that the Gentile magi was the first to worship Jesus, together with the fact that the land of Egypt protected Jesus, is included in Matthew's huge and important positive perspective on the Gentiles. Some Gentiles fulfilled a special function in the foreground of Matthew's narrative (Saldarini 1994:82).

(d) When Jesus prepared for his ministry in Mt 4:12-16, Matthew referred to Galilee as the country of the Gentiles<sup>15</sup>, with reference to those who sat in darkness, having signalled the future inclusive mission of Jesus to the Gentiles (see Chapter 4).

(e) Matthew 4:23-26 (see 3.4.3.1) has already been discussed. It serves as proof that the crowd also included some Gentiles.

(f) Jesus' healing of the centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-13 offers a striking difference between Matthew and Luke. Luke 7:1-10 emphasizes that the centurion had a proper relationship with Israelites, as well as that he intended to build a synagogue. According to Matthew, the centurion came directly to Jesus, without any interceding Israelite friends. Both Matthew and Luke record Jesus' surprise and praise for the centurion's faith and accordingly contrast his faith with the lack thereof anywhere else in Israel (Smillie 2002:92). Matthew adds some more important details, stating "I tell you that many from the East and West shall come and sit down at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the utter darkness" (Mt 8:11-12). This story suggests that Matthew's situation was an actual extension of Jesus' healing ministry, with the inclusion of the Gentile soldier.

(g) Jesus reflected where he had preached, favourably contrasting the probable reaction of Gentile cities like Tyre, Syre, Sidon, and Sodom with that of the Galilean towns which showed a lack of response. Matthew thus mentioned the Gentile cities (Mt 11:20-24) in a positive light.

(h) Matthew's fulfillment quotation from Isaiah 42:1-4 portrays Jesus as the Servant "proclaiming justice to Gentiles" and predicts that in his name the Gentiles will have hope (Mt 12:18-21).

(i) Jesus stated that his mission was only Israel, even though he finally acclaimed the great faith of the Canaanite woman and healed her daughter (Mt 15:21-28). The main theme of this passage was thus the fact that the Matthean Jesus included the Gentiles in his ministry. His plan for salvation was the same as Matthew's for his community (Kopas 1990:18; cf Jackson 2002:85).

(j) In the parable of the labourers (Mt 20:1-16), even though the labourers all started working at different times, they were all paid equally. The mention of the labourers who had reached the vineyard late most probably referred to the Gentiles.

(k) In Matthew 21:43, the parable of the vineyard most probably included a reference to those who would respond to Jesus and thus most probably included the Gentiles (the kingdom of

God would be given to a “people who will produce its fruit”), as well as the Israelites.

(l) In the parable of the wedding banquet, the invitation was extended to the Gentiles (Mt 22:1-14). This parable strongly hinted that the invitation of Jesus was rejected by the Israelites, after which Jesus then extended his invitation to include the Gentiles. The mission of Jesus thus found its complete intention and meaning in this.

(m) The apocalyptic discourse (Mt 24:14) clearly states that the universal proclamation of the salvation in and through Jesus includes all nations (Gentiles).

(n) In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-46), the parable indicates that Matthew’s community was a mixed one<sup>16</sup>, including both Israelites and Gentiles (“all the nations will be gathered before him,” verse 32).

(o) Pilate’s wife attempted to persuade Pilate not to condemn Jesus (Mt 27:19). Matthew portrayed this Gentile woman as attempting to rescue Jesus, while, by contrast, the chief priests and the elders condemned Jesus.

(p) The centurion and his soldiers confessed Jesus as the “Son of God” (Mt 27:54).

(q) Jesus proclaimed the Gospel to all nations (Mt 28:19).

All seventeen of these texts provide evidence that the attitude of Matthew’s narrative was positive toward the Gentiles. These texts lead on to conclude that Matthew’s concern for the relationship between Jesus and the Gentiles may not be on a par with his concern for Jesus’ relationship with Israel (Senior 1999:18). Moreover, the Gentile mission, according to Matthew, clearly included the Gentiles who were to become members of his community (Tagawa 1969-70:162).

It has been argued in this section that the Matthean community also included Gentile members. The Matthean community had a close and open relationship with the Gentiles and the world of the Gentiles. This also confirms that Matthew’s portrayal of Jesus’ positive mission toward the Gentiles in his life time had been influenced by the disciples’ community (the post-paschal disciples’ community), which included the Gentiles and the mission to the Gentiles.



### 3.4.3.3 Women

About two decades ago, Matthean scholarship began to focus on women in the Gospel. Social sciences and literary criticism have influenced Matthean feminist criticism.<sup>17</sup> Matthean feminist scholarship includes a literary approach (Anderson 1983, 1987), a feminist historical perspective (Selvidge 1984, 1987; Schaberg 1987; Blomberg 1991) and a social scientific focus (Levine 1988; Wire 1991; Corley 1993; Love 1993, 1994). These feminist approaches rose up against the dominant male perspectives in the reading of Matthew's Gospel. When one reads the First Gospel, women do not seem particularly significant. They usually appear as background personalities or in association with men (see Wire 1991:103). However, this section is not intended to present a feministic approach to women within the Matthean narrative. Instead, Matthew's depiction of the relationship of Jesus with women and their membership in the community are considered, as well as the social stratification of women within the community.

The following references to women characters occur in Matthew's Gospel (Anderson 2001:50):

- Mary, Jesus' mother (Mt 1:18-25; 2:13, 19-21);
- Mother and brothers (Mt 12:46-50);
- Mary, brothers and sisters (Mt 13:53-56);
- Peter's mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-17);
- The ruler's daughter (Mt 9:18-19, 23-26);
- The woman with the haemorrhage (Mt 9:20-22);
- Jesus' feeding of the five thousand men besides women and children (Mt 14:21; 15:38);
- The Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28);
- The mother of the sons of Zebedee (Mt 20:20; 27:56);
- The woman at Bethany (Mt 26: 6-13);

- Pilate's wife (Mt 27:19);
- The maid who confronted Peter (Mt 26:69);
- The women at the cross and tomb (27:55-56, 61; 28:1-10) including Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, Magdalene and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

Some of the women mentioned above have already been discussed because of their Gentile background.

In Matthew's narrative, women appeared to belong to the community of believers even though they were excluded from being recognized in its history and activities in the key areas of public power. Women shared the Israelite tradition and heritage, even though they were not usually regarded as equal in status to men (Kopas 1990:14). It is assumed that Matthew's description of women sees them as embedded with their male relatives (see above). Pilate's wife and the mother of the Zebedees can be regarded as connected to their male relatives. Moreover, while women were the witnesses to Jesus' death, burial and empty tomb, these facts did not in themselves make them disciples. After the resurrection of Jesus, he first appeared to women, whom he had sent to inform the disciples (Mt 27:55-56, 61; 28:1-8) (Wire 1991:102; Anderson 2001:45-50). Hence, women were the true participants in the founding of the Christian community from the inside, even though their social status was always lower than and submissive to that of males. Women were thus not equal to men, due to the fact that they were part of a patriarchal<sup>18</sup> community.

There is no doubt that the author of Matthew's Gospel designed and based its content on a patriarchal point of view. There is much evidence of Matthew's patriarchal stance, such as the fact that Joseph is at the centre of the birth story; that the power-groups in Matthew's Gospel were Israelite leaders; that the disciples were male; and that Jesus' teaching often assumed only a male audience (Anderson 2001:29). Hence, Matthew's phraseology is very important for a proper understanding of the status of women. Matthew's depiction of women is presented according to a cautious and traditional perspective. Traditionally, women had little importance in the community in the period of Jesus (Kopas 1990:13). Women are mentioned

in Matthew's Gospel as examples, but these examples are significant, due to the fact that they involved some cultural reflection on the status of women. For instance, when Jesus discussed divorce (Mt 5:31-32), the social-cultural setting of a woman's status in divorce was clearly outlined. Israelite society did allow divorces, but was based on a unilateral decision by the husband (Kopas 1990:14; see Du Plessis 1998:310-311). Mark's statement on divorce revealed a more positive view for women (Mk 10:10-12), as Mark stated that if a man divorced his wife and married another, he committed adultery. In the same vein, if a woman divorced her husband and married another, she committed adultery. These intimations of equality pave the way for a more pervasive equality. It has been confirmed that marriages were generally structured along patriarchal lines, founded on the power and interests of men (Carter 2000:147). The status of women was not considered equal to that of men, and their actions were always considered to be under those of men.

Women are not named among Jesus' disciples, even though they were prominent in the stories demonstrating faith, as exemplary faith was considered most wonderful in Matthew's Gospel (Mt 8:14-15; 9:18-26; 14:21; 15:21-28, 38). One can consider Matthew's broader treatment of women as examples of faith and as an incentive to good works. Matthew described the faith of a woman to have been better than that of the twelve disciples. Jesus said to a Canaanite woman (also a Gentile); "You have great faith" (Mt 15:28). This woman was, in the face of the instructions of Jesus, greatly challenged in terms of ethnic, gender, religious, political as well as economic barriers. The narrative of the Canaanite woman stands as an example of the faith required of the true member of Matthew's community (cf Jackson 2002:20). The faith of the woman was important in her overcoming all ethnic, religious, gender and patriarchal-familial barriers (Wainwright 1991:251). The story of a nameless woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in Matthew 26:6-13 is another example. The woman, through her actions, proved her deep care and respect for Jesus. The disciples of Jesus did not understand his death (Mt 26:8-9), but she had recognized that Jesus would suffer and die at the hands of his enemies in Matthew's depiction (Carter 2000:502-503). Wherever this Gospel is preached throughout the world, the woman would be remembered for her symbolic

act (Duling 2002:555). It is clear that the faith of these women was indeed vast, while the disciples had little faith (Mt 6:30; 8:26; 16:8; 17:19-20) (Corely 1993:175). Peter's reluctance to accept that the Messiah must suffer and die was rebuked by Jesus (Mt 16:22-23) and Peter denied Jesus in the passion narrative. Matthew showed that the faith of this woman was great and should be regarded as a model for the community.

Women characters were the followers of Jesus from the beginning of his ministry at Galilee to its end in Jerusalem. According to Munro (1982:231; see Malbon 1983:41), women are to be identified as disciples. In the case of Matthew's Gospel, Mattila (1999:154-160) included some women disciples. The word "disciple" was a technical term for a pupil of a teacher in the world of the New Testament. The meaning of discipleship involved adherence to a great teacher and his particular way of life. In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples were often specified as twelve specific followers, even though sometimes a large undefined group of followers was mentioned. The term disciples most probably indicated a limited inside group very close to Jesus (Mt 13:11). This limitation to the "inside" was not an indication only of the twelve disciples in Matthew's narrative. Matthew mentioned that Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus as well (Mt 27:57). This is an indication that some nameless disciples, who were not part of the group of the twelve disciples, followed Jesus. Both groups had a different attitude toward Jesus in Matthew 26-28.

According to Mattila (1999:157-158), the group of women appears to be more dominant than "the twelve disciples" in the passion narrative, where women were the witnesses of the death and the resurrection of Jesus from the beginning to the end. In the beginning of the passion narrative, the disciples were present with their master, Jesus, all the time in Matthew's depiction. They ate the Passover meal with Jesus and then followed him to Gethsemane. However, when Jesus was arrested, every one of them went his own way. Following the resurrection of Jesus, the twelve were again present in the events that took place in Galilee. However, the unknown woman who anointed Jesus (Mt 26:6-13) and Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of Zebedee's sons (Mt 27:55-56) were presented in the passion narrative as women who observed the crucifixion, the

death of Jesus, the tomb and his resurrection. These women proclaimed the resurrection to the disciples, who had fled (Mattila 1999:158). They gave up everything, followed Jesus from Galilee and served him. These women fulfilled the demands of discipleship, but they were not called disciples. Moreover, the women and the male disciples in this passion narrative cannot be identified due to the fact that following the resurrection of Jesus, he commanded the eleven male disciples to make disciples of all nations. The only difference symbolized was that of the respective reactions and attitudes of the men and women (Mattila 1999:177).

In Matthew, the separation of male and female discipleship/fellowship was due to the difference in the language used, even when the words referred to the same thing. Men who followed Jesus were said to be “disciples” even though women who followed Jesus were not called disciples, yet both were called to serve or follow him (Mattila 1999:176). Several incidents that illustrate this principle are those that involve Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-17), the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28) and the woman at Bethany (Mt 26:6-13). These women’s fellowship with Jesus is described as service or as following. The terms service and following are used in Matthew 27:55 and are connected to the women who came from Galilee, watching at the cross. The term “serve” does not refer only to providing food and hospitality. Matthew uses it as an all-embracing term for the ministry of Jesus (Carter 2000:538).

The term “disciple” was reserved for men only in a patriarchal society (Mattila 1999:176). Love (1994: 57) argues that the term “disciples” refers only to the twelve and to Joseph of Arimathea, even though other members of the Matthean community were also disciples. His point was that women were not among the twelve, even though they were full members of the community. Carter (2000:538) insists that the female witnesses of Jesus’ crucifixion proved that they were clear disciples of Jesus. Women followed Jesus, and the verb (follow), from the outset signified attachment and obedience to Jesus in response to his disruptive call (Carter 2000:538). Yet, women were not called disciples, even though their functions were similar to those of the male disciples (see chapter 1).

Moreover, in first century society, the family was very important. There was no important personality in the society, because it was a patriarchal-family society. When the crowd

followed Jesus, women were at that stage part of a patriarchal society. This may therefore be the reason why children and women were not regularly mentioned in Matthew's narrative. The mother of Zebedee's sons had a double connection to men, both to the father and to the sons, but her own name is not given in the First Gospel (Mt 20:20). Peter's mother-in-law's name is not given as she is introduced in relation to her son-in-law (Mt 8:14-16). Women and children belonged to men. For instance, Jesus fed the five (four) thousand men (Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-38), while women and children were not counted. These women and children were also members of the community. In this sense, women and children might have been a limitation in a patriarchal society (Mattila 1999:168).

The relationship between Jesus and women was that of master and nameless disciples in Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel was written within deeply embedded patriarchal assumptions. Women were not equal to men. However, their faith was sometimes considered to have been greater than that of the male disciples. Yet they were not called disciples and were always presented without a name. This clearly confirms the theory that while they were significant members of the disciple community, they had a lower status in society.

#### **3.4.3.4 Religious and social outcasts**

The unclean, degraded and expendable classes in any agrarian society lived outside the city wall (Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:85, see above). These classes consisted of disabled people, beggars, prostitutes, bandits, and others (see 3.3.4; Duling 1995a:369-370; see Rohrbaugh 1993a:387; Van Aarde 1993:533; Van Eck 1995: 214). They were at the bottom of an agrarian society (Lenski 1966:280-284) and were referred to as marginals or outcasts. The term "marginal" may be divided into three types: marginal people, involuntary marginality and voluntary marginality<sup>19</sup>. In the case of Matthew's Gospel all three kinds of marginality could be seen (Duling 1995a:365). Marginal people were also called outcasts, who were most probably divided into two groups, religious outcasts and social outcasts. In the context of the Second Temple ideology, religious outcasts included the disabled (the paralytic Mt 4:24; 8:6; 9:2.6; the dumb Mt 9:32; 15:30,31; the deaf 11:5; the epileptic Mt 4:24; 17:15; the blind Mt

9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22), a bleeding woman (Mt 9:20-22) and Gentiles (as discussed above). These social outcasts also included tax collectors and prostitutes (Mt 21:31,32), the poor (Mt 5:3; 11:5; 19:21; 26:9, 11), Barabbas (Mt 27:16,21) and the robbers/bandits (Mt 21:13; 27:38, 44). It does, however, seem evident that religious and social outcasts overlap in Matthew's Gospel. For instance, the Canaanite woman was a Gentile woman with a daughter who suffered from an unnamed disease, and she as a "social outcast" does not appear to have been related to any father, husband, brother or son who could protect her (Levine 2001b:25). Wire (1991:119) stresses that the religious movement of Jesus included all kinds of people, like the ill, the demon-possessed, Gentiles and outcast women in Matthew's narrative. These were doubly marginalised people (see Anderson 2001:34), both social and religious outcasts. It is, however, not the intention of this section to distinguish between religious and social outcasts. In this section, the focus is on the inclusiveness extended to the outcasts in the ministry of Jesus.

Most of the religious outcasts were Israelites, even though some of them were Gentiles. The ministerial mission of Jesus would in particular have been extended to the Israelite outcasts (Anderson 2001:33). Matthew's understanding of the inclusive mission of Jesus included teaching, casting out demons and healing (see Chapter 5). Jesus responded positively to outcasts such as the blind, lepers and women. Through Jesus' mission, salvation was also offered to outcasts (Anderson 2001:34), even though the Israelite leaders did not include these outcasts in their society. This inclusiveness in the mission of Jesus was part of the development of the plot in Matthew's narrative. This should be carefully considered (an overlap with characters mentioned in the section on women and Gentiles above will be avoided as far as possible).

Some men brought a paralytic lying on a mat to Jesus in Matthew's narrative (Mt 9:1-8). The paralytic man was considered an outcast in Israelite society, but Jesus saw their faith and healed the man. Jesus also ate with the social outcasts, like tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:10-14). The social relationships during a meal were, in general, an image of social relationships in a society. In the ancient world, the custom of sharing a meal was a reflection

and reinforcement of the hierarchical order, social relations and status through invitations. Eating together implied that they were on the same level and shared common ideas. The Pharisees therefore asked the disciples of Jesus why their teacher ate with tax collectors and sinners, because Jesus' eating with outcasts indicated his association with them, it is continued in Matthew's community (Mattila 1999:161).

According to Matthew's narrative, the ritually unclean woman approached Jesus from behind and touched the edge of his cloak, as she thought that if she had faith in him, she would be healed (Mt 9:20-23). Jesus interpreted her touch as a sign of her faith in him (Carter 2000:226). Jesus was characterized as the healer of the most marginal members of the society who had faith (trusted) in him. All the outcasts were healed by their faith, as faith was the key to admission to membership of the Matthean community as the new social identity in Christ.

Even the tax collectors and prostitutes became members of this community (Mt 21:31). The religious leaders did not necessarily enter the kingdom of God, even though the socially marginal and despised tax collectors, as well as the prostitutes, did (Carter 2000:425). Hence, the religious outcasts became members of the community through their faith to such an extent that their faith was contrasted with that of the leaders of Israel, the crowd and the disciples.

This survey can be extended to children (Mt 5:19; 18:1) and the little ones within the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 10:42; 18:6, 10, 14; 25:40,45). These children and little ones were considered members of the community and they were also considered disciples in training (Carter 2000:27). In fact, the disciples were not yet like humble children. The disciples asked Jesus: "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" (Mt 18:1). Jesus answered "Unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven, therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3). This is the role model of humility for the disciple community (Wire 1991:105). This does not suggest a personal characteristic of purity in children, but demands that marginal members become honest, powerless disciples (Carter 2000:361-362). The conception regarding the little ones means that Matthew initially identified single persons to be trained to become disciples, to minister to people in need of provisions, those in need of a cup of water (Mt



10:42), as well as to care in general for those in need. It was clear that the little ones were included as members of the community who believed in Christ Jesus as the new social identity (Mt 18:6). The children most probably seemed weak and powerless compared to the political, social, economic and religious elite. Jesus stated that if anyone caused one of these little ones to go astray, they would be punished. Even though one cannot be sure from which stratum those little ones came, the community still needed to care for them. Jesus' inclusive teaching was a source of authority for both the historical disciples and the coming generations as the Matthew's community (Mattila 1999:156).

### **3.5 Social situation of the Matthean community**

In this section, the inclusive situation of Matthew's community is considered. This situation is closely related to the concept of date, location, stratification and membership. As seen above, the Gospel of Matthew was written around 80 CE, which seems best to explain the inclusive situation of Matthew's community. The disciple's community (the post-paschal Matthean community) had an open mission to the Israelites and Gentiles. This implies that the Matthean community was a mixed one, which contained both Israelites and Gentiles. In other words, the Matthean community was inclusive of all nations (Mt 28:19-20). This mixed membership reflected its social location. The community was stratified and hierarchically structured.

The aim of this section is to examine the circumstances of Matthew's community in Antioch. The narrator of Matthew tells his readers that Jesus' ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem was an inclusive ministry (see Chapter 4). Social scientific analysis also suggests that Jesus' inclusive ministry is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew. This assumption allows greater insight into the inclusive situation of the Matthean community at Antioch.

#### **3.5.1 The state of inclusivity**

As seen above, Matthew reflects the stories of Gentiles and Israelites in his narrative. These narratives enable the reader to gain an informed view of them. The Gospel of Matthew furthermore emerged from Judaism and the Evangelist's anti-Israelite attitude. It is possible to

find many contradictions similar to these. The largest contrast is that between the Israelites and the Gentiles in Matthew. The evidence of the Gentile stories can be presented as follows. The Gospel of Matthew mentions the son of Abraham, rather than the son of David. In the Matthean genealogy, the first sentence describes Jesus as the son of Abraham (Mt 1:1). It is very important to note that Matthew mentions Abraham, because he is the father of all nations (Sim 1995:20). We know that the list of Jesus' genealogy includes four women, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba (Mt 1:3-6). The birth of Jesus also attracted the Gentile magis to visit Bethlehem and worship him (Mt 2:1-10). This creates a positive view of Gentiles and the "Galilee of the Gentiles"<sup>20</sup> (Mt 4:15). The gospel also says: "I will put my spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations" (Mt 12:18); and there is the final command of Jesus to his disciples to evangelize all the nations (Mt 28:19). The intention of these verses is that the Gentiles are to be targeted in these evangelistic endeavours. According to Sim (1995:20), these verses state that "Jesus was the light also to the Gentiles and that in his name the Gentiles will hope". In two narratives, Jesus mentions and praises their great faith, as he healed the servant of the Roman centurion (Mt 8:5-13) and commended the woman of Canaan (Mt 15: 22-28).

However, taking these Gentile materials into consideration, it has been argued that the author of the Gospel of Matthew was a proselytized "Israelite" who had converted from being a Gentile (see Davies & Allison 1988:11). This is a very difficult question, which has yet to be discussed fully by scholars. The scope of this thesis also does not permit or require an answer as to whether the author of the Gospel was an Israelite or a former Gentile. Matthew's description of his church was not purely Israelite-Christian, but it concerned the character of a universal church, which is open to all nations, which follow Jesus.

The clearest indication of the mixed character of Matthew's community is to be found in the parable of the weeds (Mt 13:24-43). This perspective is primarily stressed by Bornkamm (1963:17). In the same year, Smith (1963:149-168) published "The Mixed State of the Church in Matthew's Gospel." He focused on selected parables from Matthew's Gospel, namely "The parable of the Weeds" (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43), "The parable of the Net" (Mt 13:47-50), "The

sub parable of the Wedding Garment” (Mt 22:11-14), “The parable of the Bridesmaids” (Mt 25:1-13), and “The Sheep and the Goats” (25:31-46). Smith (1963:160) argues that we should discover the setting of the parables within the community because these parables “concentrate on the development of the *Sitz im Leben* of the church as the source of pressure.” Those passages seemingly reflect the evangelist’s experiences in his church life. Smith also argues that Matthew’s community was a mixed state with good and bad, saints and foolish members (see Sim 1996:211).

I concur with Smith’s view regarding the congregation of the First Evangelist that it was indeed in a mixed state. On this point, one reasonable question arises and this is: who were good and bad members? Smith (1963:163; see 2.2.1) mentions two possible components of Matthew’s community, namely the Gentiles and the Pharisees. Smith (1963:163) did not strongly stress the Gentile position, he merely mentioned that “the battle over the admission of Gentiles had been won and the church was open to all.” Though, we do not know exactly who was a good or bad member in that community, one can assume that Matthew endeavoured to reconcile his people, to make Israel a true and righteous people (Mt 13: 43, 49; 25:37). One can simply think about the members of the community as having some unsettled disputes among them.

Matthew’s community reflected the kind of life Jesus and his disciples lived (pre-paschal level). This lifestyle reached out to both Israelites and Gentiles throughout Jesus’ ministry in order to influence the disciples’ community (post-paschal level). The city of Antioch was the best place for the kind of mixed state found in Matthew’s community, because it was a large Gentile city, with a large Israelite population, and the largest Israelite settlement in Syria was undoubtedly in Antioch. They were very near their homeland and living there was very much like living in Palestine. They were living in close association with Gentiles (Stern 1974:137-138). Antioch was predominantly Greek-speaking, which provided a natural site for the written Gospel and the setting for the circumcision-press mission to the Gentiles (Meier 1983:22-27; see Vledder 1997:131). This setting could therefore explain the tone adopted to both the Israelites and the Gentile converts (Kingsbury1978a:94).

### 3.5.2 The social structure of the Matthean community at Antioch

The setting of Matthew's community is that of an urban environment (Kingsbury 1978b:66; Stark 1991:189; cf Meek 1983). There are few references in Matthew related to villages, compared to the Gospel of Mark. Matthew seems to have been more familiar with cities and he refers specifically to city life. A clear confirmation of this is that Mark uses the word "city" eight times and the word "village" seven times. Matthew uses the word "village" only four times, but the word "city" twenty-six times (Smith 1980:266; see Jackson 2003:784). There are certain words for "city" in Matthew that seem to relate to his own city (Mt 5:14; 10:11, 14, 15, 23; 23:34) (Brown 1982:97).

Greco-Roman cities were small, both in terms of area and population. The city of Antioch was the capital of the Roman province of Syria. It was a key city for both and it was also one of the three or four most important cities in the Roman Empire. The population of the city was about 150,000 to 200,000 at the end of the first century (Chandler & Fox 1974:81, 303; Stark 1991:192). Smith (1857:143) assesses that the "citizens were divided into 18 tribes, distributed locally" in Romans. Stark (1991:196) understood Smith's view as arguing that there were eighteen identifiable ethnic quarters within Antioch. The ethnical composition of the Roman world shows us that they were not an egalitarian structured society, because ethnic diversity and a constant influx of newcomers tends to undercut social integration, thus exposing residents to a variety of harmful consequences, including high rates of deviance and disorder. Moreover, some were brought in as slaves (Stark 1991:196).

Israelites were among the original settlers of the city of Antioch, when it was founded by Seleucus Nicator in 300 BCE (Josephus *Ag. Ap.* 2. 39; *Ant.* 12.119). We can't be sure how many synagogues existed in Antioch, but in the Roman period the main synagogue was located in the southern quarter of the city, the Keratein (Downey 1961:544 n 179). It is assumed that the Israelite community was in the city of Antioch. Antioch was also to become one of the main centers of Christianity. Moreover, Antioch was the birthplace of "Gentile Christianity" and it was also the place where controversy between Israelites and Gentiles first

erupted within the church (Acts 11:27-30). All this evidence tells us that the city of the Antioch church was a bridge between Israelite and Gentile Christianity (Meek & Wilken 1978:18).

People were terribly crowded within these buildings: the streets were so narrow that when people leaned out their windows they could chat with someone living across the street without having to raise their voices (Stark 1991:193; cf Finley 1997). These people belonged to the lower class in the city of Antioch, where, we can consider archaeological evidence of social stratification of the city of Antioch. In most cities the water was piped to fountains and public buildings such as the baths in the Greco-Roman world. Some was also piped to the homes of the very rich. However, for the rest of the residents, water had to be carried home in jugs (Stark 1991:193), which implies that higher social levels used more water.

The urban Israelites of Antioch were of all classes. Israelite peasants were separated from the urban Israelites by language, religious practice, and economic class (Meek & Wilken 1978:10). A few members of these groups were able to gain wealth, but for the most part they were poor, burdened directly or indirectly by the heavy tax and subjected to abuse by soldiers and officials (Liebeschuetz 1972:52-61). The social structure of Antioch was not very different to that of other cities of the Roman Empire, where the population consisted essentially of two groups, a small elite, which controlled city life to its own advantage, and a second group, which served the needs of this elite (see MacMullen 1981:8). This stratification has already been mentioned above. A large group of involuntary marginal members constituted the lowest class of the society (Carter 2000:20). A few extremely wealthy families and the much larger numbers of free and liberated poor members and slaves within this society reflected its vertical, hierarchical and interconnected character (Carter 2000:20; see Stark 1991:195). The hierarchical social structure caused some conflict between classes, and is reflected in the Gospel of Matthew.

As we have seen in the above discussion, the social environment of the city of Antioch was hierarchical in structure, which was similar to that of Matthew's community. This community was therefore not egalitarian in its structure.

### **3.6 Summary and conclusion**

Matthew's community's social situation has been considered above. We have discussed the date of the Gospel of Matthew. It has been focused on before or after 70 CE. The Gospel was written around 80 CE and circumstances within the community enhanced openness towards all nations. The community was located in the city of Antioch, which was a populous place and mixed in population. The community was not necessarily part of Judaism, even though it still adhered to some Israelite traditions. The Israelite Diaspora settled in Antioch prior to the start of the Christian community. Matthew's group therefore needed to open its community's boundaries in order to allow a highly stratified society.

Members of the Matthean community were from various social classes. Amongst these were members of the upper classes (the urban elite, the ruling and the governing classes) and the lower classes (from the urban non-elite, the degraded, unclean class and the rural peasantry). There is sufficient evidence that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian society.

The implications of the membership of the Matthean community in relation to the social stratification in advanced agrarian societies have been investigated. The community was probably a mixed one; thus, its various members of the community formed a wide-open stratified society. This implied that the Matthean community was an inclusive community that accepted all kinds of social stratification levels amongst its people (cf Carter 1997a:653). Of course, a few members from the upper classes were also present in this community (such as Joseph of Arimathea).

It has been confirmed above that Matthew's community was an advanced agrarian society, with a particular hierarchical and inclusive structure (cf Carter 2001:51). This will further be considered in the next chapter, where the text of the Gospel of Matthew is read as a test case for the suggestion of the inclusiveness within the community (developed above) via a narrative point of view analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew composed his gospel prior to 100 CE. The likelihood of this is confirmed by the fact that the one who knew the Gospel in its written form, namely Ignatius of Antioch, died in 107 CE. Ignatius wrote a number of important epistles and these epistles referred to Matthew's gospel. However, this date is still debated by scholars (see Trevett 1992:3-9; Massaux 1990:85-94; Sibinga 1966:263-83; Sim 1998:31-33).

<sup>2</sup>We can see the longest Gospel version as indicated in table 4 in Stein (1988:49-50).

<sup>3</sup>Vorster argued that Perrin supported this view.

<sup>4</sup>We can see that he mentioned the name in the Scriptures (see Robinson 1976:106).

<sup>5</sup>Brandon's (1951:221) view is taken from Streeter's view of the Infancy Narratives. According to Streeter, the source of the Infancy Narrative is different in Matthew and Luke (the Matthean and Lukan versions imply too distinct and dissimilar traditions). Therefore, Matthew and Luke do not originate from the same place.

<sup>6</sup>Davies and Allison (1988:420) and Gundry (1994:65) share the view that Galilee was in the north-west, Decapolis in the north-east, Jerusalem and Judea in the south-west and Trans-Jordan in the south-east.

<sup>7</sup>These verses mention that Peter was in Antioch (Act 12:2; Gal 2:11).

<sup>8</sup>Rohrbaugh (1993a:383) says that the upper layer of agrarian society consisted of the so-called urban elite.

<sup>9</sup>According to Lenski (1966:219,243; see Saldarini 1988a:40-41), the ruling and the governing classes are not different from each other.

<sup>10</sup> In Matthew 3:7, the evangelist takes up Jesus in his vituperation against the Pharisees (Hagner 1993:49; Luz 1989:169). It is true that the Sadducees were the real opponents of the historical Jesus; the Pharisees were the opponents of Matthew.

<sup>11</sup>Here, I refer to a person who was a Scribe in the Gospel of Matthew. According to Rivkin (1969-70:205-249; 1978:135-142), the fact that Matthew saw the Pharisaic scribes as *Pharisees* rather than as scribes means that the Pharisees and scribes are synonymous. However, Orton's (1989:37) view is that in the eyes of Matthew, at least, they are not synonymous. Matthew's own reflection is that "the Scribes were Disciples" (Orton 1989:165). This implies that the Scribes, according to Matthew, were those who had received a thorough training in Jewish exegesis and writing. However, one still has to consider Matthew as Levi.

<sup>12</sup>Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt 3:7; 16:1,6,11,12), the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5:20; 12:38; 15:1; 23:2,13,15, 23, 25, 27, 29), the chief priests and elders (Mt 21:23; 26:3, 47; 27:1, 3, 12, 20; 28:11-12), the chief priests and Pharisees (Mt 21:45; 27:62), the chief priests and scribes (Mt 2:4; 20:18; 21:15), the scribes and elders with Caiaphas the high priest (Mt 26:57), the elders, chief priests and scribes (Mt 16:21; 27:41) (Van Tilborg 1972:1-6; Carter 1996:241 n3).

<sup>13</sup>According to Duling (1995:364-365), the concept of marginality is divided into three categories, namely the marginal man, involuntary marginals and voluntary marginals. First, the marginals are those individuals and groups who, because of birth, migration, conquest and the like, are doomed to live in two different worlds. The marginal man is antagonistic to the cultural world and not fully acculturated. Second, involuntary marginality refers to "individuals and groups who for reasons of race, ethnicity, sex, under-development and the like are not able to participate in normative social status, roles and offices and their obligations and duty." They cannot relate to other members at the centre of society. Finally, voluntary marginality refers to those "individuals and groups who consciously and by choice live outside the normative statuses, roles and offices of society because they reject hierarchical social structures, though there will be attempts to perpetuate this spontaneity by social control or in conventicles within the normative social system." These three perspectives help us to understand the variety of religious sects and parties within Israelism

<sup>14</sup>The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη indicates only the nation of Israel, or is there a deliberate contrast between Israel and the other people of the world? The Greek words ἔθνος and ἔθνη occur nine times in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 4:15; 10:5, 18; 12:18, 21; 21:43; 24:14; 25:32; 28:19). Their meaning (Mt 4:15; 10:5, 18; 12:18, 21; 21:43) is "Gentiles" in Matthew's Gospel (see Jackson 2002:32 n16). In the other verses ἔθνη could indicate Israel or "Gentiles" (Hare & Harrington 1975:363). Hare and Harrington (1975:366-367) say that the Gospel of Matthew



shows that the gospel should be preached first to Israel (Mt 10:5) and then to the Gentiles. Hence, the interpretation of Matthew 28:19 is a later intention of Matthew for his ideal gospel - “all nations” including Israel.

<sup>15</sup> By contrast, the phrase “Galilee of the Gentiles” is not a matter of Gentile mission or Gentiles living in or close to Galilee. It designates land ownership in context. The Roman Empire controlled Galilee (Carter 2004:265-266).

<sup>16</sup> The term “a mixed state” has become a popular one in the study of Matthew. Some scholars mention a “Mixed State” (Luomanen 1988:469-480; Smith 1963:149-168; Gundry 1994:5-10).

<sup>17</sup> This included feminist literary criticism (cf Fetterley 1978; Warhol & Price Herndl 1991), feminist anthropology (cf Moore 1988), feminist classical scholarship (Rabinowitz & Richlin 1993) and feminist historical scholarship (cf Wallach Scott 1988; Kelly 1984)

<sup>18</sup> According to Rich (1976:57-58) “patriarchy is the power of the father: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male...”

<sup>19</sup> The concept of “marginality” in the social science literature has three dimensions: “the marginal man: individuals and groups who, because of birth, migration, conquest, and the like are ‘doomed’ to live in different, antagonistic cultures without fully belonging to either.” “Involuntary marginality: individuals and groups who for reasons of race, ethnicity, sex, underdevelopment, and the like are not able to participate in normative social statuses, roles and offices and their obligations and duties. They fail to share in both material and nonmaterial resources available to other members at the center of society, and thus who experience themselves as personally alienated”, “voluntary marginality: individuals and groups who consciously and by choice live outside the normative statuses, roles, and offices of society because they reject hierarchical social structures, though there will be attempts to perpetuate this spontaneity by social control or in conventicles within the normative social system” (Duling 1995a:364-365).

<sup>20</sup> The Gospels and Acts have 61 references to Galilee only. The phrase “Galilee of Gentiles” occurs only in Matthew 4:15-16. It is quoted from Isaiah 8:23 to indicate that Jesus, in settling in Capernaum, fulfilled an ancient prophecy. According to Chancey (2002:173), the purpose of Matthew’s quotation of Isaiah may serve to show that Gentiles will eventually be included in the Kingdom of God.



## Chapter 4

### NARRATIVE SPACE

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, it was mentioned that a combination of an analysis of the narrative point of view and a social scientific analysis would be used to explore the inclusive structure (character) of Matthew's community and to argue that it was not an egalitarian structured society. In order for this combination to be made, it is necessary to first read the text to make it possible to understand the move from the micro-social world of the text to its macro-social world (see Van Eck 1995:245).

Before starting an analysis of the narrative point of view in the Gospel of Matthew, it would be helpful to briefly recap on the distinction between emics and etics. According to Gottwald (1979:785), "Etic refers to cultural explanations whose criteria derive from a body of theory and method shared in a community of scientific observers." Emics is the native point of view in a social description of a culture and its societal arrangements (see Dozeman 1989:87-101). In the case of the Gospel of Matthew, the plot of the narrative may be regarded as an arrangement of the events of Jesus' ministry's activities (Humphries-Brooks 1993:55). Therefore, some elements are encoded and decoded for the communication from an insider's point of view (Van Aarde 1991a:104-105; see Van Eck 1995:245). What evidence is there for this inside point of view in the narrative? It is possible to find such evidence in the ideological perspective of the narrator.<sup>1</sup> The Gospel of Matthew is a narrative written from the point of view of the narrator after the event. This after-the-event point of view enabled the narrator to present the plot of his story from the ideological perspective of reader involvement (Van Aarde 1991a:104; 1994:127). According to Van Aarde (1994:35; 1997:129-130), in the Gospel of Matthew, the narrator's ideological perspective coincides with that of the author, and with the perspective of the protagonist. Moreover, Van Aarde mentions that this ideological perspective also influences the viewpoint of the characters who are narrated from the dominant perspective of the narrator. Clearly the ideological perspective of the narrator

can help the reader to understand the narrator's evaluation of the situation of his society (see Humphries-Brooks 1993:64). In the case of Matthew's narrative, the narrator's conflict situation was inclusive of a structured community. One can understand the characteristics of the structure of the society by focusing on the narrator's inside (native) ideological perspective.

An analysis of the spatial designations in Matthew's Gospel can help to discover the "inclusiveness" as it applies to Jesus' movement in terms of space in Matthew<sup>2</sup>. From this discussion will emerge the narrative point of view analysis of the text. Such a description of the topographical level<sup>3</sup> portrays what kind of characters was included in Matthew's Gospel. This section will not be considering an exegetical approach rather than the narrator's perspective (intention) of narrative structure of Jesus ministry. Hence, this Jesus' inclusive ministry was a reflection of Matthew's community.

## **4.2 Space in Matthew**

### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The ideological perspective that the narrator pertains to, is the distinction between setting and focal space. The narrator designates a setting as a focal space, while the author makes specific spatial arrangements in the narrative. Van Aarde (991a:117) puts it as follows: "Spatial arrangement in narrative material is tied to the temporal sequence of a story." The narrator's setting contributes to the structure, plot or characterization in the narrative. A particular focal space can probably be seen as symbolic. It describes social life in terms of certain beliefs, attitudes and values of the characters and their status in the social situation of the text.

According to Joubert (1990:338), one of the important functions of ideology in any society is to define and limit the linguistic and cultural practices of members of that society. These ideologies are expressed through language as a symbol. It is possible that focal spaces can be read as symbols. Van Eck (1995:246) claims that the sociology of knowledge can be used with regard to its understanding of the relationship between the symbolic and the social universe.

In the following section, important places are indicated where the Matthean intention of his inclusive community through Jesus' ministry took place, such as the villages and houses depicted by the narrator of Matthew. On the one hand, Galilee was receptive to the inclusiveness of the teaching of Jesus, as there are indications that Jesus' teaching had authority over the people of Galilee. On the other hand, in Jerusalem, the religious leaders and the crowd rejected Jesus' ministry. This implies that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry started in Galilee and moved to Jerusalem. In Galilee, his ministry was more successful than in Jerusalem in Matthew's narrative.

However, according to Matthew's depiction of Jesus, the inclusive ministry came into conflict with the views of his opponents from Galilee and elsewhere, particularly Jerusalem. It is different from Mark's narrative of Jesus' ministry. According to Mark's perspective, Jesus' ministry was successful in Galilee, but not in Jerusalem (Van Eck 1995: 245-281). This clearly indicates that Matthew's narrative point of view of Jesus' inclusive ministry conflicted with that of Israelite leaders from both Galilee (for example Mt 9:1-8, 9-13) and Jerusalem. Mark's narrative point of view of Jesus' ministry, on the other hand, narrated a conflict only with the view of leaders in Jerusalem.

#### **4.2.2 The notion of space**

Before turning to a discussion of the structure of space in Matthew, a few observations regarding the concept space may be helpful. Most modern scholars have probably used the term "space" to designate the physical or geographical setting or place. However, some have expressed the opinion that some of these aspects in a text are not spatial designations. According to Vandermoere (1982:34), the narrator presents space as supra-spatial or supra-temporal. This means that the author's position is not only supra-spatial, he dramatizes himself in the fictional world (Vandermoere 1982:124).

This study is only concerned with spatial designations in the text of the Gospel of Matthew. This spatial description reflects Matthew's intention for his inclusive community. For these notions of space I am greatly indebted to the insights of scholars such as Van Aarde

(1991a:117-118), Van Eck (1995:247-8), Dozeman (1989:87-101) and Rabkin (1977:253-270), especially Van Eck's analysis of Mark in his book *Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's Story of Jesus*.

Firstly, space refers to the setting in which characters live, act and move: for instance, in Matthew; Galilee, Jerusalem and Nazareth are important settings in the narrative. The disciples or crowds came to Jesus there (cf Mt 5:1; 8:1). Secondly, the portrayal of space includes the manner in which certain settings are presented: for instance, in Matthew 8:24, a storm was rising and made waves on the lake. Thirdly, reference to space includes the implicit or explicit emotional value of certain settings. An example of this is the fear created by a stormy sea (Mt 8:25), on the expressions "outside into the darkness" and the "gnashing of teeth" (Mt 22:13). Fourthly, space can be a non-spatial designation and sometimes non-spatial designations are described in spatial terms. Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God is an example of a non-spatial designation (Mt 22:1-14; 25:1-46) and another example is that of the man scattering seed in his field in the parable of the sower (Mt 13). Fifthly, space can refer to the boundary of /a location between certain settings, like Jesus on the way of his ministry. People come into the circle of his religious movement as disciples and crowds. It shows us the boundary of Matthew's community. Sixthly, space designates settings of human experience (see Van Eck 1995:248). Jerusalem, as the place where Jesus is going to die, as experienced by the disciples.

These criteria are used in relation to what can be regarded as spatial designations in Matthew's narrative. In the next section, the spatial designations of Jesus' ministry in Matthew's narrative are looked at in terms of these criteria. However, Jesus' ministry does not imply that the context in which it took place was an egalitarian structured society (Elliott 2003:75-90).

#### **4.2.3 The spatial designations of Jesus' inclusive ministry**

The spatial designations of Matthew's narrative are followed by the plot line in the Gospel of Matthew. Plot is the sequential arrangement of episodes into a unified action (see Egan

1978:455-473; see Matera 1987:235-236; Powell 1992:169). According to Edward (1985:9), the individual episodes of the Gospel were composed as parts of a comprehensive whole, and not as isolated pericopes. The arrangement of the episodes carries with it implicit assumptions about causality, as sequence implies cause and effect (see Matera 1987:239-240). Lotman (1977:240) clearly indicates that plot implies a time frame and reality, but also with spatial and achronic information. These aspects are like maps according to which one can follow the narrator's designations for the outline of the plot.

In the case of Matthew, the plot<sup>4</sup> is the arrangement of the events of Jesus' life of inclusive ministry (see Section 4.1; Powell 1992:187-204). This means that the events of Jesus' life are described according to spatial designations in the Gospel of Matthew. This designation considers Matthew's inclusive structured society. Matthew's arrangement of episodes can be seen as fourfold. In Matthew 2:23-4:11, Jesus prepares for his ministry. From Matthew 4:12-18:35, Jesus conducts his public ministry (inclusive) of all people in Galilee. In Matthew 19:1-20:34, Jesus travels from Galilee to Jerusalem. Matthew 21:1-28:20 present Jesus' last week in and near Jerusalem, and the suffering, death and resurrection (Combrink 1983: 62; Boring 1994:593)<sup>5</sup>.

The first section (2:23-4:11) of the Gospel of Matthew presents as an arrangement of episodes: the genealogy of Jesus, the birth of Jesus, the visit of the Magi, the flight from Herod, the baptism by John the Baptist and the temptation (see Humphries-Brooks 1993:55). These episodes took place at Nazareth (Mt 2:23), in Galilee and at the Jordan River (Mt 3:13).

The arrangement of episodes of the second section (4:12-18:35) includes the calling of the first disciples, the teaching on the Mount, the healings and driving out of demons, Jesus' sending out the twelve disciples to mission, the healing on the Sabbath day, and Jesus' feeding of the five thousand. These events took place in Capernaum (Mt 4:13), at the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:18), in synagogues (Mt 4:23), on a Mountain (Mt 5:1), in Capernaum (Mt 8:5), at Peter's house (Mt 8:14), in the region of the Gadarenes (Mt 8:28), in Jesus' home town (Mt 9:1), in a synagogue (Mt 12:9), by the lake (Mt 13:1), in a synagogue (Mt 13:54), at a solitary place (Mt 14:13), in Gennesaret (Mt 14:34), in the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt 15:21), at the

Sea of Galilee and on a mountainside (Mt 15:29), in Magadan (15:39), the region of Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13), on a high mountain (Mt 17:1), in Galilee (Mt 17:22), and in Capernaum (Mt 17:24).

The third arranged set of episodes Matthew 19:1-20:34 presents Jesus on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. The episodes took place in the region of Judea (Mt 19:1), in Jericho (Mt 20:29). In the final set of episodes Jesus goes to the Jerusalem temple and around Jerusalem. The episodes took place in Bethphage (Mt 21:1), in Jerusalem (Mt 21:10), at the temple (Mt 21:12), in the city of Bethany (Mt 21:17), on the road (Mt 21:19), in the temple court (Mt 21:23), on the Mount of Olives (Mt 24:3), at Simon's house in Bethany (Mt 26:6), in Gethsemane (Mt 26:36), at the high priest Caiaphas' house (Mt 26:57), at Golgotha (Mt 27:33), and in Galilee (Mt 28:16).

These important episodes of Jesus' ministry in Matthew's narrative are building blocks in the constitution of the plot with time indication and they contain Jesus' speeches (Humphries-Brooks 1993:57): "The speeches maximize the spatial perception of the audience; the text relates and relativises plot and speech forms and each form is spatially related." Jesus' speeches occupy the central space in the Gospel of Matthew. The narrator informs the reader about Jesus' ministry through the designation of this spatial arrangement of episodes in the Gospel of Matthew. Hence, Jesus' inclusive ministry is depicted in terms of the narrator's spatial designations for his inclusive community. Jesus's inclusive ministry illustrates that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society.

#### **4.2.4 Narrative point of view at the topographical level**

##### **4.2.4.1 Introduction**

The discussion above focused on the different spatial settings in Matthew in which Jesus' activities took place. These emic data are used as an important tool for understanding the narrator's point of view. In this section, the settings in which Jesus' ministry took place and the spatial designations that Jesus referred to, are investigated as aspects of his ministry.

#### **4.2.4.2 Settings in which Jesus' activities took place**

The emic data refers to the different settings mentioned in the text of Matthew's Gospel. This is useful, as the settings of Galilee and Jerusalem have inclusive implications in the Gospel of Matthew (see 4.2.1). Therefore, Matthew's information about where Jesus' activities took place has implications for space as a narrative element in his Gospel. It is looked at as follows: firstly, attention is paid to the larger setting/areas in which Jesus travelled, healed and taught (cf Van Eck 1995:257); and secondly, more specific settings in which Jesus' activities aimed at inclusivity took place are examined.

The insights of Kingsbury (1975/1989), Meier (1979), Heil (1979, 1991, 1998), Van Aarde (1994), Howell (1990), Combrink (1983), Anderson (1984-1985), Edwards (1985), Ellis (1985), Matera (1987), Bauer (1988), Charette (1992), Verseput (1992), Powell (1992), Davies (1993), Humphries-Brooks (1993), Erickson (1996), Carter (1992, 1997, 2000), Freyne (2001), and Waters (2003) were particularly helpful in this discussion.

##### **4.2.4.2.1 The larger settings/areas in which Jesus' activities took place**

The data regarding the larger settings in which Jesus travelled for his inclusive ministry is set out in Section 4.2.3. The above spatial structure in Matthew shows how and where Jesus' ministry took place. It is clear from Matthew's perspective of Jesus' ministry that it accepted all people. In the case of Galilee, Jesus' ministry of inclusivity was also seemingly accepted by the people of Galilee. According to Matthew's narrative, they even followed Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. However, the people of Jerusalem (especially the religious leaders of Israel) rejected Jesus' inclusive ministry (teaching). Jesus' ministry is discussed below in the divisions set out above.

###### **4.2.4.2.1.1 Jesus prepares for his inclusive ministry: Matthew 2:23-4:11**

In Matthew 2:23, the narrator tells the reader that Jesus' place of birth is the village of Nazareth<sup>6</sup> in Galilee (Schnackenburg 2002:27; Van der Merwe 1977: 17; see the case of Mark, Van Eck 1995:259). It is evident from the historical background that the city of Sepphoris was

a significant place for the Herodian-Roman government, which was based in Judea (Keener 1999:113; Chancey 2002:58-61). The city of Sepphoris was a “place of interest”(focal space) where the products of peasants were consumed. As a Greek-Roman city this place can be regarded as an example of a hierarchical community. However, the village of Nazareth was insignificant. In the eyes of the Jerusalem urban elite, the village of Nazareth seemed powerless and whoever came from it, was worthless (John 1:46) (Jones 1994:14). This argument indicates that the life of the village of Nazareth was like that of the peasant of the lower class in the eyes of Jerusalem’s elite (Keener 1997:74). The ancient society of Galilee was not egalitarian but hierarchical. Moreover, Chancey (2002:56) points out that the people of Galilee experienced class conflict, that is, the urban-rural distrust during the Jewish war.

Kingsbury (1975:16; Luz 1989:150) argues that Jesus resided in Nazareth in Galilee, the region, which God decreed for Jesus’ public ministry in Matthew’s narrative. The name of his town, Nazareth, indicates that Jesus was a Nazirite. According to Israelite tradition, the term “Nazirite” refers to consecration to serve God. Like Samson (Judg 13:1-16:31), the Nazirite did God’s will. Similarly, Jesus saved the people (Mt 1:21) (Carter 2000a:89; Kupp 1996:62-63). Hence, the term Nazirite implies the Messiah’s connection with Nazareth<sup>7</sup> (Stendahl 1960:94-105, see France 1981:237-240) and he saved his people through his ministry. Although, Nazareth was humanly insignificant, Matthew emphasizes that it was divinely significant. Israelite leaders may have been inclined to question, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (Jn 1:46), but Matthew turns their objection around by showing divine significance in the choice of Nazareth as Jesus’ hometown (Keener 1997:74). In Mt 2:13-15 and 2:19-23 the narrator’s perspective as conveyed to the reader, shows the Israelite leader (King Herod) as antagonist (but Herod’s plan to kill Jesus, fails<sup>8</sup>) and Jesus as the protagonist, carrying out God’s will to include all people (Luz 1989:35). Matthew depicted Jesus’ ministry as one of inclusivity in Galilee, but the city of Jerusalem rejected Jesus’ teaching and its religious leaders excluded it from his ministry (see Carter 2000a: 89)<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, Matthew 1:17-2:23 (with its references to “my people Israel”, “God with us”, “the Magi from the East”, the use of Old Testament quotations, Herod’s killing of the infant Israelite boys) as “the



infancy Gospel” lays the foundation for main elements of the framework of the story. The narrator reports to the reader that these events are in full accord with God’s intention. There is therefore no doubt about the authority of the narrative, nor can there be any doubt about the Messianic nature of Jesus (Edwards 1985:15; see Luz 1989:43).

According to Matthew 3:13, Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized by John. In fact, at this point, with Matthew’s story of Jesus’ baptism, it is proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God<sup>10</sup> (Mt 3:16-17). The narrator tells the reader that Jesus would do the will of God to save God’s people. According to Kingsbury (1975:14-15; see Hagner 1993:58; Bauer 1992:359), Matthew’s perspective expressed in Matthew 3:17 relates to the narrations in Chapters 1 and 2. In Chapter 1 and 2, Matthew portrays Jesus as the only Son of God through the word of the ancient prophet (Mt 2:15). This means that in Chapters 1 and 2, the divine sonship<sup>11</sup> of Jesus is indirectly revealed by the narrator (cf Mt 11:25-27; 16:13-17; 27:51-54), but in Chapter 3 directly. Matthew designates the baptism of Jesus as his proclamation as the Son of God (Schnackenburg 2002:35; see Carter 2000a:104). According to Matthew 1:1-4:11, the beginning of Jesus’ ministry to Israel, was the natural outcome of the preparatory events for Jesus’ messianic ministry of preaching, teaching and healing (Matera 1987:244).

In Matthew 4:11, the narrator introduces Jesus to his readers as the Son of God. The motif expressed in “look, angels came to him and were ministering to him,” has an Israelite background. The angels did not simply come to minister to a faithful Israelite but to call special attention to the victory of the obedient Son<sup>12</sup>. The verse is thus symbolic of the true identity of the Son (Hagner 1993:69). According to Kingsbury (1997:16-17), Matthew presents Jesus in a unique filial relationship with God: “Jesus is the wholly obedient, supreme agent of God, whom he designates as Father.” It is indicated that through the temptation of Jesus, Satan tested him to see whether he was God’s Son (Mt 4:6; Combrink 1983:79; Matera 1987:245; see Ellis 1985:31). Three times Satan tried to break Jesus’ faith in God. However, Jesus resisted Satan’s temptations and he confirmed himself as the Son of God. Hence, Matthew’s intention with the story of Jesus’ temptation (Mt 4:1-11) was to indicate that the devil challenged the relationship (Sonship) of Jesus and God, which was declared in Mt 3:16-

17 (Sonship). Jesus passed Satan's tests, and would be faithful in carrying out God's will for the salvation of his people (by preaching the kingdom of God). The links between the stories of Jesus' baptism and temptation indicate the nature of his Sonship and ministry (see Hagner 1993:69-70). The narrator's intention with the temptation of Jesus is an important part in preparation for the passion narrative. He was also later tempted to prove that he was "the Son of God" by coming down from the cross and avoiding suffering and death (Mt 27:40) (Senior<sup>13</sup>1976:323; see Howell 1990:125-126). In other words, the temptation of Jesus tests Jesus' identity (Mt 4:6) (Carter 1992:474).

To summarize the emic data with regard to the spatial designations in Matthew 2:23-4:11: the narrator's point of view of Jesus' preparation for his ministry can be described as follows: in this section, the narrator describes Jesus' native village as that of Nazareth in Galilee (Mt 2:23), which was a hierarchical structured society. The narrator's intention in recounting the preparation of Jesus' ministry was to show that Jesus would do God's will in order for the inclusive salvation of his people. The Israelite leaders (like Herod) were the antagonists of Jesus' ministry in Matthew's narrative. The narrator informs the readers about Jesus' true identity, that is, that he was the Son of God.<sup>14</sup> He also informs them about Jesus' preparation for an inclusive ministry. This was God's will, for different levels of people to be included in Jesus' ministry. The intention of this narrative shows us that Matthew's community was ready for an inclusive structured society.

#### **4.2.4.2.1.2 Jesus' inclusive ministry in Galilee: Matthew 4:12-18:35**

From the above section, it is evident that the narrator depicts Jesus as the Son of God, through his preparation for and the performance of his ministry to a hierarchical structured society. In this section, Jesus' ministry in Galilee is examined. The narrator informs the reader that the region of Galilee was where Jesus began his inclusive ministry of salvation (Davies and Allison 1988:404). In relation to Matthew 4:12, the narrator's reference to John's imprisonment is an important time signal which relates to the ministry of Jesus and his disciples (Keener 1997:95; Hagner 1993:72; Morris 1992:79-80; cf Combrink 1983:79). This

is the turning point of the narrative: “from that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near’”<sup>15</sup> (Mt 4:17). It is therefore clearly indicated that Galilee was Jesus’ main interest, because it was where his first public ministry activities would take place (see Carter 1997:16-17). In Matthew 4:13, the narrator informs us again that the ministry of Jesus was situated in the “land of Zebulon and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles<sup>16</sup> the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned”<sup>17</sup> (Mt 4:15-16). It is implied that those who live in darkness might see the light. Here, the narrator shows the readers that Jesus commences his task of including people who lived in darkness, both those of Galilee and the Gentiles<sup>18</sup> (Chancey 2002:177; see Combrink 1983:79-80; Edwards 1985:18). According to Matthew, Jesus’ inclusive ministry led him to the outskirts of Galilee where he had contact with Gentiles. However, Chancey (2002:179) has argued that Jesus’s ministry was concerned mostly with the Israelites. For example, the settlement of Tyre had a large population of Israelites.

The narrator introduces “Galilee of the Gentiles” to the reader because his point of view of the mission to the Gentiles is reflected in that phrase (Keener 1999:145). The words “Galilee of the Gentiles” alert the reader that even those “who have sat in great darkness”- the Gentiles- will, in time, see “a great light” (Mt 4:16) (see Gundry 1967:59-60; Patte 1987:56; Carter 2000b: 503-520).

Another argument advanced by the narrator is that the Pharisaic opponents centred in the region of Galilee. Of course, Vermes (1973:56-57; Neusner; Keener 1999:146; Hagner 1993:72) believe that the Pharisees on the whole were probably more concentrated in Jerusalem, rather than in Galilee. The Pharisaic movement was primarily urban while Jesus’ movement was situated in a more rural area (Keener 1999:146; cf Judge 1960:60-61). It seems that Matthew’s depiction of Jesus’ inclusive ministry involved the lower classes of people who were mostly outside the city (see Chapter 3), and that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society.

In Matthew 4:18, the narrator introduces the help of the protagonist (cf Morris 1992:86):

Jesus called his first followers at the Sea of Galilee.<sup>19</sup> Jesus promised that: “I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus included some followers (Jesus calls his disciples, but the word “disciple” had not yet been used) to his ministry and that they helped with Jesus’ inclusive ministry (Mt 4:20), which Matthew has received from tradition, Jesus promised the disciples that they would be assisting him by winning people to the movement that he has initiated. Hence, the narrator predicts that the disciples would fulfill Jesus’ inclusive ministry<sup>20</sup> (Edwards 1985:18).

According to the narrator, Jesus’ disciples were called from different social classes (see chapter 3.4). Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen. Their social ranking is very low (Keener 1999:151; 1997:98-99), while Matthew was a tax collector, who came from the elite retainers (Mt 10:3). This shows that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society, because its members had come from different social levels. Schüssler Fiorenza (1993:220) argued that Jesus’s religious movement required the rejection of the natural institution of the family<sup>21</sup> and its patriarchal structure. However, Matthew’s depiction of Jesus’ purpose in calling his disciples was not to form an egalitarian movement. Jesus’ instruction to his disciples concerns the re-ordering of all conventional national priorities (Elliott 2003:78). According to Keener (1999:152), Jesus’ ministry was “seasonal”, so that his disciples could return to support their family at certain periods of the year. Some of the women who had followed him (Mt 27:55-56) did not appear to have their spouses to accompany them. This demonstrates strong evidence that Jesus’s ministry had not overlooked the nature of the family in an absolute sense.

In Matthew 4:23<sup>22</sup>, the narrator informs us that Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues<sup>23</sup>, preaching to, and healing people. Preaching involves the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 4:23). Teaching was regarded as an instruction for his disciples, and healing (driving out demons) bore witness to the presence of the kingdom of God.

Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus revealed the kingdom to Israel through those three activities (Bauer 1992:359). The purpose of all of those activities of Jesus was for the inclusiveness of his people. It is therefore the narrator’s intention to show that Jesus’ ministry

took place to include people who were coming from a number of places, to be cured as his own community. In the pericope Matthew 4:23-25, the narrator tells us that Jesus' ministry included people who suffered from various diseases, who were suffering from severe pain, and who were paralyzed. From the narrator's perspective, Jesus' ministry included all kinds of people. The places of origin of those who came to Jesus are also clearly indicated. They came from Syria, Galilee, and the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan. Therefore, it seemed that Jesus' ministry was not limited to any particular stratification and location in Matthew's narrative.

In Matthew 5:1, the narrator depicted that Jesus had moved to and sat on the mountainside. Matthew 5 to 7 and 8 to 9 are related to Matthew 4:23-25 (see the above). It has been demonstrated that Chapters 5 to 7 deal with Jesus' teaching and Chapters 8 to 9 with healing (Du Toit 1977:35; Combrink 1983:80). Jesus presented himself to his disciples and Israel as the Messiah who teaches (Mt 5:2-7:29). However, the narrator does not clearly mention whether Jesus taught the crowds or only his disciples<sup>24</sup>. They (the crowds or his disciples) were probably the audience, because Matthew portrays the crowds as potential followers (Edwards 1985:19; cf Schnackenburg 2002:46). The narrator informs the reader of two things in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7; 7:29). Firstly, there was the tension between Jesus and his opponents of their teachers of the law<sup>25</sup> (antagonists) in the narrative, where Jesus' perspective of "righteousness that exceeds" was contrasted with the Scribes and Pharisees' perspective of righteousness<sup>26</sup> (cf Mt 6:5; 7:21-23) (Combrink 1983:81; cf Tannehill 1980:138-150) Secondly, the result of this kind of conflict is depicted. The narrator implies that they persecuted Jesus and his disciples. It probably indicates that this persecution by the Roman Empire<sup>27</sup> was not a political one (Shin 1999:3-42; cf Mt 5:38-48); it was addressed to the audience of Jesus (probably Matthean community). Jesus had already challenged the *status quo*, its commitments, power structures and beneficiaries (Mt 5:3-9) (Carter 2000a:136).

In Matthew 8 to 9, the healing ministry is related to miracle stories. Jesus came down from the mountainside and large crowds followed him (Mt 8:1) (see Vledder 1997:173). The crowds who heard Jesus' message on the mountain continued to follow him (Mt 5-7). Here,

the narrator suddenly changes the context into a healing scene. The narrator introduces a new development of Jesus' ministry to include people through the healing of all kinds of diseases in the region of Galilee (Mt 9:1-34) and in the Gentile territory (Mt 8:18-34).

In Matthew 8:2, a leprosy man came to Jesus and asked him to be cleansed of his disease. According to Israelite tradition, a person with leprosy was placed in social isolation because it was regarded as a dangerous disease.<sup>28</sup> Jesus broke the prescribed traditional rule by touching an unclean person and healed the man who was suffering from leprosy. Thus, it clearly confirmed that the narrator's picture of Jesus' ministry includes unclean people as the class of the expendables or the unclean and degraded class (Lenski 1966:281, see Chapter 3).

Jesus entered Capernaum (Mt 8:5), his home-town as the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry (see Mt 4:13), being near the border and on a major trade route, the town probably had a contingent of Roman soldiers<sup>29</sup>, where he healed a centurion's servant<sup>30</sup>. The centurion was a Gentile and had some authority<sup>31</sup> (Davies and Allison 1991:19). Moreover, the centurion requested to Jesus that his slave be cured. The centurion was a religious outcast<sup>32</sup> in Israelite society and his slave was of the lower class in both Israelite and Roman society. The narrator informs the reader that Jesus' ministry not only crossed the boundary between Israelite and non-Israelite, but also the boundary between clean and unclean as did Matthew's inclusive structured society (see Patte 1987:114; Vledder 1997:181).

Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law who was lying in bed with a fever (Mt 8:14). As usual, in the ancient world fever is a disease itself rather than something that accompanies other diseases (Hagner 1993:209). The status of women was normally lower; in the case of Peter's mother-in-law she was unclean, because she was ill. However, Jesus touched her and healed her. Touching a person with a fever was forbidden in rabbinic tradition (see Str-B 1:479-480). Moreover, in Israel, there was a teaching that a man should not make contact with a woman's hand, not even with money from his hand to hers (*Ber.* 61a). Jesus did not consider her social position and physical situation as untouchable. The narrator's attention to Jesus' ministry even included women and the sick.

The narrator informs that in the evenings Jesus drove out demons and healed all the sick

(Mt 8:16). Verses 16-17 of Chapter 8 are the narrator's confirmation of Jesus' authority with his miracle ministry to include all people. Then Jesus entered the region of the Gadarenes<sup>33</sup> and healed the two demon-possessed men (Mt 8:28-34). Of all the people Jesus could meet in Gadarenes, our attention is focused on two marginal people who live in the tombs. Their tombs were unclean (Keener 1997:183). Hence, the two demoniacs belong to the expendables, the bottom level of society. The two men lived physically on the margins, away from households, which defined gender and social roles, and economic and political involvement. This episode is set in a Gentile territory<sup>34</sup> on the far side of the lake of Galilee. The narrator of Matthew's Gospel mentions that Jesus openly went into Gentile world. The narrator informs the reader about Jesus' identification with the Gentile world, but the Israelite leaders excluded the unclean and Gentiles from their society. Jesus encountered unclean persons and animals, such as pigs, in the region (Mt 8:28, 30). In this episode, the narrator implies that Jesus involved himself with the unclean classes (see Chapter 3; Lenski 1966:281; Vledder 1997:197).

The narrator informs us about the cost of following Jesus by narrating the episode from Matthew 8:21-22. Another disciple said to him "Lord, first let me go and bury my father<sup>35</sup>." But Jesus told him, let the dead bury their own dead<sup>36</sup>. Those who follow Jesus need to stop to bury their father. The Israelites regarded the burial of one's father and mother as very important (see Gen 50:5-14; Tob 6:14). Where burial of the dead supersedes other religious duties; in Leviticus 21:2 priests are allowed the defilement of touching the dead in the case of close family members. Theissen (1992:60-93) suggested that Matthew 8:21-22 indicates an abandonment of the biological family. This implies that Jesus' ministry intended to be egalitarian as evidence of his rejection of the natural patriarchal family structure. Matthew 10:34-36 also suggests that Jesus was against biological families. He declared that one should not love one's own family more than Christ. It seems these verses indicate that Jesus was egalitarian in his outlook. However, Jones (1994:55) points out that this claim of discipleship must be understood as taking the first place. In other words, Jesus' ministry had priority over social obligations including those of family and of one's society, but religious obligations



were considered to be the ultimate (Kenner 1997:179). In view of this, Jesus declared that the biological family was of secondary significance to God's reign (Elliott 2003:78). Thus, these passages do not indicate Jesus as an egalitarian in Matthew's narrative.

After Jesus crossed the lake and came to his own town, which is not specifically named, but which is logically known as Capernaum (cf. 4:13), he healed and forgave a paralytic man's sins<sup>37</sup> (Mt 9:1-8). From the beginning, the narrative is focused on forgiving sins. The "forgiveness of sins" is an important Matthean theme. From the beginning the First Evangelist had introduced the Son of God as the one who will save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21). And in Matthew 26:28, Jesus' death is plainly stated to be 'for the forgiveness of sins'. Jesus was in conflict with some of the religious leaders (some teachers of the Law) concerning the authority to forgive sins. The scribes believe that when Jesus grants God's forgiveness of sins, he arbitrarily puts himself on the same level with God and claims divine prerogatives for himself. The narrator emphasized that Jesus had the authority to forgiveness. It confirms that Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry is inclusive of all human beings as sinners.

Jesus called the tax collector Matthew and ate with many tax collectors and sinners (outcasts)<sup>38</sup> (Mt 9:9-13) (see Kingsbury 1997:19). The Pharisees sees this meal that Jesus ate with them and blamed him in Matthew's narrative. The people of Israel in ancient Palestine had several reasons to dislike tax collectors. Firstly, Palestine's local Israelite aristocracies undoubtedly arranged for tax collection (Sanders 1990:46-47). Secondly, the Roman Empire sometimes had to take precautions to keep tax gatherers from overcharging people (Lk 3:12-13). In some parts of the Empire, taxation was so oppressive that laborers fielded their land, at times to the point that entire villages were depopulated (Lewis 1983:164-166). Here, the narrator also informs us of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus launched an ideological challenge to the religious leaders' perspective of exclusiveness. Matthew's interpretation of Jesus included sinners in the kingdom of God without the required Israelite Law (cf Davies and Allison 1991:102). In Matthew 9:18 an Israelite unnamed ruler<sup>39</sup> (leader) came to Jesus and asked him to heal his daughter. On the way to the ruler's house, a woman touched Jesus' garment in the hope of being cured (Mt 9:20-22). Why does she come to Jesus



from the rear and how is she satisfied with touching his garment? It is probably because she was shy as she was labelled in the Israelite society, as unclean. Her faith in crossing religious boundaries in order to touch Jesus' garment healed her. The narrator's depiction to the reader is that Jesus' inclusive ministry was even meant for an unclean woman. This incident indicates that Jesus' inclusive ministry accepted the woman in crossing the boundaries of both gender and ritual cleanliness within her faith (Luz 2001:42; Wainwright 1991:89-90). Jesus also touched two blind men's eyes and healed them (Mt 9:27-31). To be blind in that culture was to be a social outcast. Blindness was frequently regarded as the judgement of God (Gen 19:11; Exod 4:11; cf John 9:2), and it put serious religious limitations upon the blind. In Matthew's narrative, the blind men indicated that as Jesus was an inclusive messianic figure, he would be able to give them sight (Hagner 1993:253). Jesus healed a dumb man and drove out a demon (Mt 9:32-34). In here, the Pharisees already had to evaluate Jesus in a hostile manner. They do not deny the power of Jesus, but attribute the exorcism to black magic, as a deed performed in the name of the prince of demons.

To summarize, in Matthew 8 to 9 the narrator informs the reader that Jesus' ministry took place all around towns and villages near the Sea of Galilee, where he taught and healed every disease and sickness (Mt 9:35). Matthew's depiction is that Jesus was interested in the lower classes and included them through his ministry. Yet, Matthew's intention of Jesus' inclusive ministry does not indicate that the society as such was egalitarian in structure.

In Matthew 10:5, Jesus sent the twelve disciples on a preaching mission to Israelite towns and villages. Jesus ordered the disciples to go to the lost sheep<sup>40</sup> of the house of Israel only. It seems that the narrator intended to show that Jesus' ministry was successful in Galilee and the surrounding region (Mt 4:12-9:38). Jesus continued his mission to the Gentiles, but the focus remained on Israel (Mt 10:5), in that Israel was the prime object of God's purpose in the salvation history (Carter 2000a: 234). However, the Matthean community mission included non-believing "Jews" and Gentiles as well (Duling 2003:1; for example Mt 10:6). The narrator depicted that Jesus' inclusive mission is both for "Jews" and Gentiles, because the Gospel of Matthew does not require male circumcision for the Gentiles; baptism is the only

required entry rite (Mt 28:19)<sup>41</sup>. According to Duling (2003:1-18), the Matthean community stands on the boundary “between” Israel and non-Israel in terms of ethnicity<sup>42</sup>. It indicates that the Matthean community was in the process of reconstructing its ethnic boundaries (cf Keener 1997:202). The narrator informs the reader that the Israelites were the descendants of the patriarchs and that they should inherit the promises, but because they did not believe, the title “sons of the kingdom” was taken by many who came from the east and the west (Mt 8:11-12). It is indicated that Israelites and many Gentiles, together, received a share in the future Kingdom (Charette 1992:69-70). The lost sheep of the house of Israel were the exiles of Israel. The narrator’s indication of evangelism to lost sheep points to the return of Israelite exiles (Charette 1992:70-71). According to Weaver (1990:84), the narrator indicated that “the lost sheep” are “sheep without a shepherd” among whom Jesus had been ministering (Mt 9:36; cf 9:35). The fact that Jesus instructed his disciples that the people of Israel were harassed and helpless means they were among Jesus’ inclusive ministry (Mt 9:36). The disciples of Jesus must likewise minister to these people, “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Weaver 1990:84; contra Waetjen 1976:133). Hence, the narrator reveals that Jesus’ ministry was inclusive of both Israelites and Gentiles. This argument partly suggests that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society, because the disciples’ mission includes the Gentiles, not just Israelites by ethnicity.

In Matthew 10:24-25<sup>43</sup>, we read: “A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.” This implies that the Matthean community looked like an egalitarian structured society (see Elliott 2003:84; chapter 1). However, Matthew’s community context of Jesus’ teaching was not aimed at creating an egalitarian structure. According to Luz (2001:96), this passage has to be understood in the context of the suffering and persecution of Jesus’ community, which was a necessary experience for all his disciples because they were to be like their master. Thus, the egalitarian focus of this passage was not on a political or economic equality. By being persecuted, the disciples showed themselves to be the disciples of their teacher and Lord (Patte 1987:152).

After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee (Mt 11:1). Matthew's interpretation of Jesus invited all who were weary and burdened to come so that he could give them rest (Mt 11:28-30). Concerning "The yoke", the reader naturally assumes that this refers to those who are burdened with the effort to obey the Law and in this way to arrive at the goal of righteousness (cf Sir 6:25). However, it is not the Law itself that is burdensome but rather the overwhelming nomism of the Pharisees. Hence, these verses imply that, according to the narrator, the Matthean Jesus had an inclusive mind but the Pharisees had exclusive minds through the interpretation of the Law (cf Mt 22:1-14). They (those who are burdened) will find Jesus' yoke light, because he is a Master who will care for them (Mt 11:29). Jesus went into their synagogue (cf Mt 4:23)<sup>44</sup> and healed a man with a shriveled hand (Mt 12:9-10). Here, we can see the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees in Matthew's narrative. The opponents obviously already know that Jesus will heal on the Sabbath, and be hostile toward the community. The narrator mentions that Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' ministry even took place at their synagogue and the conflict within the opponents. Then Jesus taught the crowd at a house. Jesus' mother and brothers visited him (Mt 12:46-50). The narrator again informs us of Jesus' inclusive mind in words such as "whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Jesus left the house<sup>45</sup> and went to sit at the sea, but a large crowd gathered around him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it (Mt 13:1-2). The place where he "sat beside the sea" was probably Capernaum in Galilee (Carter 2000a:282). Jesus taught the crowds and went to his home town, where he began teaching the people in their synagogue (Mt 13:53-54).

Jesus heard about the death of John the Baptist from John's disciples. He withdrew by boat to a solitary place. The large crowds came to Jesus and he had compassion on them and healed their sickness (Mt 14:13-14). Jesus' "compassion" is not simply a matter of a person being touched; it is the mercy of Israel's Messiah for his people. The mercy of healing of the sick from among the people is important in Matthew's narrative; it is that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus ministry is inclusive as is the intention of his own community. Then Jesus fed a large crowd in Gentile territory (see Van Aarde 1986:229-256). The narrator

portrays the crowds (women and children) as inclusive in the kingdom of God through Jesus' ministry (Gundry 1982:295; cf Carter 2000:308). They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The fact that "twelve" baskets are referred to in this pericope probably symbolizes the twelve tribes of Israel<sup>46</sup> (Hagner 1995:418). In Matthew 14:34 the narrator reports that Jesus landed in Gennesaret, a town close to Jesus' own territory of Capernaum. The people brought their sick ones to him. The narrator depicted again his community was inclusive through Jesus and engages in an inclusive ministry with healing. The narrator says anyone who touched Jesus' garment was healed (Mt 14:36). The religious leaders (the Pharisees and Scribes) came from Jerusalem with a question about the behaviour of the disciples, who did not wash their hands before they ate<sup>47</sup> (Mt 15:1-2). The narrator also informs the reader about the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders. The location had not changed; Jesus was still in Gennesaret.

The narrator then notes that Jesus moved to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt 15:21). A non-Israelite (Canaanite) woman came and asked for mercy, announcing that her daughter was possessed by a demon. Jesus healed her daughter (Mt 15:28). According to Jackson (2003:787), the Canaanite woman in Matthew's narrative is an imitation of the story of Ruth. If Jesus allowed the Canaanite woman to follow him, it indicated that she was allowed to join the Matthean community. Jackson (2003:779-790; 2002:21) believes that Matthew's intertextual designation of the story of Ruth shows how Gentiles became members of the Matthean community.

The narrator informs us that Jesus left and went back to the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down (Mt 15:29). The motivation of "mountain" is an eschatological inclusive gathering of the people, healing, and messianic banquet, the pointing to the mountain as symbolic of Mount Zion and Zion eschatology in Matthew's Gospel<sup>48</sup> (Davies and Allison 1991:567; Hagner 1995:445). The narrator informs the readers that the Messiah returned to his home town and healed every type of illness. Jesus again fed a large crowd in a remote place<sup>49</sup> (Mt 15:32-33). After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and moved into the territory of Magadan (Mt 15:39). The religious leaders came and

confronted Jesus about their demand for a sign. Here the demand for “a sign from heaven” means that they wanted a miracle with a divine significance, a miracle that will show beyond all contradiction that God is with him. Jesus said<sup>50</sup> that the Israelite leaders’ role was that of puppets of Satan (Mt 16:1-4) (Van Aarde 1994:98). The narrator informs us that the religious leaders need faith for understanding Jesus’ miracle ministry as a sign from heaven (cf Hagner 1995:456). However, the disciples of Jesus failed to understand their Master’s teaching. Jesus and his disciples crossed the lake (Mt 16:5). The disciples understood Jesus’ teaching about the dangerous point of view of the Israelite leaders (Mt 15:10-20). The above discussion shows us that the narrator depicted Jesus’ inclusive ministry but the disciples sometimes could not understand it.

Jesus entered the region of Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13; cf Mt 4:15; 15:21). The city of Caesarea Philippi was some twenty miles north of the Sea of Galilee (Carter 2000a:332). The narrator says that this was the only time Jesus went very far beyond Galilee and in the northern direction, it was a Gentile town located (of course Jesus went to Tyre, to the north-east of Galilee; see Mt 15:21) (Edwards 1985:59; Davies and Allison 1991:616). Jesus now asks the disciples for their own opinion about him (Mt 16:15). Herod Antipas thought Jesus was John the Baptist (see Mt 14:2) and many Israelite people anticipated the return of Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the prophets. Peter as spokesman answers for himself as well as for the other disciples, “you are the Christ, the son of the living God.” “The Christ,” is the Greek word for “anointed one.” “Son of God” is Jesus’ unique dignity, attested by God himself. This was the second time a disciple of Jesus acknowledged him as the Christ, the Son of the living God (Mt 16:16). The first time was after Jesus walked on the water: “truly you are the Son of God” (Mt 14:33).

After six days<sup>51</sup> Jesus went to a high mountain with Peter, John and the brother of James (Mt 17:1). There on the mountaintop Jesus was transfigured. They came down from the mountain (Mt 17:9) and approached the crowd (Mt 17:14). Jesus healed a boy from demon-possession (Mt 17:18). Jesus and his disciples (probably together with his followers) gathered in Galilee. Jesus repeated the prediction that the Son of Man would suffer and die (Mt 17:22-

23). The narrator encourages the reader to anticipate the coming difficulties of Jesus' passion for people's inclusion in the kingdom of God.

Afterwards, Jesus and his disciples moved into Capernaum (Mt 17:24). In Capernaum, three things happened. Jesus was in conflict with the authorities on the payment of taxes. Jesus taught the disciples who asked him who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of God (Mt 18:1) and that one must forgive one's brother seventy-seven times (Mt 18:21). The topographic location of Capernaum stresses the opposition against Jesus. Jerusalem, in Matthew's Gospel, was opposed to Jesus from a theological perspective (see Lohmeyer 1942:106-107). Therefore, the town of Capernaum was portrayed as being in opposition to Jesus, like Jerusalem (see Van Aarde 1994:221). The Israelite half-shekel or double drachma is tax for the support of the temple. It was to be paid annually by each free adult Israelite, excluding women, slaves and children. After the temple was destroyed, the Romans asked all Israelite people to pay tax to the Roman government<sup>52</sup> (Keener 1997:282).

Jesus' greatest instruction concerned the Kingdom of God (Mt 18:1-5). The narrator depicted it within the context of Matthew's community. Yet, the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society. The word "great" implies position and honour; the high position in the kingdom included the governors and ministers (Luz 2001:426; cf Esth 10:3; 1 Macc 7:8). The narrator informs his readers that unless the members of the community change and become like little children, they will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. It seems that the members of the Kingdom of God (the Matthean community) have no leadership structure (cf Morris 1992:460). However, children were without power or status and as such, were utterly dependent on their parents in the ancient world (Luz 2001:428; Harrington 1982:74). According to Luz (2001:428), the word "little" means "low" or "humble." Thus, the term "little children" implies spotlessness and low social status (Luz 2001:428). Hence, Jesus' instruction did not encompass any egalitarianism. The narrator did not emphasize equality of the members of the community in Jesus' instruction. He taught his disciples to become like children, by turning away from their previous status to live a humble life (Patte 1987:248). The humility of Jesus' disciples concerned their morality as his followers. However, this does

not necessarily imply that the disciples were equal.

Peter's inquiry to Jesus on how he must forgive a sinful brother marks a new division within the community discourse (Mt 18:21-22). Jesus could simply have answered "yes, it is not limited forgiveness." "Seventy-seven times" is not a limit of literally seventy-seven or even 490 times but it indicates that one must forgive an unlimited number of times. It is implied that the narrator's context reflected within Jesus' inclusive ministry, is to forgive a sinful brother without counting.

The emic data with regard to the spatial designations in Matthew 4:12-18:35 can be summarised as follows: the narrator describes Jesus' ministry as successful in Galilee and the towns around Galilee. The narrator depicts Jesus' activities as an inclusive ministry of healing (Mt 4:23-24; 8:2, 5, 16; 9:1-8, 18, 27-31; 12:9-10; 14:13-14, 35), Jesus drove out unclean spirits/demons (Mt 8:2, 5, 16, 28-34; 9:9-13, 27-31, 32-34; 15:21-28; 17:18), taught (Mt 4:17, 23; 5:1-7:29; 9:35; 10:5; 11:1; 13:53-54; 18:1, 21-35) and fed the crowds (Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-38). Jesus' ministry targeted the crowds. Jesus called his disciples (Mt 4:18-22) and worked with them as part of Jesus' ministry. Therefore, the narrator's native point of view of Jesus' ministry is one of inclusivity for all people. The narrator's depiction of Jesus' ministry is in context within his inclusive community.

In Galilee, Jesus and his disciples (the helpers) are characterized as being successful with the "ministry of inclusiveness." The narrator emphasizes that Jesus' inclusive ministry was not only limited to the territory and the nation of Israel but was extended to other nations and countries. He went to the world of the Gentiles and healed them as well. Moreover, Jesus' ministry included females and low-level people (even unclean people). Jesus' inclusive ministry in the Gentile world is depicted in Matthew 4:15, 24; 8:28-30; 14:13-14 and 15:28. His inclusion of females (see Wainwright 2001a:126-137) amongst those that he healed is portrayed in Matthew 8:14-15; 9:22, 25 and 15:21-28, and his association with people of lower social strata and unclean people in Matthew 4:24; 8:2, 8:28-34; 9:3, 9-13, 32-34; 15:28 and 17:18.

However, Jesus' inclusive ministry was opposed by the antagonists in Matthew's narrative

(Mt 2:16; 9:3, 11; 12:2, 4, 24, 38; 15:1-2; 16:1, 12, 21; see Bauer 1988:65-67). The narrator informs the readers that Jesus was in conflict with the power group of Jerusalem (Mt 2:16). Jesus forgave the sins of sick people, but the teachers of the Law said he was blaspheming (Mt 9:3). They did not accept Jesus' authority to forgive sins. The narrator tells the readers to understand that God's forgiveness is connected with one's forgiveness of others (Charette 2000:61). It also indicates that Jesus' ministry included sinners. Jesus' ministry included all people, as he ate with the tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:7). The Pharisees and members of the elite, the religious leaders and members of the governing class continued to maintain hierarchical and social stratification (see Vledder 1997:117-130). That is why they criticized Jesus' practice of including all kinds of people.

The narrator says that some religious leaders came from Jerusalem (Mt 15:1-2). They tested Jesus by asking about the hand-washing ritual required by the law of the elders. Hand washing before eating is a regular ritual law in Judaism. Jesus' answer to them was: "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" This means that in terms of the narrator's (Matthew community) perspective in Matthew 15:1-3, hand-washing before eating is not ritual law, but a special Pharisaic ritual (Luz 2001:330). This interpretation clearly indicates that Jesus' inclusive ministry came into conflict with the religious leaders' views concerning the interpretation of the Torah. The Matthean community did not refute on the basis of the traditional interpretation of the Torah, but the community was in conflict with Pharisaic ritual (their own view of the Law). Jesus also warned his disciples about the teaching of their religious leaders (Mt 16:1, 12). Jesus told his disciples that he would eventually suffer at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and teachers of the Law, and that he would be killed by them (in Jerusalem). It is clear that the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders centred around the fact that Jesus' ministry included all people. According to Luz (2001:348), the religious leaders demanded a sign from heaven because they opposed Jesus' ministry. An example of his ministry is the two miraculous feedings in which great crowds participated in his teaching. The religious leaders maintained their hierarchical structure and excluded people of lower status.



The narrator's depiction of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:12-18:35) succeeded in including all kinds of people. Most of the crowds followed Jesus. The crowds that followed Jesus in Galilee and in the Gentile world included males and females, and people from many different classes. It clearly indicates that Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry was not concerned with "egalitarianism".

#### **4.2.4.2.1.3 From Galilee to Jerusalem: Matthew 19:1-20:34**

This section is Matthew's depiction of Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus went from Galilee to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan (πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου) (Mt 19:1). The narrator tells us that Jesus' inclusive ministry continued on his way to Jerusalem and came into conflict with the view of religious leaders. Jesus' religious movement (inclusive ministry) moved from Galilee into the Transjordanian region (the region of Judea beyond the Jordan). The narrator informs the reader that there will be major conflict in Jerusalem (Luz 2001:488). Duling (2003:18) suggests that the ethnic stand of the Matthean community focuses on the boundary between Israelite and non-Israelite. However, to Luz (2001:488), the narrator is ignorant of the geographical-historical circumstances (it was Gentile world or not in Israel history).

The crowd followed Jesus and he performed miracles of healing as well (Mt 19:2). Jesus, the healing Messiah, remains faithful to his inclusive mission to all the people until the end. The religious leaders (some Pharisees) again tested the authority of Jesus by asking him whether a man could divorce his wife for any and every reason (Mt 19:3). This question asked by the Pharisees is seen as a form of tempting Jesus. The narrator tells us once more that Jesus included children in his ministry (Mt 19:13-15; cf Mt 18:1-4). The disciples did not accept the children but Jesus included them and blessed them. We have argued that children formed a lower social class. While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples, he proclaimed his imminent death again (Mt 19:17; cf Mt 16:21; 17:12, 22-23). On the way to Jerusalem, the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus and requested that one of her two sons should sit at his right and the other at his left in his kingdom (Mt 20:20-21). She may have

been the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (Hagner 1995:580; cf John 19:25). Sitting at Jesus' right and at his left in the kingdom indicated that these were the two places of highest honour. It implies that the ancient world, as the Mathean community, is not an egalitarian structured society. As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Jesus healed two blind men on the way. Not only is there physical blindness, but there is also blindness of the heart and of the thoughts (Luz 2001:549). The followers of Jesus rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but Jesus healed them (Mt 20:29-34). After healing them, the formerly blind men followed (becoming models of discipleship) Jesus on the way of the cross. The narrator tells the reader that Jesus is the inclusive messiah for the blind Pharisees and scribes in Matthew's narrative (cf Luz 2001:549; Mt 23:16-26).

To summarize: the narrator's depiction is that while Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, the crowd was still following him. Jesus' inclusive ministry with the crowds continued (Mt 19:2). There was conflict on the way to Jerusalem; some Pharisees came to Jesus and asked about the law on divorce. The location of Jesus' ministry could change, but Jesus' inclusive ministry continued, so many people came from different stratas. Thus, the narrator's intention of his inclusive community is depicted through Jesus' ministry.

#### **4.2.4.2.1.4 Jesus in Jerusalem: Matthew 21:1-28:20**

In this section, Matthew's depiction of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem is examined. It is implied that the narrator's depiction of Jesus' ministry took place not only in Jerusalem, but also near Jerusalem in the last week (Mt 21:1-27:66). Finally, Jesus' ministry took place at the crucifixion and after the resurrection in Jerusalem (Mt 28).

Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives (Mt 21:1). The Mount of Olives was situated just across the Kidron valley from Jerusalem. The narrator's geographical note in Matthew 21:1 indicates that Jesus travelled on the road from Jericho (Mt 20:29) to Jerusalem. As he entered Jerusalem, the crowd also followed Jesus (Mt 21:8-9). The crowd repeatedly proclaimed Jesus as the messianic king. Matthew changed "many people" in Mark 11:8 to "the very large crowd" for a predictive

allusion to the numerous Gentiles that were going to enter the community in Matthew 21:8 (Gundry 1982:410). It implies that Jesus' inclusive ministry was reflected in the Matthean community. In the temple, Jesus cleansed the temple and healed the blind and the lame (Mt 21:10-14). Jesus' healing in the temple underlines his identity as the Son of David. The "blind and lame," had severely restricted access to the temple (probably to the court of the Gentiles) (cf Lev 21:18-19; 2Sam 5:8). Jesus left the temple and stayed overnight in Bethany (Mt 21:17). The narrator informs the reader that at this point a seemingly abrupt departure took place from the Israelite authorities and from the city itself. It was not yet time for the more escalated confrontation concerning the authority that Jesus claimed. The next morning, Jesus was on his way back to the temple (Mt 21:18). Jesus entered Jerusalem's temple court, and while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him (Mt 21:23). The narrator informs the reader that Jesus' authority to teach (Mt 7:29), to heal and forgive (Mt 9:6, 8) was inclusive of all kinds of people, but the chief priests and the elders of the people refused to let Jesus' inclusive ministry take place. The narrator emphasizes Jesus' inclusive ministry through his teaching on the parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-13). The wedding hall was filled with guests (Mt 22:10). The guests probably included Gentiles, male and female, of any social stratification level and the poorest of the poor (Carter 2000a: 437; see Levine 1988:211-215; Hagner 1995:631) (see chapter 4.2.4. 2.3). This is strong evidence that Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' ministry was not egalitarian. The same day, the Sadducees came to Jesus and questioned him (Mt 22:23).

In Matthew 23:1 there is no indication of any change of place or time. Jesus instructed the crowds and his disciples about the indictment of his opponents. The narrator notes that the religious leaders were not in favour of inclusiveness because they liked to sit in important seats and the Pharisees were also called blind guides (Mt 23:26; see Mt 15:14). Jesus was in the temple (Mt 21:23-23:39). Jesus left the temple and sat on the Mount of Olives (Mt 24:1,3). Geographically the narrator notices that Jesus was outside the city of Jerusalem, overlooking the temple (on the Mount of Olives).

While Jesus was in Bethany at the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, an unnamed

woman came to him and poured very expensive perfume on his head (Mt 26:6-7). This anointing possibly has Messianic overtones (Anderson 2001:40). The disciples misunderstood the woman's action. However, Jesus explained that she had prepared him for burial (Mt 26:12). This unnamed woman's position was not high in Israelite society. She succeeded, but the disciples failed, as her actions brought honour for her but shame to the disciples (Anderson 2001:41). The narrator clearly tells the reader that Jesus' inclusive ministry encompassed even an unnamed woman. The position of the woman, who was Jesus' disciple was not higher than that of any other male disciple (cf Keener 1997:366).

Jesus ate the last supper with his disciples (Mt 26:17-29). By identifying his own mission with the Passover, Jesus indicates that he has come to enact the new redemption and new exodus promised by the biblical prophets (Keener 1997:367). It is the narrator's reference to the institution of a new covenant. Jesus spoke of his blood as the sign of the covenant, as his blood was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Hagner 1995:773; Charette 1992:77). Jesus' blood was indicative of the inclusion of all people through salvation. Jesus said to his disciples: "After I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee" (Mt 26:32).

The narrator says the crucifixion of Jesus on Golgotha (Mt 27:33) completed (fulfilled) his inclusive mission. Jesus' arrest took place at Gethsemane (Mt 26:36). Gethsemane was probably on the Mount of Olives (Mt 26:30) (see Carter 2000a:510). In this place, Jesus prayed to God and focused on the obedience of the Son, as he accepted whatever the Father required. Judas came to Jesus and kissed him. It was a signal to those who were with him that the man was Jesus. Then all the disciples of Jesus left him (Mt 26:56). This is the beginning of the passion. A large crowd, sent by the chief priests and the elders of the people to arrest Jesus, took him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest (Mt 26:57). The narrator tells us that 'the scribes and the elders were gathered together. This appears to be a reference to the Sanhedrin, the highest council in the land.'<sup>53</sup> Peter disowned Jesus during his trial by the Jerusalem council under Caiaphas (see Mt 26:69). The servant girl (Mt 26:69, 71) had perhaps been among the crowds who had seen Jesus teaching and recognized Peter as having been with him (Hagner 1995:806). The narrator clearly indicated Pilate's authorizing<sup>54</sup> of Jesus'

crucifixion (Mt 27:26). They condemned Jesus for blasphemy and they crucified him (Mt 27:35). Romans crucified their victims naked and public nakedness caused shame (Brown 1994:870). Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up his spirit (Mt 27:50). The death of Jesus, the righteous one, bears for sinners the righteous wrath of God against sin. The narrator notes that Jesus' death on the cross was the point of completion of his inclusive ministry as his death has the power to save people from sin (Bauer 1988:102). Jesus' crucifixion is also maintained for Matthew's inclusively structured community.

The narrator says that the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and had served him, were watching him die on the cross from a distance (Mt 27:55-57). This scene also indicates that these women cared for Jesus on his journey from Galilee up to Jerusalem (Anderson 2001:42-43; Osiek 2001:220). It implies that Jesus' inclusive ministry started in Galilee and his mission was completed when he died on the cross in Jerusalem. Moreover, women (two Marys) were also at the burial (Mt 27:61) and went to the tomb to "anoint" the body of Jesus (Mt 28:1).

Jesus was buried in a tomb, made by a man from Arimathea, named Joseph, and the women were witnesses to it (Mt 27:57-60) (see Osiek 2001:205-220). After the Sabbath, Jesus was raised from the dead (Mt 28:6). The women were invited into the tomb to see where Jesus "lay" as proof that the body was not there. He had gone ahead to Galilee; where the disciples would see him (Mt 28:7, 10). The narrator depicts the inclusive ministry of Jesus as ending with the disciples back in Galilee (Mt 28:16), where the story began and where they became his disciples. Here, the narrator emphasizes that Jesus' inclusive mission was handed over to his disciples' communities (Mt 28:18-20). The disciples are to "go" and "make disciples" of "all the nations," it is implied that Jesus' ministry was a universal mission. Waetjen (1976:256-257) says that the great commission was not only a duty for the eleven disciples, but as Jesus joined himself to the company of the eleven, it was no longer an individual mission to make new disciples; it became a duty for the disciples' communities. Therefore, each disciple's community was also an inclusive group for all kinds of stratification people.

In summary: the narrator's designation of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem and its surroundings

was not very different from the ministry in Galilee. His inclusive ministry was activated from both Galilee and Jerusalem and its surroundings in Matthew's narrative. The religious leaders tried to obstruct Jesus' ministry in both the Galilee and Jerusalem areas. A slight difference is that Jesus' inclusive ministry succeeded better in Galilee than in Jerusalem. The crowd followed Jesus from Galilee. Jesus also healed people in the temple (Mt 21:14). The religious leaders were opposed to Jesus. Jesus' ministry was completed when he died on the cross. The disciples went back to Galilee as the new Israel for inclusive mission community. Hence, Jesus' inclusive ministry is reflected in Matthew's community as an inclusively structured society.

#### **4.2.4.2.2 Specific settings in which Jesus' activities took place**

From the above section, it is clear that the narrator's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry took place in Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem and in Jerusalem and its surroundings. In this section, the discussion focuses more specifically on certain spatial references in Matthew that can be seen as "settings in settings," like a city (village, town), a mountain, a boat and synagogue in Galilee, or a mountain, a house and the temple in Jerusalem (see Van Eck 1995:270 with regard to Mark).

The narrator's settings where Jesus' inclusive ministry of teaching, healing and exorcism took place are looked at in Galilee, on the way to and in Jerusalem. Jesus' ministry took place within the spatial reference of a city (village, town), houses, synagogues, mountains, boats and temples. In Jerusalem, Jesus' ministry took place on the mountain and in a house, but most evenings and at night Jesus was ministering outside the city of Jerusalem. The purpose of the discussion of these "settings in settings" is to discern whether there was a difference between Jesus' ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem. These settings are as below:

4: 23 ἐν ὅλη τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ

ἐν ταῖς

συναγωγαῖς

5: 1	εἰς τὸ ἔθνος,
8: 5 εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ	
8: 6	ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ
8: 14	εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
8: 23	εἰς τὸ πλοῖον
8: 28 εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν	
9: 1	εἰς πλοῖον εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν
9: 7	εἰς τὸν οἶκον
9: 10	ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ
9: 23	εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
9: 28	εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν
9: 35 τὰς πόλεις πάσας καὶ τὰς κώμας	ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς
12: 9	εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν
13: 2	εἰς πλοῖον
13: 36	εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν

13: 54 εἰς τὴν πατρίδα

ἐν τῇ

συναγωγῇ

14: 13

ἐν πλοίῳ

ἔρημον

14: 32

εἰς τὸ

πλοῖον

14: 33

ἐν τῷ

πλοίῳ

14: 34 εἰς Γεννησαρέτ

15: 21 εἰς τὰ μέρη Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος

15: 29 τῆς Γαλιλαίας

εἰς τὸ

ὄρος

15: 39

εἰς τὸ

πλοῖον

εἰς τὰ ὄρια Μαγαδάν

16: 13 εἰς τὰ μέρη

Καισαρείας

17: 1

εἰς ὄρος

17: 24 εἰς Καφαρναούμ

17: 25

εἰς τὴν

οἰκίαν

-----  
21: 1

εἰς Βηθφαγή

εἰς τὸ

ὄρος τῶν ἔλαιων

21: 12

εἰς τὸ ἱερόν



21: 14		ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
21: 17	εἰς Βηθανίαν	
21: 23		εἰς τὸ ἱερόν
24: 1		ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
24: 3		ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρους τῶν ἔλαιῶν
26: 6	ἐν Βηθανίᾳ	
		ἐν οἰκίᾳ
26: 36	Γεθσημανὶ	
26: 55		ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ
26: 58		τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ ἀρχιερέως
26: 61		τὸν ναὸν
27: 5		εἰς τὸν ναὸν
27: 33	Γολγοθᾶ	
28: 16	εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν	
		εἰς τὸ ὄρος

According to the above tabulation, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus' ministry took place in the city, in a house, synagogue, on a mountain, on a boat and in the temple as spatial structures of certain "settings in settings" in Matthew's Gospel. This inclusive ministry is reported in Matthew 4:23 to 17:25 and clearly indicates that Jesus' inclusive ministry activities covered Galilee and its surroundings. In the last half of the Matthean narrative, from 21:1 to 28:16, Jesus' ministry took place on a mountain, in a house and in the temple. However, most of Jesus' ministry took place around the temple.

The narrator's point of view of Jesus' inclusive ministry can be looked at from the perspective of the above spatial structure. The narrator informs the reader that Jesus started his ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:23). Jesus went up a mountain and taught his disciples there (Mt 5:1). Matthew 5:1-2 could be directly related to the tradition of Moses' enthronement on Sinai: "the image of Moses sitting on Sinai, whether on a throne or some other seat, was

firmly established in the imagination of pre-Christian Jews. It was therefore a resource Matthew could have utilized, had he wished” (Allison 1993:179; see the above). Jesus sits on the mountain (the Moses sitting on Sinai) and taught people concerning the inclusiveness of the Kingdom of God. All the references to “the mountain” (Mt 4:8; 5:1-2; 15:29; 17:1-2) indicate that Jesus’ teaching and ministry included all people in the kingdom of God. The narrator tells the reader that Jesus came down from the mountain (Mt 8:1) and entered Capernaum (Mt 8:5). Jesus healed the servant of a centurion. Without a change in location Jesus entered Simon Peter’s house and healed Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-15). When evening came, people who were demon-possessed and those who had suffered from many diseases were brought to Jesus and he healed them as well (Mt 8:16). Then Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him (Mt 8:23). The above discussion indicates that Matthew’s interpretation of Jesus’ ministry includes all kinds of people from different strata.

The narrator reports that Jesus moved into the region of the Gadarenes (Mt 8:28). Jesus met two demon-possessed men and he drove out the demons (Mt 8:28-34). Jesus got into a boat and crossed over to his home town where he healed a paralytic man (Mt 9:1-7). Jesus had dinner at Matthew’s house; many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him (Mt 9:10). Jesus revived a dead girl and a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years (Mt 9:18-26). The majority of commentators argue that she was marginalised in Israelite society because of both gender and purity regulations (see Levine 2001a:70-77). However, Jesus healed her without any consideration of the purity regulation. Jesus entered a house and two blind men came to him; he healed them (Mt 9:27-30).

Jesus entered their synagogue and healed many sick people (Mt 12:9, 15, 22). On the same day (it has connections with Mt 12:15-50; see Carter 2000a: 282), Jesus came out of the house, got into a boat and taught the crowds (Mt 13:1). The narrator tells the reader that Jesus moved to his home town and taught the people in their synagogue (Mt 13:54). Jesus crossed over to Gennesaret and healed people (Mt 14:34-36). Jesus entered the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mt 15:21). He healed the Canaanite woman’s daughter (Mt 15:22-28). Jesus left there and sat on a mountainside, which was near the Sea of Galilee (Mt 15:29). The narrator tells the reader

that Jesus also healed the lame, the blind, the crippled and the mute (Mt 15:30). Jesus moved to Magadan (Mt 15:39). Jesus went to the region of Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13) and he and his disciples arrived in Capernaum (Mt 17:24).

The narrator's description of Jesus' inclusive ministry took place in Galilee in cities, in a house, in a synagogue, and on the mountain. The narrator's native point of view of Jesus' ministry in Galilee as "settings in settings" also confirms that Jesus' ministry was an inclusive one. Jesus' ministry repeated the same pattern as he moved around in the city of Galilee, in the house, on the Mount, in a synagogue and in the boat where he was teaching, healing and driving out demons, thereby including people. There is strong evidence that Jesus' inclusive ministry took place within a stratified society; it was a reflection that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society. The narrator's depiction of this kind of Jesus' inclusive ministry is a reflection that his own community is an inclusive structured society.

Next, we look at Jesus' inclusive ministry in Jerusalem as depicted elsewhere than in Matthew's Gospel (21:1-28:16). In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' activities in Jerusalem are portrayed as taking place in the temple (see Van Eck 1995:275-276). Jesus did not stay at the temple at night; in the evenings he always left the city to stay outside Jerusalem (Mk 11:1, 12; 14:13). It also indicated that Jesus' ministry did not take place outside Jerusalem (at night). However, the Gospel of Matthew differs from that of Mark. The narrator of Matthew also claims that Jesus went outside the city of Jerusalem at night but the narrator emphasizes that Jesus' inclusive ministry took place in the temple as well (cf Mt 21:14). The narrator of Mark emphasizes the conflict between Jesus and his opponents in some parts of Jerusalem.

Hence, Jesus' ministry took place in Galilee and in Jerusalem and the purpose was to include all kinds of people, who came from different social levels. Jesus' inclusive ministry was more limited in Jerusalem than in Galilee. His antagonists tried to maintain the stratification of their society.

To recap, Jesus' ministry took place in Galilee and in Jerusalem and the ministry was inclusive of all kinds of people. In Galilee, Jesus' inclusive ministry took place in the city, a

house, a synagogue, on a mountain and in a boat. In Jerusalem, Jesus' inclusive ministry took place on a mountain, in a house and in the temple. However, most of Jesus' inclusive ministry took place in the temple in some parts of Jerusalem. Hence, the purpose of Jesus' ministry in both Galilee and Jerusalem was to include all people in the spatial structure of Matthew's Gospel as in the context of his inclusive community.

#### 4.2.4.2.3 Referential spatial designations

The most important point of Matthew's spatial references indicates that Jesus' ministry took place in order to include people into the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (kingdom of God) (cf Mt 4:17). The kingdom of God is not indicated as a physical place. It is God's active domain of salvation (Du Toit 2000:545; Luz 1980:485).

Hence, the narrator describes how Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God through teaching, preaching and healing. The narrator designates Jesus' inclusive teachings as follows:

- preparation for inclusive ministry (baptism and temptation) (Mt 3:16-17; 4:1-11);
- Jesus' proclamation that the kingdom of heaven is near (Mt 4:17);
- the healing of various diseases and driving out demons (Mt 4:23, 24; 8:2-4, 5-13, 14-15, 16, 28-34; 9:2-7, 18-26, 20-22, 27-31, 33, 35; 12:10-13,15, 22; 14:35-36; 15:22-28, 30-31; 17:14-20; 19:2; 20:29-34; 21:14);
- teaching (Mt 5:1-7:29; 10:1; 13:2; 13:54; 22:2-14; 23:1-39);
- the forgiving of sins (Mt 9:2);
- eating with sinners and tax collectors (Mt 9:10);
- the claim that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8);
- "whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50);
- feeding those who are hungry (Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-38);
- Jesus' walking on the water (Mt 14:25);
- Jesus' acceptance of a little child (Mt 18:2-3; 19:13-15);

- Jesus' crucifixion (this completed his proclamation of the kingdom of heaven for the salvation all people) with his followers from Galilee present (Mt 27:35, 55-56);
- Jesus' commanding of his disciples to do God's will (to make disciples of all nations) (Mt 28:19).

In both Galilee and Jerusalem, the purpose of Jesus' ministry was to proclaim the kingdom of God. Its purpose was to proclaim the inclusion of all people. Hence, the narrator's point of view of Jesus' ministry is that it includes people as members of the kingdom of God (e.g., Mt 5:3, 10). Jesus' ministry took place in three ways. Healing was a significant method to include sick people. The sick people were unclean, but Jesus healed them and included them in his group of followers (cf Mt 4:25; 8:1; 9:1; 20:34; 27:55; see Kingsbury 1978b:56-73). Secondly, Jesus' ministry took place through his teaching. The Sermon on the Mount for example, functions as an admission to Matthew's community.

A closer look at Jesus' inclusive teachings reveals the following: The purpose of the parable of the wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14) was to teach about the kingdom of God. The king invited all kinds of people, that is anyone whom his slaves could find (Mt 22:9). According to Carter (2000:436), the word "anyone" is an indication of the lower social class, and the Matthean community's mission was the inclusion of all people. Moreover, Jesus ate with the tax collectors and sinners (Mt 9:10). Finally, Jesus' inclusive ministry was completed when he died on the cross (Mt 27:35) and with his command to make disciples of all nations (28:18-20). These verses indicate that Jesus' death completed his inclusive mission, and that his command was an extension of his inclusive ministry through the community of the disciples. Therefore, the picture the narrator paints of Jesus' ministry is that it included people from Galilee to Jerusalem. One can therefore conclude that Jesus' inclusive ministry is a dominant theme in the Gospel of Matthew.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The narrator's point of view is presented here in terms of emic data to the reader in the Gospel of Matthew. The narrator informs the reader that Jesus Christ is the protagonist of the narrative and that his ministry is for the salvation of his people according to God's will in the context of their community. Hence, Matthew's context of his inclusive structured community depicted through Jesus was started by his inclusive salvation ministry. The preparation for Jesus' ministry indicated that he was truly the Son of God. The disciples were supportive and helped in Jesus' inclusive ministry. Jesus' ministry was targeted at the crowds (both Israelites and Gentiles). The religious leaders (the elite) were opposed to Jesus' inclusive ministry. Jesus' inclusive ministry started in Galilee and it reached its completion at his death on the cross at Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, the antagonists obstructed Jesus, but he completed his inclusive ministry there.

The narrator presents space as settings of interest: Galilee, on the way to Jerusalem, Jerusalem and its surroundings. The narrator indicates space more specifically: the city, synagogue, mountain, house, temple and so forth. In Galilee, Jesus' ministry was successful through healing, teaching and preaching. The narrator presents a picture to the readers showing the inclusive ministry in Galilee that the beneficiaries of the salvation are no longer only the physical descendants of Abraham and are also no longer restricted to the physical land of Israel (Charette 1992:82). Jesus came to save his people from their sins and included members of a new Israel (cf Mt 1:21). Jesus' ministry was intended to provide new membership to his people as the people of God in the context of Matthew's community. God's people include both Israelites and Gentiles through Jesus' salvation. On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus' ministry continued to include people through healing. The religious leaders opposed Jesus' inclusive ministry, but the crowd continued to follow him on his journey to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem and its surrounds, Jesus healed people and completed his inclusive ministry.

Hence, it is clearly understood that the narrator of Matthew's Gospel presents the structure of space as Jesus' inclusive ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus' ministry was to include people through salvation; it was God's will that his people be saved. There are different

conflicts between Jesus and his opponents in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' inclusive ministry is rejected by the religious leaders in Jerusalem, but not in Galilee (Kingsbury 1989:63-88). In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' inclusive ministry is opposed by religious leaders from Galilee to Jerusalem, but Jesus' inclusive ministry was still open through salvation (see Freyne 2001:308; Catchpole 1992:271-279). The reason for the opposition to Jesus' inclusive ministry was that the religious leaders did not want to alter the stratification in their society, which might threaten their status.

This analysis of the narrative point of view leads one to conclude that Matthew's depiction of Jesus' inclusive ministry was for all people in the whole region from Galilee to Jerusalem. The religious leaders opposed Jesus' inclusive ministry, because they wanted to keep the social stratification intact and centred on the temple and ideologically supportive of hierarchical relationships. This means that Jesus' inclusive ministry took place within some aspect of an egalitarian structured society. However, Jesus completed his inclusive ministry when he died on the cross in Jerusalem. Jesus' inclusive ministry is a dominant perspective in Matthew's narrative. The narrator's narrative structure of Jesus's inclusive ministry reflected the context of Matthew's inclusive structure community. In the next chapter, we will look in more detail at Matthew's intention of his inclusive community through Jesus' inclusive ministry by means of a social scientific reading. The emic study of Jesus' inclusive ministry also forms the basis of the next Chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the concept of an "ideological perspective" to refer to what literary studies refer to as a "point of view". According to Van Aarde (1991:105-107), the ideological perspective is that from which the narrator/implied author observes the story-stuff of the narrative world and evaluates (selects and combines) it, with the result that the narrated world is arranged in a plot as an orchestration to the ideal/implied reader.

<sup>2</sup> The structural investigation of Matthew's gospel has been done in three ways. The earliest perspective divided the Gospel according to the *geographical or chronological* features in the text. Scholars such as Allen and Grensted (1929) used this approach. The twentieth-century investigation adopted some form of *topical* outline. This perspective was followed by Bacon's (1930) programmatic work, which divides the Gospel according to the alternation of narrative and discourse material. The third focus was on conceptual structure, which is in favour of an arrangement that builds around some crucial theme or concept (Strecker 1967, 1971; Trilling 1968; Thompson 1974; Meier 1975).

<sup>3</sup> According to Van Aarde (1997:133), the poetics of the Gospel of Matthew displays two explicit topographical (temporal) levels, the pre-paschal and post-paschal (see more detail in Chapter 2).

<sup>4</sup> For instance, according to Matera (1987:243-246), the kernels of Matthew's plot are a) the birth of Jesus (Mt 2:1), b) the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Mt 4:12-17), c) the question of John the Baptist (Mt 11:2-6), d), Jesus'

conversation at Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13-28), e) the cleansing of the Temple (Mt 21:1-17), f) the Great Commission (Mt 28:16-20). Matera's (1987:252-253) view of the above kernels of Matthew's plot concerns Israel's rejection of the Messiah and the reason for the spreading of the gospel to the Gentiles.

<sup>5</sup> I combined into one what Combrink designated as two parts: the last week in and near Jerusalem (Mt 21:1-27:66) and the resurrection and appearances of the Lord (Mt 28: 1-20). I also designated Jesus' preparation for his ministry as one structure (Mt 2:23-4:11). According to some, this division is in keeping with Mark's geographical outline. Kingsbury divided Matthew as follows: the person of Jesus Messiah (Mt 1:1-4:16), the proclamation of Jesus Messiah (Mt 4:17-16:20), and the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Messiah (Mt 16:21-28:20). Kingsbury's division is a combination of Christological perspectives (see Chapter 2). However, some disagree with Kingsbury that Matthew 4:12 is the start of the Galilean ministry of Jesus (Anderson 1909: xxi; Farmer 1982: 138-140; Harrison 1964: 159). Some regard this to be 4:17 (Battenhouse 1937: 93; Robinson 1928:xix; Schweizer 1975:5), or 5:1 (Davidson: I, 345). It is argued that the journey of the ministry to Jerusalem starts in 19:1 (Anderson 1909:21; Farmer 1982:138-140; Harrison 1964:160) but other scholars also believe it to be at 16:13 (Klostermann 1971: contents page), in 16:21 (Senior 1977:15-16), and in 17:1 (Robinson 1928: ix-xx; Bauer 1988:23). I have explained some perspectives of Matthew's structural division. I will follow the geographical outline of Matthew.

<sup>6</sup> The city of Nazareth is unknown in the Old Testament or any source earlier than the New Testament documents (Luz 1989:39).

<sup>7</sup> The perspective of the messiah's connection with Nazareth is primarily concerned with the Old Testament situation. For instance, the discourse of Mt 2:13-23 is a reflection of Moses' exodus from Egypt (Erickson 1996: 13).

<sup>8</sup> In Herod's attempt to kill the infant King, we encounter evil for the first time in the narrative. In Matthew's perspective, evil continually stands in opposition to the purposes of God (Luz 1989:43).

<sup>9</sup> Carter's perspective is a socio-political one on Matthew's community, namely that Jesus was rejected by the central elite political and religious powers in Jerusalem.

<sup>10</sup> It is evident from Qumran (4QFlor 10-14; 4QpsDanAa) that the title "son of God" had clear messianic significance in Israelism prior to the New Testament period. Jesus had sonship and messianic identity. Yet, as we see in the voice coming from heaven after the baptism, Jesus is called to be obedient not only as a Son but also as a Servant (Hagner 1993:69).

<sup>11</sup> My understanding of Sonship is the divine titles as "Lord", "God" and "Father". According to Mowery (1997:642-656), the narrator especially depicted the Lordship of Jesus in Matthew 1 and 2 (cf 1:20, 22, 24; 2:13,15, 19).

<sup>12</sup> The Son of God is not only the one revealed from heaven (cf 2:15; 16:16; 17:5) but especially the obedient one who subjects himself to God's will (Luz 1989:180).

<sup>13</sup> According to Senior, the death scene has become a challenge to Jesus' Sonship as "Lord". Jesus' temptation story in Matthew also indicates that it foreshadows both Jesus' suffering and vindication as Son of God (Donaldson 1985:99-101).

<sup>14</sup> The narrator of Matthew's Gospel presents a series of reliable witnesses to disclose the true identity of Jesus to the reader as Jesus the Christ, Son of Abraham, Son of David, Emmanuel, King of the Jews, Shepherd, the Coming One, the Son of God (Bauer 1988:77-83).

<sup>15</sup> Jesus' words of "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" is an echo of John's message recorded in Matthew 3:2. John and Jesus therefore stand in continuity, and the message of John to the Israelite is equally a message to Matthew's community (Hagner 1993:47). However, Luz (1989:197) did not agree with the above view. Jesus begins his proclamation of the coming kingdom of heaven. He quotes verbatim the proclamation of John the Baptist (Mt 3:2). But the kingdom of heaven becomes clearly an entity which is still in the future (not until and only in Matthew 11:12 and 12:28 does the reader learn that it begins already now). Kingsbury (1989 [1975]:128-149) had a completely different interpretation of "the kingdom of God": according to him, the present and the future aspects are of equal value; the kingdom is growing in the time of Jesus, which Kingsbury counts from the



birth to the parousia (Mt 28:20).

<sup>16</sup> Senior (Senior 1999:1-23) observed that Matthew's Gospel has a relative lack of attention of relationship with the Gentile world. He argued that the Gentile mission has a more prominent role in Matthew's narrative than a historical location between Israelite and Gentile worlds. By contrast, Carter (2004:259-282) believed that Matthew's Gospel concerning the Gentile world is much larger than the current debate recognizes.

<sup>17</sup> Charette (1992:73) notes that "Jesus' ministry in Galilee is presented as the fulfillment of the salvation in Isaiah 8:22-9:2, which concerns the bright light that will break in upon the people who live in darkness."

<sup>18</sup> The phrase "Galilee of the Gentiles" was a common designation for Galilee, resulting from what had historically been a rather large Gentile population (Schnackenburg 2002:40; Hagner 1993:73). According to Luz (1989:200), "for Matthew, the ecclesiological dimension evidently belongs to the history of proclamation of the ministry of Jesus. For this reason it has to become clear in the prologue also that the result and goal of the arrival of Jesus, the Son of God, in Galilee is the origin of the community. "Galilee of the Gentiles" is the place of origin of the community". However, we have already confirmed that the location of Matthew's community was the city of Antioch (see chapter 3).

<sup>19</sup> The Sea of Galilee is called the lake of Gennesaret in Luke 5:1 and the Sea of Tiberias in John 12:1).

<sup>20</sup> In contrast, Jesus' healing and exorcism ministry in Matthew 4:17-23 demonstrates that God's authority is opposed by Satan's/Rome's control (Carter 2004:268).

<sup>21</sup> Luz (1989:201) also agrees with this view of the break with the family. Jesus called his disciples not only in the emphatic "immediately" in the description of the leaving of nets and father, but also in the significance which the leaving of the physical father, in favor of obedience to the heavenly Father, has in the Gospel of Matthew as a whole (cf 8:21; 10:35-37; 19:29; 23:9).

<sup>22</sup> Verse 23 is repeated almost word for word in 9:35. The only differences (besides the addition of ὁ Ἰησοῦς in 9:35) are that 9:35 has "all the cities and villages" for "the whole of Galilee" and omits the final words "among the people." According to Hagner (1993:79), if in 9:35, Matthew is not copying his own earlier summary, he may reflect a traditional summary that the ministry of Jesus might have contained in oral tradition. The summary of 9:35 may function as an inclusion with the present passage, enclosing the account of Jesus' teaching in chapters 5-7 and his healing in chapters 8-9. By the contrast, Luz (1989:203; cf Schniewind 1956:36) also believed that verse 23 is repeated almost word for word in 9:35. Verse 23 anticipated even the structure of these chapters: "the Messiah of the word, the preaching one", is described in chapters 5-7, "the Messiah of the deed, the healing one", in chapters 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> The teaching of Jesus "in their synagogues" indicates two things: Jesus turns to Israel and teaches as a teacher of Israel, in the synagogue (just as his miracles are meant for the chosen people). By contrast, "their synagogues" makes clear that the evangelist and his community have their own place outside these synagogues (see chapter 2.2). The synagogue refers to the assembly of the people as a religious, social and political meeting place (Rapinchuk 2004:214; Horsley 1999:71)

<sup>24</sup> It is clear that among the crowds there were true disciples in addition to the twelve special disciples. According to Davies and Allison (1988:419), the crowds in Matthew serve several functions. First and foremost, they follow Jesus wherever he goes and thereby show him to be a charismatic figure, indeed a sensation (Mt 4:25; 8:1,18; 11:7; 12:46; 15:30; 17:14; 19:2). Secondly, as an audience they are open and receptive, for they respond to the Messiah with amazement, astonishment, and reverential fear (Mt 9:8; 12:23; 15:31; 22:23). They, in fact, hold Jesus to be like John the Baptist (Mt 14:5; 21:26), a prophet (Mt 21:11,46), and they bless him when he enters the holy city (Mt 21:9). Thirdly, they are contrasted with the Pharisees (Mt 9:33-34; 15:1-10; 23:1). Jesus condemns the Jewish leaders, but he has compassion on the multitudes (Mt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32). Fourthly in Matthew 13:36 and 14:22-23 the crowd is clearly distinguished from the disciples, and there are places in Matthew where Jesus delivers esoteric teaching (Mt 16:21-28, 18:24-25). The crowd, then, cannot represent the church. Finally, the crowd is implicated in Jesus' death (Mt 26:47, 55; 27:20, 24).

<sup>25</sup> According to Hagner (1993:193-194; Luz 1989:456), Matthew's addition of "their" to "scribes" indicates a distance between the Israelite Christians of Matthew's community and the rabbinic authorities of the synagogue. This is an indication that the separation between the community and Israelism has already taken place: the scribes are on one side. The people who are astonished stand in the middle between "their" scribes and Jesus.

<sup>26</sup> Schnackenburg notes that “God’s guarantee of forgiveness and salvation, which Jesus proclaims, also generates a strong moral call to the disciples of Christ. The evangelist, who sees the defects and weaknesses in his community, inserts the new ethos of those who await the reign of God as an inalienable, integral part of his theology. This ethos is condensed in the programmatic address of the “Sermon on the Mount.” In contrast to Israelism with its legal piety, Jesus calls for a “righteousness” that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5:20). Jesus proclaims a morality, made possible through God’s boundless mercy, grounded in trust in his Father, and transcending legal prescriptions, that is directed to the love of God and reaches from love of siblings and love of neighbors all the way to love of enemies (Mt 5:43-48). The righteousness given and required by God, which is on a higher level than that of human beings, stamps Matthew’s attitude of piety (Mt 6:1-18). The quest for it makes all earthly concerns secondary, and overrules them (Mt 6:33). The execution of the will of God, or love in action, which is to be practiced in the community (reconciliation and forgiveness, Mt 5:23-24; 6:14-15; 18:31-35) and toward all people (works of mercy, Mt 25:31-46), ties the revelation of God and Christ to the practice of Christian living.”

<sup>27</sup> This view is not confirmed about the persecution of the Matthean community by the Roman Empire or its relationship with Israelism within the community (see Shin 1999:3-42).

<sup>28</sup> A skin disease was an important problem within society. It resulted in isolation from Jerusalem and other walled cities, and great social stigma was inevitable (Davies and Allison 1991:11; cf Plich 1986:102; 1988:62; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:71; see Vledder 1997:177).

<sup>29</sup> Galilee was under the rule of the tetrarch Herod Antipas and not under Roman rule during the ministry of Jesus (Gundry 1982:141; see Hagner 1993:203).

<sup>30</sup> It is still arguable whether it was the centurion’s son or servant. Matthew’s *παῖς* is probably to be taken as “son” rather than “servant” (*δοῦλος*), although the latter is far from impossible. If the *παῖς* was a servant and not a son, he was a servant very close to his master. This view is also a problem, as it was not an uncommon phenomenon in the ancient world (Hagner 1993:204).

<sup>31</sup> A centurion in the Roman army was not a very high-ranking officer. A centurion was a person in authority in charge of 100 soldiers (see Harrington 1991:113; Martin 1978:14-22).

<sup>32</sup> Roman soldiers participated in pagan religious oaths to the divine emperor (Jones 1971:212).

<sup>33</sup> Most Matthean scholars agree that Gadara was a pagan country (Patte 1987: 124; Gnilka 1986:321; Sanders & Davies 1989:169; Harrington 1991:120; Hare 1967:96; Vledder 1997:195).

<sup>34</sup> It was a predominantly Gentile region, as is shown by the reference to the herd of pigs, which would not be found in an Israelite area (Morris 1992:208).

<sup>35</sup> The interpretation of “to bury my father”, is that it is in the sense of “look after him until he dies” (for evidence that the phrase could have been understood in this sense) (Bailey’s (1980:26-27). This is required by the Torah.

<sup>36</sup> Scholars’ views are different against the interpretation of the dead. Scholars such as Luz (2001:19; see Gundry 1982:153) believed that it means really dead. However some other scholars (Keener 1997:180; Morris 1992:203; Davies and Allison 1991:56) believed that it means spiritually dead.

<sup>37</sup> The Israelite view of sickness is that it is a direct result of particular sins. Hence, Jesus explicitly forgave a paralytic man’s sins (Davies and Allison 1991:89).

<sup>38</sup> A sinner was identified, distinguished, and disapproved as one of those not living in accord with a group’s claims (Carter 2000:219). A sinner was considered to be someone outside Israelite society.

<sup>39</sup> Mark and Luke give him a name: Jairus. The word ‘a ruler’ can be translated in various ways: “a synagogue official”, “a president of the synagogue”, “one of the officials”, “a Jewish official”, His position as a synagogue official is probably correct (Morris 1992:228).

<sup>40</sup> “Lost sheep” here refers not to a portion of Israel but to all of Israel (Luz 2002:73; Hagner 1993:270).

<sup>41</sup> Sim’s (1996:171-195) view is opposed to that of Duling. Sim believed that the Matthean “Christian Jewish” community must have required circumcision for male Gentile proselytes.

<sup>42</sup> However, the interpretation of an only Israel mission differs in particularism. According to the salvation history perspective, which sees a clear distinction between the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry and the time following the resurrection and thus a movement from particularism to universalism: in the former, only Israel is in view; in the latter, the Gentiles are also in the view (Hagner 1993:271; Luz 2001:73).

<sup>43</sup> It is not really Jesus’ saying but it is the First Evangelist’s intention of his narrative.

<sup>44</sup> According to Luz (2001:187), Matthew writes here from the perspective of his reader or of his community that no longer belongs to the synagogue.

<sup>45</sup> The house that Jesus leaves has not been previously mentioned. It is only in retrospect that the reader notices that the previous story obviously took place in a house. Hagner (1993:368) mentioned that “the house” is probably Peter’s house in Capernaum (cf Mt 8:14).

<sup>46</sup> By contrast, the number twelve could not refer to the twelve disciples and the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>47</sup> The hand washing is not referring to physical cleanliness but ritual purity. There is no Old Testament reference concerning the ceremonial washing of hands before the eating of ordinary meals. Priests were instructed concerning the washing of hands before performing their temple duties. The rule of ritual purity had perhaps already been widely adopted by the general populace (Hagner 1995:431).

<sup>48</sup> By contrast, “the mountain” has no established symbolic meaning of Zion, because the mountain is sometimes also called a satanic place (Mt 4:8) and a place of teaching (Mt 5:1; 24:3) (Luz 2001:344).

<sup>49</sup> In the Markan source this second feeding, taking place in Gentile territory is probably the feeding of Gentiles (Mk 8:2-3). But it is certainly not the case in Matthew (Schnackenburg 2002:152; Luz 2001:345).

<sup>50</sup> According to Funk and the Jesus seminar (1998:39), it is not originally Jesus’ saying.

<sup>51</sup> “Six days” is as a repetition of Moses’ going up Sinai after six days (Exod 24:16) (Hagner 1995:492).

<sup>52</sup> By contrast, the rabbinic theory says that the temple tax was no longer collected after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem (Luz 2001:414).

<sup>53</sup> It had seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin, the high priest being its president (Schnackenburg 2002:275).

<sup>54</sup> Past scholarly tradition is believed to have minimized Pilate’s involvement. A recent study claims that Pilate is a minor character and politically neutral for Jesus’ crucifixion (Carter 2004:275-276; 2003:1-54, 75-99; Bond 1998:129, 133).

## Chapter 5

### SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC CRITICISM

#### 5.1 Introduction

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

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

## 5.2 Jesus' baptism as ritual of transformation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

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

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

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

### **5.3.2 Purity and pollution**

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

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

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

### **Map of places**

There are ten degrees of holiness:

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

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

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

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

### **Map of persons**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Map of things**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Map of times**

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

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

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

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

**Maps of persons:**

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



**Maps of places:**

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

**Maps of things:**

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

**Maps of time:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *The challenge of the Pharisees*

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

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

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



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

### *Jesus' riposte*

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

### *The implicit public verdict*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***Denunciation***

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

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

### ***Retrospective interpretation***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 5.3.5 Kinship

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

### **5.3.6 Summary**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5.5 Conclusion

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

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

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

boundaries of the purity system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Chapter 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this study, we have argued that the Matthean community was an inclusive one, but that it was not a society with an egalitarian structure. In other words, the Matthean community was an inclusive society within a hierarchical structure. In Chapter Six, the findings from each chapter have been summarized. Also the assessment has been made on whether the problem statements and the research gaps are addressed in methodologically appropriate ways in this investigation to support my arguments regarding Matthew's inclusive community, despite the fact that his community operated in a hierarchical structure.

#### **6.2 Mapping the road traveled**

Some scholars have argued that the historical Jesus was an egalitarian person. As a result, his instructions helped to produce a "community of equality". In a certain sense, one can argue that Jesus' egalitarian teaching seems to have influenced the currently frequently advanced theory of equality, as seen in the social and political arena in modern society. However, the present egalitarian perspective distorts the actual historical and social nature of Jesus' movement and his way of teaching (Elliott 2003:75). Several people who propound an egalitarian theory appeal to Biblical texts and argue that Jesus and his followers engaged in an egalitarian movement. In addition, they use the same Biblical texts to promote social revolution, democratic institutions, and the eradication of the traditional family. But Jesus' teaching was not intent on establishing an egalitarian community; rather that he redefined familial values, norms and modes of conduct (Elliott 2003:75).

Current Matthean scholarship has also argued that the Matthean community was an egalitarian society. Several scholars have argued vehemently that Matthew 18:15-17 provides evidence of the equality of the members of the community. Matthew 23:4-12 is also one of the "proofs" which are used to support the notion that the Matthean community was an egalitarian society. Several other passages also mention certain aspects, which suggest an egalitarian community, namely the idea of

“leader as Servant” (Mt 18:1, 4), an implication of egalitarianism or a rejection of the family (Mt 10:34-37), a warning against the recognition of human authority (Mt 23:8-10), and “the new family of God.”

Some of the Matthean scholars, such as Krentz (1977:334-366; see White 1986:75; Sim 1998:139; Saldarini 1994:48; Stanton 1992:104) believe that Jesus’ followers were not called leaders in the same way that Jesus was. The community had only one teacher, who was Jesus and God; all the other members of the community were equal, and as such, they regarded themselves as brothers and sisters. The “true family of God”, implied that the members of the community were equal within their community (cf Schüssler Fiorenza 1983:149-151).

According to this perspective, the Matthean community was a sectarian group (see chapter 1) who did not establish a hierarchically structured leadership role. In other words, the new sectarian movement of the Matthean community rejected a hierarchical structure and presented itself as a group with an egalitarian structure, as opposed to the hierarchies of the parent body of the Israelite community (see Sim 1998:139-140). It is evident, in terms of these arguments, that the Matthean community was a society with an egalitarian structure.

However, I propose that the Matthean community was neither an egalitarian community, nor a hierarchically structured society. The term “egalitarian” cannot be applied to an ancient agrarian society, because the word “egalitarian” is derived from a modern western political and philosophical context that emerged after the French Revolution. The modern term “egalitarian” includes age, talents, strength, social rank and station, economic class, political or legal status, responsibilities or opportunity (see Elliott 2002:76). It is obvious that the ancient agrarian societies of two thousand years ago were not like those of the modern western society. These agrarian societies maintained a gap between those who belonged to the ruling class and those who had little or no access to the ruling class. This implies that the Matthean community was not a group operating within an egalitarian structure, but were members of a hierarchically structured advanced ancient agrarian society. An ancient agrarian society was unequal because native members were divided into dominant males versus inferior females. Parents were socially superior to their children. The freeborn were superior to slaves; while the natives were superior to aliens. These examples are

sufficient evidence to argue that the context in which the Matthean group lived was hierarchically structured. This community consisted of a mixed population of both Israelite and Gentile members.

Some of the historical Jesus scholars (Schüssler Fiorenza 1994; Crossan 1994:71-74; Theissen and Merz 1998:219-225) believed that the historical Jesus' religious movement was egalitarian as his "discipleship of equality." Jesus' invitation to discipleship involved a call of abandonment of one's biological family and its patriarchal structure. However, Jesus' teaching declares the biological family to be of secondary significance and Jesus' disciples had to leave their family temporarily in order to accompany him. Moreover, Jesus did not denounce the family or its patriarchal structure but it was a prioritizing of their loyalty to God (Elliott 2002:79).

Many Christian feminists and female scholars also assume the egalitarian nature of the Jesus religion movement (see Corley 1998:291-325; D'Angelo 1992:199-218; Grant 1989:184). These scholars focus on Jesus and his special attitude to women's equality with men. Women were closely related with Jesus' religious movement. The female roles are significant in the Gospel of Matthew and early Christian tradition. However, Israelite women were systematically excluded from both the religious and public life of the social world. Therefore the Israelite women and men were not politically and socially equal.

Furthermore, we have discussed that to critically evaluate a comparison between Matthew and Paul's inclusive tendencies one must use a cross-cultural interpretation. The Matthean community was part of the Israelite tradition and it was also under the influence of the Hellenistic culture. Paul's communities were of a mixed culture, which included both the Israelite and Hellenistic traditions. Hence, the interpretation of the Law was different from Matthew's and the Pauline communities. Matthew's community was a Law-observant community, which was different from the Law-free Pauline communities. The Law legitimated Israelite society as an institution with a hierarchical structure. This implies that a Law-observant community structure did not include everyone, since members were from different social levels, and individual social standings differed. This insight also indicated that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian society, but an inclusively structured society that represented a hierarchical social stratification.

The narrative point of view and social scientific models have been used in this study to analyse

the Matthean inclusive community. The narrative point of view is applied to Jesus' inclusive ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem. This was Matthew's spatial setting for Jesus' missionary travels. The narrator's intention of his inclusive community is depicted through Jesus' ministry. Social scientific models were used in order to determine and decode the text within the social and cultural context of Jesus' inclusive ministry. Hence, the first methodology applied, involved reading the text and applying the social scientific models to a specific social situation.

The discussion of the social location of the Matthean community includes the date, the location, the stratification, the membership and the social situation of the Matthean community in Antioch. This analysis reveals that the Matthean community was an inclusive social structure. The Matthean community probably existed between 80 and 90 CE. It was a mixed community. It was an advanced agrarian society, as well as a highly stratified society. The city of Antioch, the most likely setting, was a mixed state, containing both Israelites and Gentiles within a hierarchical structure. Moreover, the reading shows that the members of the Matthean community were divided. The upper classes fell into the ruling category, while the lower classes were subject to the ruling class. The results of this investigation confirm that there is strong evidence that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian but an inclusively structured society with a social stratification.

The narrative point of view analysis indicated that Jesus' inclusive ministry is designated by the narrator's according to the spatial settings of his geographical movement in the context of his community, which is an inclusively structured society. The narrator informs his readers about Jesus' inclusive ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem. The narrator divides Jesus' inclusive ministry into four sections. Firstly, Jesus prepares for his inclusive ministry in Matthew 2:23-4:11. Secondly, Jesus' inclusive ministry from Galilee in Matthew 4:12-18:35 is discussed. Thirdly, Jesus' journey of inclusive ministry from Galilee to Jerusalem is set out in Matthew 19:1-20:34. Finally, Jesus' inclusive ministry in Jerusalem and its surroundings is presented in Matthew 21:1-28:20.

Jesus was a protagonist as shown in his inclusive ministry (for all kinds of people) as depicted in the narrative of Matthew. This implies that the Matthean community conflicted with the Israelite leaders about the intention of inclusivity. His ministry was in accordance with God's will regarding salvation for his people. The Israelite leaders (the religious leaders) were antagonistic towards

Jesus' inclusive ministry. The function of Jesus' disciples was to be helpers in his inclusive ministry, but sometimes they failed. The target of Jesus' inclusive ministry was the crowd. Hence, Jesus' inclusive ministry came into conflict with the aims of the Israelite leaders. Jesus' ministry included the social and religious outcasts within a stratified society, while the Israelite leaders excluded them. Jesus' inclusive ministry took place within the spatial contexts of the city, houses, synagogues, mountains, boats, and the temple. This inclusive ministry was completed by his death on the cross and it being continued by his disciple's community (Matthew).

A social scientific reading suggests that after Jesus changed his ritual status in the transformation manifested in his baptism, he began his inclusive ministry by preaching the Kingdom of God for the salvation of all kinds of people. Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry yielded the following results: according to a cultural anthropological perspective, Israelite society was divided along the lines of purity and pollution. The Israelite leaders excluded unclean people, but Jesus included such people from different social levels. Matthew's interpretation of Jesus' inclusive ministry was not limited by time, place, person(s) or things, as the Israelite tradition presupposed it would. Moreover, Jesus was a patron to religious and social outcasts. This reading also clearly indicates that the Matthean community was not an egalitarian structured society.

### **6.3 Concluding remarks**

In this study, Matthew's inclusive community was investigated and interpreted using a narrative point of view and social scientific analysis. The Matthean community was not an egalitarian society. It was an inclusively structured society. The social location of the Matthean community shows that it was a mixed one, which included both Israelites and Gentiles in Antioch around 80 to 90 CE. It has been confirmed that Matthew's community was an advanced agrarian society, with a particular hierarchical and inclusive structure. Matthew's intention of his inclusive community depicted through Jesus' inclusive ministry began in Galilee and moved to Jerusalem, according to the spatial settings described. Jesus' inclusive ministry was aimed at all kinds of people within a hierarchically structured society in the first century Mediterranean world.

The modern term “egalitarian” cannot be applied to the Matthean community as an ancient hierarchically structured society. Hence, the assertion that Jesus was an egalitarian who established “a community of equality” is not an acceptable theory for the Matthean community. We can confirm that the ancient world, even the Matthean community, was not used to assert the equality of all members within a social or economic relationship. This means that the egalitarian theory cannot be demonstrated with reference to the social structure of the Matthean community. The theory of equality raises problems of anachronism if it is applied to the Matthean community in the ancient world.



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