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CONFLICT IN THE MIRACLE STORIES IN

MATTHEW 8 AND 9: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND

EXEGETICAL STUDY

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CONFLICT IN THE MIRACLE STORIES IN MATTHEW 8 AND 9: A SOCIOLOGICAL AND EXEGETICAL STUDY

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SUMMARY

OPSOMMING

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

CHAPTER 1

ENTERING THE DEBATE: EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

*Die Erörterung des Wunderproblems stellt sich jeder Zeit neu und ist
darum nie zur Ruhe gekommen.*

(Suhl 1980b:1; my emphasis)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the ages there has always been a great fascination with the wonderful and
the miraculous. Whether the miracles of Jesus, or the miracles in its broadest
sense, it has always remained a fascinating topic in both popular and academic
discussion (see, for example, the short and popular article of Freyne 1975:283-
286; the popular works Smit 1987 and McCaslin 1988, and the thorough aca-
demic works of Van der Loos 1968, Suhl 1980a, Brown 1984 and Van de Beek
1991 - to name but a few). The interest in miracles over the ages is clearly
illustrated in the historical study of Brown (1984). He has done a comprehensive
survey of the way miracles were perceived through the centuries (cf Craig
1984:473; Vledder 1986:327). I personally share this age-old and lively interest
and wish to contribute to the discussion. I more specifically wish to contribute to
the discussion on the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9 because of its neglected
character (see Luz 1990:147; see also chapter 2 below).

1.1.1 The aim of the study

In essence this study will be a sociological and exegetical study. It cannot be said better than in the words of Elliott (1990a:8):

> The method is *sociological* in that it involves the employment of the perspectives, presuppositions, modes of analysis, comparative models, theories and research of the discipline of sociology (conflict theory - EJV). It is *exegetical* in that it focuses centrally upon a biblical document (Mt 8 & 9 - EJV; his emphasis).

The general aim of this sociological and exegetical study is the analysis and the interpretation of the conflict in the text of Matthew 8 and 9, and more particularly the conflict between Jesus (and the Matthean community) and the Jewish leaders.

There is no doubt that conflict in the Gospel of Matthew has been investigated before (see chapter 2). The implied reader is constantly made aware of the tension in the text. The emphasis however, will be more on the *dynamics* of conflict. How does conflict 'work' and why are people in conflict? I will use conflict theory. I will develop this theory (see chapter 3) on a relatively high level of abstraction. I aim to thus offer a systematic way of organizing the information on conflict in order to focus the attention on the social structures and processes thereof. The basis question is: 'Why is there conflict between Jesus and the leaders?'

As a model, I developed five basic statements:

(1)   All conflicts are essentially conflicts of class/group *interests.* All human activities are driven by the drive to maximize one's own interests.

(2)   Closely related to the above is the urge one has to *survive*.

(3)   In basically all societies/groups there are those who in terms of *power and authority* are in positions of either domination or subordination.

(4)   Conflict almost always brings about *change*.

(5)   Conflict is *always present as a never ending spiral.*

The thesis is that, according to Matthew, Jesus was in conflict with the Jewish leaders because they had contradicting interests. The leaders acted on behalf of the Roman rulers as retainers, and therefore failed to realize the interests of the marginalized. Jesus (and the Matthean community) acted on behalf of the marginalized, the lowest classes of society. The community challenged the authority of the Jewish leaders because they were on their way out, out of the sphere of the authority of the leaders. This was perceived as a threat to their position. Furthermore the community challenged the dormant values of the leaders to forgive and to act merciful, that is: to act in the interests of the marginalized (which the leaders did not do). The conflict is resolved negatively in Matthew 9:34 by the label that Jesus was possessed by the devil (by implication this also applies to the community). At the same time the conflict has the potential to go on and challenge the leaders of the community themselves to act in the interests of the marginalized, which we call: 'to become voluntary marginalized'.

I am aware of the fact that any model unavoidably both obscures *and* reveals. Any model helps us focus on specific aspects and leads to the downplay of others (cf Powell 1989:28). We only know a part of the reality, when using a model. It specifies only those aspects of reality on which it focuses. Alternative aspects are often left out of account (cf Carney 1975:12). Or, as Carney (1975:34) says: 'One cannot consider other issue areas or other viewpoints once within the framework of his model's terms of reference'. My attention is selective and limited, although, I attempt to be methodical and structured in thought - and I am conscious of my viewpoint! I hope to be stimulating and appropriate. Rohrbaugh (1993a:229) says that each time a text is read by a new reader, the field of reference tends to shift and multiply because each new reader fills in the text in a unique way. This is often called 'recontextualization'. This refers to the multiple ways different readers may 'complete' a text as a result of reading it from a different social location. This study is thus an own attempt to such a 'recontextualization'.

1.1.2 The programme of investigation

To achieve the above aim and thesis, the study will have six chapters.

1.1.2.1 Chapter 1

Chapter 1, the present chapter will be an orientation of the possibilities on where to enter into the debate on the miracle stories. It will lead to accounting for the use of social-scientific criticism, conflict theory and the use of the model as template and heuristic tool. The aim of this chapter is to account for the epistemological and methodological assumptions.

1.1.2.2 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 is an attempt to identify a research gap. Different scholars will be investigated in terms of their views on the marginalized and their use and explication (or not) of conflict. In this chapter an attempt will be made to account for the possible contribution I wish to make in particular with regard to Matthew 8 and 9.

1.1.2.3 Chapter 3

Conflict theory is placed against structural functionalism. The latter is unable to explain conflict and coercion in society sufficiently, which conflict theory indeed does. An own synthesis is developed, predominantly from the theories of LA Coser and R Dahrendorf. The above-mentioned five statements are derived from this particular chapter

1.1.2.4 Chapter 4

In between the high level of abstraction on a macro-level (conflict theory; chapter 3) and the text to be interpreted on a micro-level (Mt 8 & 9; chapter 5), chapter 4 is placed to act on a 'meso-level' and to bring these two poles together. In chapter 4 the social location of the Matthean community is investigated in terms of the so-called *intra* and *extra* muros debate, i.e. was the community still part of Judaism or were they totally on their own? Furthermore, the community is related

to formative Judaism. It will be argued that they were not on their own yet, but were in a process of parting from Judaism.

1.1.2.5 Chapter 5

The implications of chapters 3 and 4 are applied to the text of Matthew 8 and 9. This chapter is the exegetical part of the study. Emphasis is placed on the plot as it unfolds in terms of time and causality. Background information and insights from other commentaries are utilized to further highlight the conflict.

1.1.2.6 Chapter 6

All the knots are tied together. The findings of the study are implemented in terms of the five statements: interests, survival, power and authority, change, and the never ending potentiality of conflict.

1.2. WHERE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

In order to determine where a contribution could be made, and before entering into the discussion on the miracle stories, we have to realize that there are many legitimate and interesting possibilities, as Suhl (1980b) and Engelbrecht (1988) have indicated.[1] Furthermore, to make a contribution, one has to make a choice from different approaches and possibilities. I will briefly mention a few different possibilities in the light of the article of Engelbrecht (1988), who, in turn made use of the classification framework of Kertelge (cf Engelbrecht 1988:140). The aim of this section is to place my work within the broad field of the research on miracles and the so-called *social-scientific approach*.

1.2.1 Form criticism *(Formgeschichte)*

One possibility is to approach the miracle stories from a *form critical* perspective. Engelbrecht (1988:140) says that the older representatives of the so-called *Formgeschichte*, referring to Dibelius (1971) and Bultmann (1967), classified the miracle stories either as paradigms of the proclamation of the early church or as 'apophthegms' or 'sayings' of Jesus set in a brief context.[2] The basis of this

approach is that certain 'basic' forms exists can be traced back in every particular miracle story (see also Bultmann 1965b:15-16).[3]

The work of Gerd Theißen (1974), is a good example of the work of one of the leading representatives of the *form critical* approach to the miracle stories. He assumes that the miracle stories in the New Testament are composed of a limited number of components, namely: characters (*Personen*), motives, themes and *Gattungen*. These concepts are all inter-related (cf Theißen 1974:14). To Theißen the term *characters* does not simply mean mentioning a few names of characters acting in the miracle stories. It is a question of what *roles* these characters play in the narratives. The characters are normally quite versatile. The task is to abstract different variants of characters. One single character can act out different roles. For instance there can be a 'companion of the sick' (*Begleiter des Kranken*), or a 'suppliant on behalf of the sick' (*stellvertretend Bittenden*), to name but a few variants of characters that evolve in the miracle stories (cf Theißen 1974:14). By *motives* Theißen (1974:16) means the smallest narrative units that cannot stand on their own. They can be presented in a single sentence or part of a sentence, but are dependant on the rest of the narrative to make sense. He gives 'a call for help', 'kneeling' and 'utterances of supplication or trust' as examples of different motives. A *theme* is viewed as a leading thought or a root idea of a narrative that rounds off a series of characters/motives and gives them a certain 'closeness' (*Geschlossenheit*). 'A healing of the sick' for instance is a different theme than 'saving from a dangerous situation'. Themes are indeed called 'repeated motives'. They often embrace more than one motive (cf Theißen 1974:17). Under *Gattungen* Theißen (1974:11) understands the classification of similarities and relations of texts and their simultaneousness in a cultural environment. He presents the following definition of a *Gattung*: 'Gattungen sind Repertoires von Personen, Motiven und Themen, die wir aus Person-, Motiv- und Themenvarianten der Gattungsexemplare abstrahieren' (Theißen 1974:18; see also 126-128). Furthermore, he presents extended inventories of characters (cf Theißen 1974:53), motives (Theißen 1974:57) and themes (cf Theißen 1974:94; see also 1974:22-23).

Building on the assumptions of Theißen, and influenced by structuralism, Betz (1978:71-72) concentrates more on the form that lies at the basis of all the miracles stories (see also Funk 1978:58). Betz uses two miracle stories, namely the healing of the blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52) and the healing of a boy possessed by a demon (Mk 9:14-29) to illustrate the way in which *all* miracle stories can be analyzed. Each miracle story has three sections: an opening, a main section and a concluding section (cf Betz 1978:72; see also Funk 1978:61). Within these sections, there are various internal developments to which we here will not attend. The purpose of the *form critical* approach, to Betz (1978:80), is to learn *what* a miracle story is. The next step, says Betz (1978:80-81), is to seek the history of the miracle story '...in which the miracle stories would be treated according to their literary forms, genres, beginning with the simpler and moving to the more and more developed stories. In this way one could follow the successive stages in the life and history of these stories and their penetration by theological reflection'. Funk (1978:57) wishes to go even further to catalogue the different miracles according to their narrative nucleus, depending on the relation between the dialogue and the healing in the story.

The form critical approach presents us with useful information on the miracles. Especially the works of Betz (1978) and Funk (1978) give us good and useful frameworks to analyze the miracle stories (as narratives, see chapter 4 below). However, this will not be the approach I choose in order to interpret the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9. One can take the miracle stories apart and seek their basic form(s), try to assess *what* a miracle story is, and yet still not really know what it means. It is almost like taking apart an alarm clock: one could know what it is and how it works, but still fail to understand what it is meant for, namely to indicate what time it is.

1.2.2 Historicity

A second possible approach is to determine whether the miracles did or did not really take place. The purpose then would be to try and reconstruct the miracle stories as closely as possible to the way they really would have taken place in time and space. One would try to determine the *bruta facta* of the events or the

ipsissima facta (or *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*). The question is to what extent the events can be verified (cf Kee 1983:1-41; see also Vledder 1984:84). I will, however, not follow this approach. I do not regard historicity of the miracle stories as irrelevant (as Engelbrecht 1988:142 wrongly thought Schmithals 1970:25 was suggesting; see also Boshoff 1984:31-32), but feel that the matter of historicity does not really contribute to the understanding of the miracle stories themselves. In a previous article, I argued that the historicity of the miracle stories is not necessarily a precondition for the understanding and the communication thereof (cf Vledder 1984:72,85). The miracle stories in as far as they are *narratives*, can present an own plot and point of view, regardless of whether we view them to be historically correct or not.

Closely related to the matter of historicity, is the question of probability/possibility of the miracle stories and miracles as events, and whether miracles are regarded as possible or impossible. To a great extent, this depends on one's definition of a miracle.[4] There is no single definition of what is or what is not a miracle, and to find an appropriate definition amongst the piles of literature, is not easy. Defining *miracle*, is a whole study field on its own - a task Brown (1984) took upon himself. An often used definition, which can be used as a rule-of-thumb, is that a miracle in some way or another is contrary to the 'normal'. It is taken from Augustine as being '...whatever appears that is difficult or unusual above the hope and power of them who wonder' (cited by Brown 1984:7; see also Engelbrecht 1984:5; Van de Beek 1991:14). Or, there is the basically similar view of David Hume that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, and therefore impossible to have happened (cf Court 1972:2; see also Bastin 1984:132; Brown 1984:84; Vledder 1984:79; Engelbrecht 1988:140). There are all sorts of theoretical 'handstands' made to rationalize the 'out of the ordinary' of the miracles to be 'part of the normal order'. Thus Feuerbach (cited by Brown 1984:124) views a miracle as '...a supernaturalistic wish realised - nothing more'. It is a wish realized in the most desirable way by being fulfilled without delay. Brown (1984:172) cites Paul Tillich when defining a miracle:

A genuine miracle is first of all an event which is astonishing, unusual, shaking, *without contradicting the rational structure of reality.* In the second place, it is an event which points to the mystery of beings, expressing its relation to us in a definite way. In the third place, it is an occurrence which is received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience (my emphasis).

Brown (1984:232) also cites Lewis to illustrate how a rational explanation is given to a miracle: 'A miracle is emphatically not an event without cause or without results. Its cause is the activity of God: its results follow according to Natural law'. Lewis thus tries to reconcile the 'unusual' with the 'usual'. Yet, how ever one views a miracle, Brown (1984:263) in following Van der Loos (1968), is correct when he states that what the believer calls a 'miracle', may be ascribed by an unbeliever to 'unknown causes'. A definition of a miracle thus depends entirely on one's presupposition. Brown reduces the possible presuppositions to three basic possibilities: scepticism, the evidencialist (or 'offensive') apologetics, and the so-called 'defensive' apologetics (cf Brown 1984:3; Vledder 1986:328-334). Of course we have to realize that all these distinctions are theological reflections. In ancient times, these distinctions simply were not made. Ménégoz (1980:63) says that to the ancient people, a miracle was a godly intervention in the *natural* course of things. Or as Jordan (1980:185) states: 'Es gibt sich sonach deutlich: *die an sich der Antiken nicht fremde Anschauung vom Wunder als einer Durchbrechung eines geschlossenen unverbrüchlichen Naturzusammenhanges findet im Neuen Testament keinen Ausdruck'* (his own emphasis).[5]

I have, however, not chosen the option of either studying Matthew 8 and 9 in terms of its historicity or probability. Nor will I attempt to find a compatible definition for the interpretation of these two chapters. It seems to be an endless debate, into which one in any case enters with pre-set assumptions, and these pre-set assumptions have not altered much over the ages (see endnote 5).

1.2.3 Religionsgeschichte

It is furthermore not the intention of this study to search for the Old Testament/Jewish or Hellenistic analogies, or parallels of the miracle stories, as is done by the *Religionsgeschichte*. The Hellenistic background received the most attention in the research, particular attention being given to the Hellenistic divine man (θεῖος ἀνήρ), the analogy between Jesus and Appolonius of Tyana, and other Hellenistic practices of miracles and magic (cf Theißen 1974:262-297; Menoud 1980:281; Kee 1983:297; Brown 1984:398 n. 144; Engelbrecht 1988:143-144). Suhl (1980b:24-27) and Engelbrecht (1988:144-145) mention the names of scholars like Köster (1968, 1971), Achtemeier (1972), Betz (1972), Tiede (1972), Petzke (1973) and Holladay (1977) who occupied themselves with the Hellenistic concept θεῖος ἀνήρ as the dominant principle behind the miracles of Jesus. Hull (1974) and Smith (1978) are mentioned as representatives of those who view Jesus as a so-called 'Master-Magician' (cf Engelbrecht 1988:145).

A work that appealed to me personally, was that of Morton Smith (1978). Smith (1978:1-7, 16) wants to view Jesus from the side of the 'opponent' (the 'other side of the Christian tradition'). He wishes to understand more clearly who Jesus was, and why he was crucified. According to this perspective Jesus was a miracle worker (cf Smith 1978:16, 20). Because of his background, Jesus was an ordinary man and a sinner and '...therefore the miracles, success, impious behaviour and supernatural claims prove him a magician' (Smith 1978:32). Because he was perceived a magician, he was rejected by the scribes and the high priests (Smith 1978:43-44). But also from the evidence outside the Gospels, a magician was perceived as dubious (cf Smith 1978:45-67). From a Jewish (Semitic) viewpoint, magic was closely associated with madness (cf Smith 1978:77), thus Jesus was possessed by a demon (Beelzebul) and performed miracles. Smith (1978:85) recognizes a strong link between Jesus and Appolonius of Tyana. Not only were there historical similarities, there also were similar legends around these two figures. Also the accusations made against them by others were similar (cf Smith 1978:91; see also Menoud 1980:281; Brown 1984:368). Smith (1978:94-139) then scans through the evidence of the New Testament, in analogy to the figure of Appolonius of Tyana, and comes to the

conclusion that there are clear elements which correspond with magical material, '...and provide evidence for a picture of Jesus the magician' (Smith 1978:139).

Although the work of Smith (1978) held great appeal to me personally as a new and different insight, I nevertheless also do not take this approach to examine the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9. It is true that the distinction between 'miracle' and 'magic' was never made in New Testament times (cf Kee 1986). This distinction was first made explicit in the second century (see Remus 1982a:127-156; 1982b:550). Nevertheless, it remains hard to be convinced that Jesus *was* a magician in Hellenistic terms, although Smith (1978) could be correct in that he was probably *perceived* as such by his opponents. I agree with Engelbrecht (1988:155) who says:

> As far as the *religionsgeshichtliche* background of the miracles is concerned, I have an idea that we shall not much longer be bombarded with the Hellenistic background of these stories, *but that the Jewish/Old Testament background will continue to be stressed.* Two views of Jesus in his role as miracle worker might now be laid to rest, namely viewing him either as a *θεῖος ἀνήρ* or as a magician. *There have been conclusive studies to counter these views* (my emphasis; see also Kee 1983:297; Brown 1986:55).

1.2.4 Redaktionsgeschichte

At the basis of this approach lies the idea to compare a miracle story to other stories (or layers within the story) and see how it was transformed to its 'final' form. Held (1963:165-211) does this to indicate how Matthew eventually interpreted the miracles to create his own version. Likewise, Suhl (1980c:464) is a good example of this approach, although he does not claim to be working *redaktionsgeschichtlich*. He compares and interprets the transformation of the tradition from one gospel to another.[6]

The work of Suhl (1980c) is of course not the only example of how the so-called *Redaktionsgeschichte* dealt with the miracles. However, I regard it as an appropriate illustration of an approach which I also will not follow. Even if one

compares the different traditions with each other, and there is merit in it indeed, the question remains as to how would one understand a particular tradition as such, loosened from its sources. We may be able to understand the *history and transition of the text* and yet not understand the text itself.

1.2.5 Narratological/narrative approach

The current interest in the Gospels as narratives, makes it quite evident that the miracle stories should also be studied as narratives, and thus from a narrative approach (cf Praeder 1986:43; Engelbrecht 1988:153). Since I assume that the miracle stories in the Gospels primarily are narratives, I will be making considerable use of this approach in a separate chapter (see chapter 5 below). Therefore I refrain from going into this approach any deeper at this point. In a previous article I argued in favour of a narrative approach to the miracle stories rather than a historical-critical approach. A narrative approach does more justice to the hermeneutics of the miracle stories because a clear distinction is made between a 'narrative world' and the 'real world'. Furthermore the concepts 'historicity' and 'communication' are dealt with differently in a narrative approach than in historical criticism (cf Vledder 1984:72).

I have tried to indicate, by this brief overview of the different possibilities of approaching the miracle stories, that these approaches are not the ones that I would choose. Not that these approaches are of no value, but the 'newer' social-scientific approach with regard to the miracle stories, has simply not yet been explored in full, especially in as far as conflict theory is concerned (see chapter 2 for more detail on this). We thus turn to the social-scientific approach.

1.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

The aim of this section is to place my work within the sphere of the so-called social-scientific approach.

1.3.1 The social-scientific approach[7]

There exists a perception that the *Formgeschichte* (and historical criticism as a whole) failed to lay bare the *Sitz-im-Leben* of New Testament texts. Therefore, in

the seventies of this century (the last two decades), a renewed interest evolved towards the so-called social sciences. The pendulum has again swung to an interest in social questions (cf Scroggs 1983:339; Kee 1983:290; Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:56; Joubert 1991:40). It is not that historical criticism is totally abandoned and now regarded as worthless. The social-scientific approach, as Elliott (1990a:xix) puts it: '...is an *expansion*, not a replacement, of the conventional historical-critical method. It *complements* the other subdisciplines of the exegetical enterprise'. Of course, sociological data have previously been taken into account, but a sociological (social-scientific) approach attempts to do more. Says Elliott (1990a:3):

> Social data have been used often merely to 'round out the picture',
> illustrating or clarifying literary or theological conclusions already
> formulated. What is needed is a procedure for appropriating and
> applying sociological models and concepts which at each stage of
> exegetical analysis could aid our understanding and interpretation of
> the interrelation of literary, theological and sociological aspects and
> dimensions of composition.

Malina (1983:21) also, in choosing between a social-scientific and historical-critical method, states: 'In sum, social science methods can offer biblical interpretation adequate sophistication in determining and articulating the social systems behind the texts under investigation'. This is also true of the miracle stories, and thus I also (at least within the South African theological context) wish to take the social sciences as my point of departure, because its full potential has not yet been explored with regard to the miracle stories of Jesus. In fact, the question of the sociological function of the miracle stories in the New Testament has long been neglected in favour of an historical-critical approach (cf Engelbrecht 1988:150).

But, even within the broader field of the *social-scientific* criticism, choices have to be made. There seems to be broad consensus that there exist two fundamentally different points of departure within this method, which are easily confused (cf Scroggs 1983:341; Malina 1983:11; Domeris 1988:379; Botha

1989:485; Osiek 1989:269; Van Staden 1991:32; Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:56-60). An overall distinction is made between *socio-historical* or *social description*, and *social-scientific analysis*.

1.3.1.1. Social description

The socio-historical or *social descriptive approach* (hereafter called the latter), provides us with the broad background to the New Testament period and the early church. Its focus is description rather than analysis (cf Domeris 1988:379-380; see also Botha 1989:485). Van Staden (1991:32) explains this approach as follows: 'A social description *accumulates* data that it regards as relevant in order to contribute to the historical understanding of the background of the New Testament texts or text segments....When needed, pieces of the amassed information are fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle'. As far as Matthew 8 and 9 are concerned, one can make a socio-historical study of the community in the city of Antioch in a similar way as Meier (1983:57) does, in order to assess the identity (crisis) of the community (if one assumes that Matthew was written to the community in Antioch; cf Meier 1983:22; see also Stark 1991:189-210; we, however, do not take Antioch as the place where Matthew originated [see below in chapter 4, the section called *An urban environment?]*). One can also investigate the social history of the city of Antioch (or any other ancient city which one could have chosen to be the place of origin of Matthew's Gospel) in a similar way as Van Tilborg (1992:80-81). He reconstructs the city-history of Ephesus, in order to understand the Jewish community within the Hellenistic city-environment, and to explain the Gospel of John. But, we not intend doing this. However, a good example of a social description of the miracles as such, is to be found in the works of Howard Clark Kee (1983, 1986).[8] Another scholar who deals with the sociological functions of the miracles, is Gerd Theißen (1974:229-261). But since his work has some implications for our survey of the conflict in Matthew 8 & 9, we will deal with him separately in the part on *Conflict as phenomenon, studied in relation to the Gospel of Matthew* (see chapter 2 below).

The social description is highly compatible and useful to my study, and I will make use of some of the results 'filling up the gaps' or 'rounding out the picture'.

However, I will not use this approach as point of departure and method of research, for it does not appropriately address the *dynamics* of the social conflict that is present in Matthew 8 and 9. I will, in fact, approach my study from the perspective of *social-scientific criticism*.

1.3.1.2 Social-scientific criticism

The 'sociological approach/analysis' refers to the implementation of methods of analysis and research based on epistemologies relevant to the social sciences. It '...abstracts data in the sense of unearthing, *making explicit* what is buried and implicit in the narrative discourse' (Van Staden 1991:33; my emphasis). To a certain extent, this approach builds on the data of the historian, but much more emphasis is placed on the underlying *dynamics* of the societies, and questions asked are: Which kind of interactions took place and what kind of conflicts emerged? And by means of understanding these dynamics, we are able to grasp the relations within the texts and perhaps also the texts themselves (cf Scroggs 1983:337; see also Botha 1989:485).

But when one enters the field of the so-called *social-scientific criticism*, a few more choices have to be made. Scroggs (1983:344-356) distinguishes the following fields: Typologies, cognitive dissonance, role analysis, sociology of knowledge and Marxist interpretation. Domeris (1988:383; see also Botha 1989:495) extends this list to include the use of normative dissonance, legitimation of power struggles, cultural anthropology, and Mary Douglas' group/grid model. Also Elliott (1990a:xix), with Malina, includes sociology, anthropology, economics, sociolinguistics and semiotics, all as related subdisciplines in the field of the social sciences. But, to me, the most comprehensive and systematized (and standardized) overview of the social sciences in relation to the New Testament, comes from Van Staden (1991). He states:

> Even the names given to the exegetical subdiscipline devoted to this branch of exegesis - Sociology of the New Testament - is a misnomer, since it promotes terminological confusion by using as

umbrella term a word that has become associated with a specific discipline in the field of the social sciences, namely sociology. This exegetical subdiscipline does not make use of sociology alone, but of other disciplines in the field of the social sciences as well, namely anthropology and psychology.

(Van Staden 1991:112)

Schematically, Van Staden (1991:112) presents the overview of the social sciences as follows:

Social-scientific study of the New Testament

| Sociology | Anthropology | Psychology |
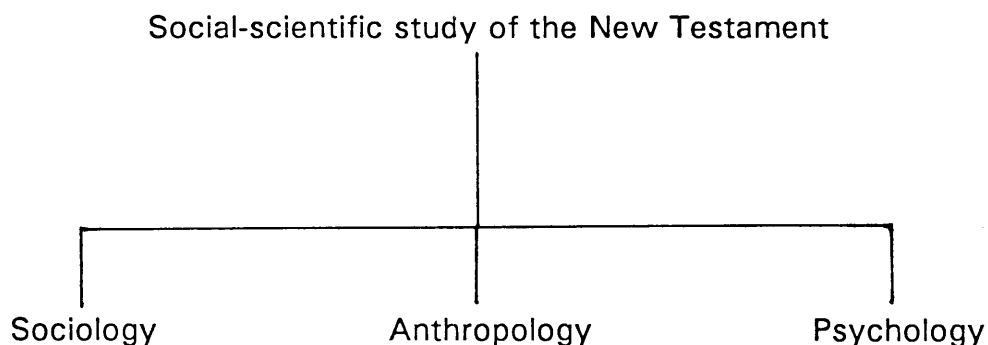
Each of these subdisciplines in turn have their own substructures, but I leave it hereby (see Van Staden 1991:113-114 for more on the subdivisions).

As far as I know, no psychological investigations have been done into the miracle stories of the New Testament yet.

Pilch (1986, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993; see also Joubert 1991:47) has done (cultural) anthropological studies on the miracles and the health care systems in Matthew and Luke. The health care system and consequently also the miracles are not to be viewed from our modern bio-medical models (against the study of Hengel & Hengel 1980). Rather they have to be viewed as part of the total well-being of the person, and the sick are seen as culturally appropriate well-beings. They have to be interpreted in terms of the three symbolic corporate zones: (1) heart/eyes, (2) mouth/ ears, and (3) hands/feet (cf Pilch 1989:283).

As for myself, I wish to do a *social-scientific* study, taking the models from the subdiscipline: sociology.

But, once 'inside' sociology, still another choice has to be made. At a high level of abstraction, there are three different main theoretical perspectives within the social sciences which one might use to understand social interaction. They are called *structural functionalism*, the *conflict/coercion theory* and *symbolic interactionism* (cf Haralambos 1980:9-19, 521-559; Malina 1983:16; Osiek 1989:272; Van Staden 1991:114-143; Joubert 1991:48).[9] At the basis of structural functionalism is the view that a society is constantly in an equilibrium, that is in good balance. Society is viewed as cohesive and integrated through consensus on meaning, values and norms. The society is held together by means of core values which are the ends of society (cf Malina 1983:16; see also Haralambos 1980:9). Conflict models explain social systems in terms of various groups that are in constant conflict with each other in order to maximize their own interests and goals (cf Malina 1983:17; see also Joubert 1991:48). The symbolic interactionism focuses on systems of symbols that consist of persons, things and events, which have unique reality because of their perceived symbolic meaning. 'It supposes that human individual and group behaviour is organized around the symbolic meaning and expectations that are attached to objects that are socially valued' (Malina 1983:18; see also Van Staden 1991:132). My choice is to focus on conflict theory in more detail as an appropriate model to investigate the existing conflict in the text. More attention will also be given to structural functionalism as against the conflict model in chapter 3 below.

1.4 A MODEL

1.4.1 How to use a model

Since the introduction of social-scientific criticism some two decades ago, there have always been objections. Most of these objections are quite well-known by now. The critique against social scientific criticism as a whole, is valid also in respect of conflict theory, which, as indicated before, forms part of this approach. Some of the objections have to a large extent been overcome in the course of time, but a few stubborn (and legitimate) objections still remain, and require specific attention. Therefore, the aim of this section will be to account for the way in

which the conflict theory will be used as a *model*, in an attempt to overcome some of the severe known critique to and disadvantages of *social-scientific criticism*, and *conflict theory* in particular.

In an early article on the sociological approach, originally published in 1980, Scroggs (1983:339) indicated a few problems confronting the sociological analysis. Since then, many have built and elaborated on this (cf Malina 1983:19-21; Harris 1984:112; Rowland 1985:362; Osiek 1989:276; 1992:89). I will in short reflect on these known difficulties. The first difficulty was that of *methodology.* This seems to be one of the earliest objections. There was confusion as to which one of the numerous possible sociological theories one had to use. Which model was valid? Which one was appropriate to the data that was to be interpreted (cf Scroggs 1983:339)? Almost a decade later, Osiek (1989:277) wrote: 'Modern biblical social analysis is still in its early stages....One eventual need is for some standardization of criteria and methods, which at present tend to be very eclectic....It is too early for such standardization to happen, but it is a long-range need'. An attempt at some sort of standardization, which might contribute to the elimination of the confusion that existed at the early stages of the so-called sociological analysis, was made by Van Staden (1991). As for myself, the study of Van Staden (1991) was of great value in the determination of the methodological position of the conflict theory I chose.

The second objection was the *problem of the data*. Not only, says Scroggs (1983:340; see also Malina 1983:19) is there little data available for a sociological analysis, we also do not have direct access to the data. Most texts speak about theological verities, not sociological conditions. The texts are religious documents, not meant for social information. As faith documents, they hardly reveal sociological information. As collection of evidence for the social history of the first century, the New Testament contains a very small set of data (Holmberg 1990:9-10). The question is whether we have enough information upon which judgements can be made (cf Osiek 1989:276). This indeed should make us cautious not to become too enthusiastic about the results of the research, and cautious not to come to too simplistic conclusions (cf Scroggs 1983:340; Rowland 1985:362).

A third objection against the social-scientific approach is the problem of reductionism (cf Scroggs 1983:340; Malina 1983:19; Rowland 1985:361; Osiek 1989:276; 1992:89). There is indeed a danger to reduce all of reality in terms of *one* closed system of interpretation, that is for instance to reduce religion to a closed Feuerbachian, Durkheiman or Marxist system (cf Scroggs 1983:340; Rowland 1985:361). Closely related to this problem, and one which is often implicit in the charge of reductionism (cf Malina 1983:20), is that the social sciences are often viewed as deterministic, that is that they leave no or little room for the transcendent, hence for God's creative activity. One surely in a way has to acknowledge these two charges to be true, although Harris (1984:112) rejects it by saying: 'The intent of social world scholars, however, is not reductionistic; it is to give a more complete understanding of Christian origins'. As to the charge of reductionism (and determinism), Scroggs (1983:340) doubts that the use of the social scientific criticism implies the leaving out of the transcendent. To the charge of determinism, Malina (1983:20) responds: 'Now it should be quite clear that the social sciences are indeed deterministic, but only in the sense that they are sets of models that seek out the "that," "how," and "why" of meanings imposed on human beings'. And to the charge of reductionism, Osiek (1989: 276) says that any interpretive paradigm runs the risk of being reductionistic. 'It is simply a question, to what aspect of reality (e.g. economics, social forces, ideas or beliefs) will one try to mistakenly reduce the complexity of human reality?' She says that in some places, social analysis has been resisted and feared because it was perceived as being in association with Marxist analysis. She questions this perception (cf Osiek 1989:276; 1992:89). Therefore she states: 'By now, I trust this objection has been laid to rest. Rather than treat theology reductionally, one might argue, social science analysis saves it from the docetist, dualist tendency to split off social realities from revelation' (Osiek 1992:89).

These early objections against the social-scientific approach, which are still being raised (cf Osiek 1989, 1992), to my mind can now be laid to rest. This is so, especially if one weighs up the advantages and contributions against its disadvantages, and if one sees the steady flow of literature using this method over the last two decades (see the overview article of Joubert 1991). One can assume

that it is already a strongly vested approach, already vested as an important expansion of, among others, historical criticism (cf Elliott 1990a:xix). As for the advantages, one can agree with Osiek (1989:277) that social-scientific criticism makes an important contribution to the interpretive venture. She says: '(1) It provides another link between religion and the social sciences, to help avoid the mutual isolation in which academic fields sometimes live. (2) It furnishes means for making integrative linkages among the various aspects of life in the biblical world' (Osiek 1989:277). It can be an important aid to the broadening of the view of ancient life in its material and social aspects (cf Osiek 1989:277). This also applies to the use of the conflict theory I will attempt to use.

There are, however, two other major pitfalls to account for: the charge of *ethnocentrism* and more specific that of *anachronism.* Judge (1980:206; see also Craffert 1992:217; Rohrbaugh 1993a:227) calls these charges the *sociological fallacy*. The problem of anachronism (and ethnocentrism) evolves from the fact that there is a historical distance from the subject and the object. There is no possibility for live observation, while the original focus of sociology was the observance of life cultures (cf Osiek 1989:275). Is it really valid to use models, composed by modern people (often for modern societies) on ancient cultures? Is it valid to transfer data from contemporary cultures (Western or non-Western) to ancient Mediterranean cultures? This applies in particular to conflict theory as it will be used in this study, for one of the major contributors to this theory, i.e. Dahrendorf (1959), postulated the theory of conflict to be applied to modern industrial societies. Is it possible to apply this modern conflict theory to a pre-industrial society or a pre-industrial text like Matthew 8 and 9? If so, what do we have to take into account?

The distinction that is made between *etic* and *emic*, does not really help in solving the problem of anachronism, although it may be useful to understand that we are dealing with material that refers to a reality vastly different from our own. We should thus be sensitive not to modernize the meaning of the ancient texts (cf Van Staden 1991:71). *Emic* means to view information about human behaviour from a native's point of view (cf Van Staden 1991:71) It refers to an 'experience-near' (cf Geertz:1979:226). This is in contrast with the term *etic*, referring to a

model of how the world, or human behaviour works, that is applied upon a social phenomenon to be studied from 'outside' the particular world of the studied object. This is also referred to as an 'experience-distant' (cf Geertz 1979:226; see also Van Staden 1991:71). It seems quite evident that an 'etic' approach, being the use of an 'outside' model to examine social phenomena of earlier and ancient societies, could easily be viewed as anachronistic, and the only way out of anachronism and a-historism is to view social behaviour emically or 'from a native's point of view'. This is what Craffert (1992:222) suggests, saying: 'However, if one's aim is to reduce anachronistic and ethnocentric interpretation, the ideal (i.e. *to go native*, or to understand other cultures *from within* - EJV) becomes an imperative'. But, is this possible for an ancient, no longer existing society such as that of the New Testament times? I could to a limited extent imagine it to be possible for living present-day societies and cultures, although I am aware that Geertz (1979:227-228; see also Osiek 1992:91) even doubts this to be possible. One might be able to enter into a cross-cultural debate and an emic investigation of a living culture. One will continually be able to discuss concepts, images, viewpoints, and symbols with the *existing* natives. One can continually be exposed to a living culture. One can continually ask the natives what they mean by this or by that. One may even become so occupied and taken up by the study of another culture, that one can factually live among their ranks, eat, drink and sleep with them, dress like them, even marry into the culture, in order to 'live' oneself into the 'experience-near' concepts of that particular living culture.

But, this is no longer possible in respect of societies and cultures that no longer exist. Therefore it is hard to imagine how *to go native* in as far as the New Testament is concerned. We simply cannot question the authors of the texts and we cannot probe the intentions of the real, live inhabitants of the different societies portrayed in the New Testament (cf Rohrbaugh 1993a:230). Even that what we might argue to be the *native values*, are all still constructed by *ourselves*, as *we* understand them to be (or *like* them to be; see Vorster 1988:41 for the distinction between *construction* and *reconstruction*). There is no way in which we can really be physically exposed to those ancient cultures, except by their literature. There is broad consensus that presuppositionless interpretation of literature is impossible

(cf Powell 1989:27), which means that even when exposed to an ancient culture through their literature, it still depends on our own suppositions to what extent we will interpret that culture and literature. The fact that there are almost two millennia between the societies of the New Testament and today, makes the charge of anachronism and ethnocentrism seem hard to overcome. Anachronism seems inevitable, for even a so-called *emic* approach is hardly imaginable, as an *emic* approach to the New Testament societies is in fact still an *etic* enterprise. As Osiek (1992:91; see also 1989:275) says: 'Whatever the continuity between ancient and modern Mediterranean cultures, none of us will ever be able to share fully the world view of New Testament people. Whatever our judgement about etic or external observation, *it is really all we have*' (my emphasis). That is, whether we view a text from an *emic* or *etic* viewpoint, all we really have is an 'outside view'. Therefore I challenge Craffert's (1992:234) view that *the native's point of view* should be emphasized as point of departure. It may have its value, but why should it be the point of departure? In any case, both *emic* and *etic* approaches have their disadvantages: 'Confinement to experience-near concepts (emic - EJV) leaves an ethnographer awash in immediacies as well as entangled in vernacular. Confinement to experience-distant ones (etic - EJV) leaves him stranded in abstraction and smothered in jargon' (Geertz 1979:227).

With regard to a social scientific interpretation of the New Testament texts and societies, we are in a stale-mate situation as far as anachronism is concerned. Realizing the disadvantages, and the almost inevitability of the anachronism of both an emic and etic approach, other means will have to be found to account for the use of our method.

With regard to the charge of anachronism, the aim should be to account for the use of conflict theory as a *model* in order to *try to argue and demonstrate the commensurability of this theory to the data* (cf Craffert 1992:229). The applicability of modern conflict theory to an ancient text, needs to be *demonstrated* and not assumed (cf Powell 1989:35 in his critique against Horsley 1987:85) and therefore we need to account for the way in which models are used. Closely related to the use of the model, is to account for the 'level of abstraction' on which the model is used (cf Osiek 1992:90). This will not eliminate anachronism for even

the explicit and conscious use of models, as Craffert (1992:226) has correctly indicated, '...does not necessarily prevent anachronism or ethnocentric interpretation, since the way models function is determined by preferences which are not implicit in the model themselves'. It could however, contribute to the narrowing of the historical gap, or limit (not eliminate) the charge of anachronism.

1.4.2 A model as heuristic tool

It is hard to imagine any interpretation without the use of a theory or model. Quite a large amount of literature on what models are, and why they are needed emerged (see Carney 1975; Scroggs 1983; Malina 1983; Elliott 1986: Rohrbaugh 1987; Powell 1989; Osiek 1989, 1992; Holmberg 1990; Van Staden 1991; Craffert 1992). With regard to what a model is, most of these writings are based on the thorough work of Carney (1975). I will refrain from presenting the full debate on what a model is and what kind of models there are. For this the works of Carney (1975), Elliott (1986) and Van Staden (1991) are adequate.

There is no doubt that one *needs* models to understand reality. Says Rohrbaugh (1987:23): 'Human perception is selective, limited, culture-bound and prone to be unaware that it is any or all of the above. The cognitive maps with which we select, sort and categorize complex data interpose themselves between events and our interpretation of them whether we like it or not'. Reality comes to us as a complex configuration of data, which should be controlled. We need to sort, select, categorize, compare, generalize and synthesize the detail (and sometimes the chaos) of reality in order to be able to understand and control it. Otherwise, the data (and reality) is likely to control us (cf Carney 1975:5; see also Malina 1983a:14; Craffert 1992:225). Models are needed '...to enable us to cope with a complex configuration of data by screening out those which are too big or too small to be appropriately considered and by focusing on a specific aspect or level therein....As a model is necessarily so selective, it can be an approximation to reality' (Carney:1975:8-9). In order to handle this complex reality and the data thereof, we tend to 'chunk' or abstract similarities and, as Malina (1983:14) says: '...thus reduce the number of items being dealt with' (see also Carney 1975:9). It seems that human beings cannot make sense of their experiences and their world

without making models of it and without thinking in terms of abstract representations of it. By models we establish the meaning of what we want to see (cf Malina 1983:14; Elliott 1986:5). As Carney (1975:19) says: 'Models save us from mental or decision overload'.

What, then *is a model*? When defining reality, or the business of defining the situation - the interpreting stage - is where models come in. It is a filtering process, it is the presentation of an organizational framework (cf Carney 1975:3-4). Carney (1975:7) presents the following definition of a model:

> A model is *an outline framework, in general terms*, of the characteristics of a class of things or phenomena. This framework sets out the major components involved and indicates their priority of importance. It provides guidelines on how these components relate to one another. It states the range within which each component or relationship may vary (my emphasis).

and:

> The key characteristic of a model, in fact, is that it is, before all else, a *speculative instrument*. It may take the form of a descriptive outline, or it may be an inductive - even deductive - *generalization*. But whatever it is, it is first and foremost a *framework of reference*, consciously used as such, to enable us to cope with complex data.
> (Carney 1975:9; see also Elliott 1986:5; Holmberg 1990:14; Van Staden 1991:152; my emphasis)

and:

> Dynamic models...are the everyday bread-and-butter inquiries which must be made by anyone who is investigating how society works. The models...are thus the *workhorses* of social inquiry.
> (Carney 1975:11; my emphasis)

We have to realize that we are dealing with what Carney (1975:13; see also Elliott 1986:6; Van Staden 1991:158) calls *conceptual models*, which are appropriate for the analysis of social data. These models are to select and apply certain theories for the investigation and interpretation of social phenomena. Elliott (1986:6) cites Riley in defining a conceptual model as '...the researcher's image of the phenomena in the real world that he wants to study'. These phenomena are certain aspects of the behaviour of human beings in collectivities. They make explicit those assumptions which the researcher has concerning the social world and its meanings. Said somewhat differently in another phrase from Elliott (1986:5): 'Models are thus conceptual vehicles for articulating, applying, testing, and possibly reconstructing theories used in the analysis and interpretation of specific social data'.

Before presenting an own definition of what a model is, the much cited and one of the most comprehensive definitions of Malina (1983:14; see also Elliott 1986:4; Osiek 1989:271; Holmberg 1990:13; Van Staden 1991:153), will be stated:

> A model is an *abstract, simplified representation* of some real world object, event, or interaction, constructed for the purpose of understanding, control or prediction. A model is a *scheme or pattern* that derives from the process of abstracting similarities from a range of instances in order to comprehend (my emphasis).

Thus, I want to define a model, deduced from the above, as:

> *A model presents us with a general framework or generalization of complex social data, simplified into a scheme or pattern, in order to understand. It acts as a workhorse, tool or speculative instrument to transform theories into research operations.*

But, *how is a model used*? In particular, account will have to be given of the manner in which the model (for example conflict theory) will be used in this study.

A distinction is often made between a *theory* and a *model*. Carney (1975:7-8; also followed by Elliott 1986:3; Holmberg 1990:14; Van Staden 1991:154), states:

> A model is something less than a theory and something more than an analogy....A theory is based on axiomatic laws and states general principles....A model...acts as a link between theories and observations. A model will employ one or more theories to provide a simplified (or an experimental of a generalized or an explanatory) framework which can be brought to bear on some pertinent data. Models are thus the steppingstones upon which theories are build.

In this study, this sharp distinction will not be made. The theory of conflict, mainly inferred from the works of Ralf Dahrendorf, will be used *as a model,* that is a 'theory in operation'. Thus the terms 'theory' and 'model' will be used interrelated and interchangeable. However, the eventually described and deduced conflict theory (model) will be used to evaluate the text of Matthew 8 and 9 in a particular way. It will be used as a sort of 'mould' or a 'template' which will be placed like a frame over the text. The model, it seems, indeed will be used in a way which Holmberg (1990:73; see also Craffert 1992:231) calls a 'deductive one', that is, we start with a sociological theory (conflict theory) and then apply it to the data (i.e. Mt 8 & 9). It will indeed be used as a 'fact-finding instrument'. The theory of conflict will be used to serve as heuristic device for investigating, organizing and explaining the social data from the text and their meanings. The model plays, in the words of Elliott (1986:8):

> ...an indispensable role in the formal research process and hermeneutical circle which moves back and forth in empirical and interpretive phases between the fields of sociological theory and concrete social phenomena....[T]he model shapes research objectives, the kinds of data to be gathered, and the way in which these data are to be assembled and interpreted.

Although Holmberg (1990:73) does not himself prefer this approach, he does however acknowledge that a 'specified sociological hypothesis', which conflict theory indeed is, '...can be very useful *as an heuristic guideline, indicating what kind of phenomena the researcher should look for'* (my emphasis). In using the model (conflict theory) as a *heuristic tool*, new questions evolve, and new evidence nobody cared about before, might come forth (cf Holmberg 1990:15). In using the model for its heuristic value, I hope that it will serve to illuminate the unique phenomenon of the conflict I intend to study.

In the 'deductive use' of the model I propose, I do not at all uncritically *assume* commensurability. In the words of Craffert (1992:231) on the deductive use of models: '*Commensurability* between the phenomena of the model and the evidence *is assumed*, and the *native's point of view is disregarded*, and consequently the aim of interpretation resembles that of the natural sciences, namely to explain by means of a law-like model' (my emphasis). I have already indicated that 'the native point of view' of the New Testament texts is hardly imaginable, thus I do indeed disregard it. I hope to fill the 'historical gap' through the secondary use of different historical studies in the chapter on *The social location of the Matthean community* (see chapter 4). However, commensurability is not *assumed* at all. In this regard, *the level of abstraction* of this study should be taken into consideration. It is particularly Rohrbaugh (1987) and Osiek (1989; 1992) who challenge us to account for the level of abstraction. Generally speaking, one can accept the remark by Rohrbaugh (1987:25; see also Osiek 1989:270, Craffert 1992:226): 'The higher the level of abstraction, the more specific details of a historical situation tend to lose their focus. The lower the level of abstraction, the more important such particularities become'. A high level of abstraction is almost like taking a photograph with a wide-angle lens. A low level of abstraction could be compared with taking the same picture with a telephoto lens. Rohrbaugh (1987:28) says:

> The point...is that models can and do operate as different levels of abstraction and that the higher the level, the more *generalized* the details in focus. Questions (and/or conclusions) appropriate to a

given level of abstraction may well be warranted at the same time that conclusions appropriate to a level that is lower or higher may not....The proper question *is whether the conclusions drawn from the use of the model match the level of abstraction at which the model is drawn'* (my emphasis).

The model/theory I will be using, will indeed be on a *high* level of abstraction, and therefore, it will indeed be a more generalized theory, which accounts for the reason why a general theory, initially developed for industrial society, will also be used for the text that was formulated in an ancient agrarian society. This also accounts for the lack of peculiarities as far as the particular social environment of the Gospel of Matthew is concerned, because the theory is used more on a cross-cultural level. The conclusions that will be drawn, will be quite general, in line with the level of abstraction. The commensurability of the conflict theory is not assumed beforehand, but because of the high level of abstraction, it is legitimate to use this general (modern) model (theory). It will later on and in more detail be argued that, generally speaking, even ancient agrarian societies, even *more* so than industrial societies, were highly stratified societies. Therefore the commensurability of the conflict theory to the ancient text and society can well be argued. Conflict theory is quite flexible, because of the ever present potential of stratification in any society so that it is quite *transcended to particular cultures* (in the words of Osiek 1992:90)

ENDNOTES

1. Both Suhl (1980b) and Engelbrecht (1988) present us with overviews on the research done on the miracles. Suhl (1980b), however, almost exclusively concentrates on the research done in the German-speaking world up to 1980, while Engelbrecht (1988) places the research into a broader (updated) framework. The difference between the overviews of both Suhl (1980b) and Engelbrecht (1988) and that of the book of Colin Brown (1984), which also gives a thorough view on the research, is that the former only places the research in the framework of New Testament scholarship, while Brown places the research into a very wide philosophical and theological framework.

2. See also Bultmann (1965b:15-21) on the miracle stories (*Wundergeschichten*) and *Apophthegmata* as part of the different *Gattungen* of tradition-material (*Überlieferungsstoffes*).

3. The distinction between 'miracle event' and 'miracle story' stems from a *form critical* approach. As Betz (1978:69) states: 'The miracle story is not to be confused with the miracle event: the stories never narrate the miracle itself because the miracle by nature is a divine mystery. All miracle stories carry an interpretation' (see also Vledder 1984:78-82; Engelbrecht 1988:141). The miraculous event itself is never described by the story. Betz (1978:70) continues:

> Rather, at the precise point within the narrative where the miracle is about to happen a 'gap' occurs. After the 'gap' the narrative states as a fact that the miracle has happened. The reason for this peculiar phenomenon is that the miracle as an event is by nature a divine mystery and, as language is concerned, an *arrheton*: human language is not capable of expressing the divine.

A miracle story is a narrative with the special assignment of serving as a kind of language envelope for the transmission and communication of the 'unspeakable' miracle event (cf Betz 1978:70). In this study we will use the term *miracle stories* throughout (see chapter 2).

4. Bultmann (1958) has his own peculiar way of dealing with the issue of the possibility of miracles. To understand the way Bultmann sees miracles, one has to see it within his concept of 'mythology', for miracles are part of a perception of the world (*Weltbild*) , dominated by 'myths' and 'mythology'. 'Mythology', is a primitive perception of the world in which all meaning, happening and events that are surprising or terrifying, are ascribed to extra-ordinary causes, i.e. to gods and demons. 'Myths' speak of gods and demons as forces to which humans are dependant (cf Bultmann 1965c:146). But the modern human does not have this mythodological perception of the world. 'Für den Menschen von heute sind das mythologische Weltbild, die Vorstellung von Ende, vom Erlöser und der Erlösung vergangen und erledigt' (Bultmann 1965c:145). To get to understand a text imbedded in this perception of the world, one has to 'demythologize' the text in order to get to its essence, i.e. as text of human existence. 'Die Methode der Auslegung des Neuen Testaments, die versucht, die tiefere Bedeutung hinter den mythologischen Vorstellungen wieder aufzudecken, nenne ich "*Entmythologisieren*" ' (Bultmann 1965c:146; his own emphasis; see also Lehmann:1971:51; Perrin 1979:73).
  Miracles, as part of this mythological worldview, thus also have to be 'demythologized'. One has to get to the essence of the miracles in terms of human existence. Bultmann (1958:214) does this by distinguishing between *Wunder* and *Mirakel* (terms that are difficult to translate into English; thus we will continue using these German terms). *Mirakels* are events that are seen as *contra-naturam*, but Bultmann (1958:214-217) dismisses this as impossible to the modern human that perceives everything to be according to natural causes. *Wunder* are deeds of God in opposition to the events in the world. 'Zweifellos ist der Glaube interesiert am Wunder, sofern "Wunder" *Tun Gottes* bedeutet im Gegensatz zum Weltgeschehen' (Bultmann 1958:217). *Wunder* are religious expressions of our own human existence and experience. Thus the events of the world (*Weltgeschehen*) must not be confused with nature or the creation as such (cf Bultmann 1958:219). Rather we must see it as human existence (*Existenz*), of my own day to day living, my work, my whole being. Furthermore, we cannot loosen our understanding of God from understanding ourselves. 'Ich kann von Gottes Schöpfertat nur reden, wenn ich mich jetzt als Geschöpf Gottes weiß' (Bultmann 1958:218). The *Wunder* to Bultmann (1958:219) therefore are my own acts and deeds in this world. But, we want to see God and *Wunder* in our own lives, yet, we don't. Bultmann (1958:221) states:

> Ich verstehe also was Wunder bedeutet: Gottes Tun. Ich verstehe auch, daß mir im Gottes Wunder sichtbar sein sollten. Ich weiß aber, daß ich sie nicht sehe; denn die Welt erscheint mir als Natur, und ich kann mich davon nicht freimachen durch den Entschluß, daß es anders sein soll, und ich werde mich hüten, mich in eine Stimmung hineinzusteigern, als könnte ich es doch.

This brings us to the way Bultmann sees the reality of *Wunder* (Bultmann 1958:221). To speak of *Wunder*, is to speak of one's own existence (being), that is that God becomes visible in my own life. This is what Bultmann (1958:221) understands under the revelation of God: But I cannot see God; He is disclosed to me. As Bultmann (1958:221) says: '...so sehe Ich auch, daß seine Verborgenheit meine Gottlosigkeit, mein Sündersein bedeutet. Denn er *sollte* mir nicht verborgen sein.'

Therefore, there is only one *Wunder*: The revelation of the grace of God to the godless people. This grace is seen as God's forgiveness. This is an act of God. But, this grace and forgiveness is also a *Wunder* in opposition to the world events (*Weltgeschehen*). We try to be righteous, but we fail because of *Angst*, trouble and the finiteness (*Vergangenheit*) of our lives (cf Bultmann 1958:222-224). But we can be freed from this *Vergangenheit* by forgiveness. Bultmann (1958:224) says:

> Ist uns die Sünde vergeben, so bedeutet das, daß wir Freiheit haben für die Zukunft, daß wir Gottes Anspruch wirklich hören und uns ihm zur Verfügung stellen können (Röm.6,12ff.)....Nur aber wird vollends klar, warum die *Vergebung als Wunder*, d.h. als Tun Gottes im Gegenzats zum Weltgeschehen verstanden muß....Ist Gottes Wunder die Vergebung, d.h. hebt Gott im Wunder unser Verständnis unser selbst als der Leistenden und so immer der Vergangenheit Verfallenen auf, so hebt er damit auch den Charakter der Welt als der uns verfügbaren Arbeitswelt auf (his own emphasis).

Forgiveness as a *Wunder* thus is not a one-time event. It is something that has to become true on a continual base within our existence. *Wunder* has to be seen anew continuously. The forgiveness in Christ has to be continuously made explicit in human existence (cf Bultmann 1958:226).

In as far as the miracles in the New Testament, Bultmann (1958:227-228) dismisses them as part of the mythological world, and thus as part of past-time experiences that have little in stall for today, because they are seen as *Mirakels* (see above). But, as *Wunder* they have to be made present in the preaching about Christ. Christ outside faith (and thus also miracles) is of the past, and has to be made present in faith, and in our own world.

5. As far as scepticism is concerned, Brown (1984:129; see also Van de Beek 1991:31) states:

> The argument is basically simple: we must use our present experience and knowledge to understand the past. Since we do not experience anything that violates the regularities of nature, we must be sceptical of all claims to the contrary. Our experience of all events as similar or homogeneous...suggests that the universe is a closed system that cannot admit interventions. This clearly rules out miracles, as popularly understood. From Celsus to Feuerbach and beyond to the present day, the objections to miracles are essentially variations on this theme.

The so-called 'offensive camp' amongst the apologetics, according to Brown (1984:3, 197), sees miracles as clear-cut proof of God's intervention in history, unambiguously underwriting the truth-claims of the faith. In this regard, Sabourin (1974:174; see also 1971:79, 1975:199) argues that the miracles of Jesus are historically authentic and the Gospels are reliable accounts thereof. They are part of 'salvation history' (cf Sabourin 1975:199). Miracles provide 'objective' (sic) grounds and confirmation for believing. A modern-day example of this approach is to be found in the definition of McCaslin (1988:24):

> *A miracle is an extraordinary act of God, observable to man, which is performed by the will of God and is at once a mighty work, a sign, and a wonder, designed to prepare man for the deliverance and reception of the message of God and confirm the authenticity of both the message and the messenger* (my emphasis).

To the 'defensive' option (of which Brown [1984] himself is a representative), miracles are credible against the background of certain beliefs about God. However, the miracles could *not* offer *hard historical evidence* to show that every biblical miracle really happened in such a way as to compel belief. Miracles are nothing more than part of a framework of belief and *do not prove* anything (cf Brown 1984:3; see also Vledder 1986:334). As Brown (1984:292) puts it: 'It is to suggest, as it were, a grammar of belief, in terms of which miracles have a meaningful place. Beyond this, the philosopher and the apologist cannot go; they can only debate whether such perspectives are reasonable. Beyond that each individual must make up his or her own mind.'

6.   Suhl (1980c:464) uses the miracle story of the healing of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (Mt 9:18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Lk 8:40-56) as a test case. There is a remarkable difference, especially in length between the versions of Mark and Matthew. Mark stresses the urgency and speed of the matter by indicating that the daughter of the ruler is almost dying. She has not yet died (Mk 5:23). Now Mark adds an extensive description of the woman with *haemorrhage* in the story (Mk 5:24-34). Through this, Mark heightens the tension and urgency for Jesus to act, for the story of the woman with *haemorrhage* has nothing to do with the story of the healing of Jairu's daughter. The tension is heightened: will Jesus be able and be in time to heal the girl? While Jesus still speaks to the woman, a messenger reports that the girl has died (Mk 5:35). Jesus need not proceed to the house of the ruler. But Jesus goes on to illustrate the contrast between the people and himself (Mk 5:36). At the moment he received the message of the girl's death, as Suhl (1980c:474) sees it, Jesus utters the word on the faith of the woman. Through this, Jesus acts in contrast with the opinions of the people. The climax of this contrast occurs in the house of the ruler of the synagogue, where Jesus, with his opinion that the girl is sleeping and not dead, meets with insulting mockery, for they (the people) know better. The raising of the girl stands in the light of the contrast between the opinions of the people and the challenge of Jesus. The reader should identify with the plea of Jairus. The reader should be taken along with the story to realize that limited faith, which places Jesus' deeds only in a framework of what is held as possible, should be extended to a limitless trust/faith, even there where - to human judgement - no hope exists (cf Suhl 1980c:475).

        To Suhl (1980c:475), both Matthew and Luke independently used Mark as source in their own interpretations. But, whereas Mark concentrated more on the tension between the attitude of the people and the deeds of Jesus, Matthew (9:18-26) focused more on the limitless trust of the father (cf Suhl 1980c:476). Matthew concentrates more on the meeting between the believing father who seeks help and the Lord who presents that help. The meeting between Jesus and the woman with *haemorrhage* also focuses on her faith. Both the woman and the father to Matthew are examples of how one should believe in Jesus and how this faith is fulfilled (cf Suhl 1980c:477). Matthew changed the story to depict that the girl was *already* dead. By this, he released the need to concentrate on the tension, but intensified the limitless faith of the father (even in the face of death). The changes Luke (8:40-56) brings about, are to be seen in the context of Luke-Acts as a whole. All the changes Luke made to his example (*Vorlage*), were meant to make the end of the events psychologically clear. In this manner he fulfils the programme he mentioned explicitly in the introduction of Luke 1:1-14: he pictures an event from the past of Jesus that was handed down by the eye and ear witnesses (cf Suhl 1980c:479; he however, builds this assumption on a wrong translation of Luke 1:2b. It should rather be translated to read 'eye-witnesses and *servants of the word*').

7.   A full and thorough study on *social-scientific criticism* was done by Van Staden (1991).

8.   Kee (1983:1-41), in his work: *Miracles in the early christian world: A study in socio-historical method*, experiences serious flaws in the traditional *Religionsgeschichte*. Concerning the miracles, he asks whether it is sufficient to ask 'Did it really happen?' A far more important question to him would be to ask 'What did the ancient writer, who reported the event, understand to have occurred?' He says that too often historians of religion have not asked this question. He wants to present an alternative method which, as he says, '...insists that the essential requirement for interpretation of a text is to read it in context: not merely in literary context, but in the wider, deeper social and cultural context in which both the author and audience lived, and in which the language they employed took on the connotations to which the interpreter must seek to be sensitive' (Kee 1983:3). Kee quotes Turretini: '"One must put oneself into the times and into the surrounding of the sacred writers" - or, one might add, of any ancient writer - "and one must see what concepts could arise in the souls of those who lived at that time."' This is what Kee intends doing. Kee ends his chapter on *Personal identity and world-construction* with a remark that in the period between the rise of Alexander's successors and the ascendancy of Antoninus (138 CE), many persons were more concerned about their personal needs and destiny than about the fate of the incumbent political power. He continues: 'Those in pursuit of personal fulfilment turned from the gods of the state to those divinities who promised personal benefactions, both in matters of health and in sense of purpose' (Kee 1983:77). This, if I correctly understand him, is the social setting of the miracles. He then presents an analysis of two cults of what he calls 'beneficent deities': Asklepios, the healer and Isis (cf Kee 1983:78-145)

Asklepios was a god concerned with the wider range of human needs, anxieties and aspirations. The Olympian deities were regarded as of little interest, as arbitrary and impersonal, while Asklepios - and Isis - were concerned with the total welfare of the lives of the people and the fulfilment of their destinies (cf Kee 1983:104). The figure of Isis had a very widespread transformation in time and space (cf Kee 1983:105). Nevertheless, she fulfilled the role as agent of order, as instrument of justice, to maintain the law and as benefactress of the people (cf Kee 1983:105-145).

Kee (1983:146) argues that contemporary to the cults of Isis and Asklepios in the Hellenistic world, was the rise of apocalypticism in Judaism. He wants to know how a miracle plays a role in the apocalyptic life-world. Kee (1983:146-147) characterizes a 'apocalyptic life-world' as : (1) a dualistic world view in which the evil powers wrested control from the creator; (2) a small band of brave and faithful accept opposition and persecution in their fidelity to the divine purposes; (3) those purposes have been disclosed to the elect remnant through visions, dreams, oracles and marvellous acts; (4) they expected divine judgement of the world.

Kee (1983:146) says that in the Jewish Bible, miracles appear as extraordinary acts said to be performed by the God of Israel on behalf of his people or in defeat of their enemies. Miracles are also acts performed by divinely endowed persons. They were acts of mercy. Furthermore, the miracles were signs of the defeat of the evil powers. They were signs of a new age in which the divine will finally become sovereign throughout the creation (cf Kee 1983:155). Kee (1983:156) proceeds to analyze the Q-sources. He says that for the Q-tradition, miracle is the assuring sign of faith in eschatological vindication. It points to the triumph of God over the evil forces that have frustrated the achievement of his plan for the creation and the human race (cf Kee 1983:159). As for Mark, Kee (1983:165) says that the 'nature miracles' are presented within a framework of apocalyptic judgement and of redefinition of the holy people and their avenue of access to God. Kee (1983:170) continues to see the miracle as sign of the Spirit in the writings of Paul.

In chapter six, called *Miracle in history and romance: Roman and early christian sources*, Kee (1983:174) surveys the Roman historiography that deals with the miracles and the phenomenon of the Hellenistic-roman romance's (an extravagant story or novel) influence on the representation of the miracles in early Christian writings. An important dimension of the miraculous in the Roman historical tradition is the fact that an Egyptian magician appeared in the midst of the Roman troops, fighting far away from Egypt. The figure of an itinerant miracle-worker became common in the later second century. 'Fitting into this role - and in later third-century romanticized form, serving as its paradigm - is Apollonius of Tyana....It would appear, therefore, that by the opening of the second century the professional miracle-worker/itinerant oracle was a recognizable public figure....[t]his popular model affects the way in which Christian literature portray its prophets and wonder-worker in the later second century' (Kee 1983:183). To Kee (1983:188), the miracles in Matthew function to lend authority to Jesus' activity and especially his interpretation of the law. They support his authority and divine identity. As for Luke-Acts, the miracles function as special manifestations of Jesus' power and purpose, so that those with true insight could discern within history the hand of God at work (cf Kee 1983:200).

There are also a few social functions of the miracles in Matthew and Luke to which Kee (1983:218-220) draws our attention. Both Matthew and Luke indicate that at the turn of the second century, the church was moving out of a sectarian ghetto. They were able to move out to the wider Roman world. What the Gospels also show us is that there was no primitive orthodoxy or essential unit from which heretics later dissented and departed. Side-by-side in the early church, as Kee (183:218) says, '...were groups who were influenced by the culture currants of the imperial epoch, who understood and to a considerable extent shared the assumptions and stance toward life of their non-Christian contempories.' There however are differences between the Gospels as well: Matthew emphasized the distinctiveness of the new Israel as the people of God. Miracle is important as portent by which the divine control over history is manifest. Furthermore, miracle confirms Jesus as the New Moses, the preeminent and final interpreter of the will of God (cf Kee 1983:219).

For Luke, however, the covenant people and the stance toward Hellenistic-Roman culture, are open and inclusive. The universality of what God is doing through Jesus and the apostles is stressed. Miracle functions, as Kee (1983:220) says, '...to show that at every significant point in transition of Christianity from its Jewish origins in Jerusalem to its Gentile outreaching to Rome itself, the hand of God is evident in the form of public miraculous confirmation.' As a final function, Kee (1983:220) says that miracle is always effected for human benefit, not for the accomplishment of political ends. It is a pity that he does not say more about this last function.

On *Miracles as universal symbol*, Kee (1983:221) states that already at the first century miracle was seen as an avenue to deeper or inward meaning, '...a symbolic vehicle by which timeless truth could be perceived behind outward event.' Miracle in the Gospel of John acts as an example. The miracle as 'signs' characterized the activity of Jesus. They were public acts, but only those with divinity-granted insight could understand them (cf Kee 1983:225). They were signs of the presence of eternity (cf Kee 1983:229) and of a new reality (cf Kee 1983:231). In his last chapter before the conclusion, Kee (1983:252-289) explores the life of Apollonius of Tyana, as well as the polemical writings which treat the miracle workers of the second to fourth centuries in both pagan and Christian literature, in which miracles were found to have some propaganda value (cf Kee 1983:274). Through the leader figure and his miraculous actions, a stable religious and social community is sought (cf Kee 1983:294-295).

The conclusion Kee (1983:290-296) comes to is that to him the history-of-religion-method collapsed. Instead he sought to carry out an analysis of the features of both pagan and early Christian experiences. He was aware of the range of settings in which the phenomenon (of miracle) appears. Miracle functions differently from context to context, as was summarized above, and as Kee (1983:293-295) himself does. To get as close as possible to a general agreement on the significance of miracle in the period from Alexander to Severus (465-538 CE), both in and outside the Christian church, Kee (1983:293) says:

> ...that through miracle the gods or God disclose(s) the divine purpose for the world or for the chosen people within it through extraordinary events. The events are public; their import is often grasped only by those with insight to discern it. The events range from cosmic portents of charge to direct divine intervention, which may take the form of healing, reward, punishment, judgement, or vindication.

The concluding chapter is closed with a few questions to be asked to a text under investigation in order to take the specific context or life-world of a phenomenon into consideration (cf Kee 1983:295-296). These questions are: Who is in charge? That is, what powers are in control? What is the opposition? That is, how are the forces of evil to be identified? What is the identity of those who understand? How and to what end does the divine manifest itself in human experience? What are the privileges and responsibilities of the members of the community to whom these insights have been granted?

In a later monograph, Kee (1986) concentrated more on the phenomenon of healing in New Testament times. He investigated three particular approaches to healing: medicine, miracle and magic (Kee 1986:ix,2), in contrast to his previous work (Kee 1983) that focused on the miracle in particular. On the notion of healing, Kee (1986:1) says:

> In every age and in every setting, a primary concern of human beings is health. This concern manifests itself in two distinct modes: (1) the eagerness to maintain the health of the body, and the negative corollary, which is the overcoming of sickness; (2) the basic human need to discern some framework of meaning by which the cause of sickness, suffering, and disability can be understood, and by which these universal experiences of frailty and vulnerability can be incorporated into a view of the world and humanity's place within it.

It might be desirable, just for the record, to keep the three modes of healing apart: *Medicine*, says Kee (1986:3) is a method of diagnosis of human ailment and prescription based on a combination of theory and observation of the body, its function and malfunctions. Medicine builds on the foundation of natural order. It needs to aid the healthy functioning of the human organism. It seeks to increase the effectiveness of its service to human health and the extension and happiness of human life (cf Kee 1986:126).

'*Miracle* embodies the claim that healing can be accomplished through appeal to, and subsequent action by the gods' (Kee 1986:3). The gods - God - are in control. They work out a divine purpose in the creation for the benefit of all creatures (cf Kee 1986:127).

'*Magic* is a technique, through word or act, by which a desired end is achieved' (Kee 1986:3). There is a basic assumption that some mysterious, inexorable network of forces exists, which the initi-ated can exploit for personal benefit. They can also act as block for personal protection. These forces, having many names, have to be utilized to achieve desired ends (cf Kee 1986:127).

9. Note that Haralambos (1980:12,534) calls conflict theory 'Marxism'. But this is not entirely correct. Conflict theory to a certain extent (via the interpretation of Dahrendorf 1959) is based on the insights of Marx, but is not entirely the same as 'Marxism'. See chapter 3 for more on conflict theory.

CHAPTER 2

FINDING A RESEARCH GAP: SELECTED READINGS

Die Wundergeschichten des Matthäusevangelium waren in den letzten Jahren eher ein Stiefkind der Forschung.

(Luz 1987:147; my emphasis)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There is little doubt that the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) and the miracle stories (Mt 8-9) are linked. This is because of the compositional frame created by the summaries in Matthew 4:23 and 9:35. Matthew 4:23 (Καὶ περιῆγεν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, **διδάσκων** ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ **κηρύσσων** τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ **θεραπεύων** πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ; Jesus went throughout Galilee, *teaching* in their synagogues, *preaching* the good news of the kingdom, and *healing* every disease and sickness among the people)[1] stands at the beginning and 9:35 (Καὶ περιῆγεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς πόλεις πάσας καὶ τὰς κώμας, **διδάσκων** ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ **κηρύσσων** τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας καὶ **θεραπεύων** πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν; Jesus went through all the towns and villages, *teaching* in their synagogues, *preaching* the good news of the kingdom and *healing* every disease and sickness) at the end (cf Grundmann 1971:110; Thompson 1971:366; Burger 1973:273,281; Luz 1985:21,24; Harrington 1991:5; Duling & Perrin 1994:341). Because these words are virtually the same, 4:23 acts as introduction and 9:35 as 'rounding up' or summary of the whole unit. Between these two verses the themes *διδάσκειν* and *κηρύσσειν* refer to the words and teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and the term

θεραπεύειν refers to the acts of Jesus in the miracle stories in chapters 8 and 9. This frame around the material, makes the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle stories stand out very prominently in the Gospel of Matthew. We will in our study concentrate on the latter, the less exhausted part in theological research - as is illustrated by the above cited quotation of Ulrich Luz.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that Matthew (the author) was not just a collector who simply put together into one book the material he got from his sources: Mark, Q, and his own 'Sondergut'. He was intelligently re-interpreting his sources and re-arranging them to compose his own Gospel with its own distinctive theological viewpoint. What is eye-catching, is the way in which he took over the material (especially from Mark) about the miracle stories. He not only put them together into one unit (Mt 8 & 9), but also re-arranged them, and especially shortened them considerably (cf Held 1963:165-168; Thompson 1971:365; Burger 1973:275-283; Luz 1985:28-31; Harrington 1991:5,116). It is especially Held (1963:168-211) who discusses the issue of Matthew's re-interpretation of his sources in particular detail. Matthew retells his story by employing: (1) far-reaching abbreviations (see 8:14-15; 8:16-17; 8:28-34; 9:2-8; 9:18-26; 14:32-38; 17:14-20), (2) the expansion of especially the dialogues of Jesus (see 8:5-13; 8:18-27; 14:22-33; 15:21-28; see also Harrington 1991:122), and (3) the omission of Mark 7:31-37 and Mark 8:22-26 from his Gospel.

A short note on the use of the term 'miracle stories' is necessary. Gnilka (1986:348) calls these two chapters the 'Wunderzyklus'. But, since there also exists non-miracle material in Matthew 8 and 9, the term 'Wunderzyklus' is too static and misleading. We would, however, in this study rather refer to the 'miracle stories' in Matthew 8 and 9, to *include* the non-miracle material, i.e. the summaries, callings and redactional explanations. To Burger (1973:276), the existence of non-miracle material between the 'miracle stories' serves as an argument in support of the view that Matthew was an interpreter of the traditional material of his sources. The view of Burger (1973) is supported by Louw (1977:91; see also Davies & Allison 1988:67; Combrink 1991:6-7): 'The section on healing (8-9) is twice interrupted by narrations of incidents related to the teaching and preaching of Jesus, thus not only affording stylistic breaks in the

series, but rather echoing the preceding section (5-7) leading on to 9:35. These two breaks cause the healing, or miracle, material to be divided into 3 sub-sections, each presenting three scenes'. Therefore, the term 'miracle *stories*' (the term we will be using throughout this study), leaves open the possibility that the miracles are imbedded in narratives that could include more material than just 'miracles'. It does, however, indicate that the emphasis is placed on the stories about miracles, put together into one narrative whole (see also endnote 3 of the previous chapter on how Betz (1978:69-70) distinguished between a miracle event and a miracle story).

2.2 SEARCHING FOR A GAP

Although 'conflict' plays an important role in the miracle stories (as in the whole Gospel; cf Hummel 1966:9; see also Kingsbury 1987:57; 1992:347; Luz 1990:63), the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders has up to now, been insufficiently explicated in the research on the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9. Some progress has indeed been made to indicate that conflict has a function in these two chapters, especially in relation to the community of Matthew. However, where this conflict does feature, it is inappropriately explained in terms of the conflict theory I opted for. In this regard I take up the challenge of Craffert (1994:108) to investigate the *particular nature* of the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9.

Furthermore, one has to see how (if any) the so-called 'marginalized' are dealt with in the research on these two chapters. Because the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9 are so prominent (see above), the question presents itself to us as to what the function(s) of this unit is (are). Do these two chapters feature as narratives with christological, or ecclesiological ends in the same way as Schweizer (1974:13-15) asks it to be a feature of the Gospel of Matthew in general? Do they function as demonstration material to christologically illustrate Jesus' authoritative position, that is to give legitimacy to his office and position as the incarnated Messiah? Or do they have an ecclesiological function, that is to indicate something of the Matthean church-community, and how does conflict feature in this regard. A single answer could however not be found among the

scholars.   Therefore, in order to determine a research gap, and to give some structure to our selection of some of the scholars, we will divide this presentation into three groups: (1) scholars who see the miracle stories as having a christological function, (2) those who regard these two chapters as having a more ecclesiological function, also in terms of the Gospel as a whole, and (3) those who dó deal particularly with conflict with regard to the miracle stories and the Gospel of Matthew as such.   This division must not be seen as too rigid, for there is still much in common between the first two groups, as we will see further on.   It must only be seen as an aid to better understand the different representatives.   What the first group have in common is that they take the miracle stories as an entity on its own, out of the context of the Gospel as a whole, and place it under one or more (christological) themes.   The second group have in common the fact that the stories form part of the ideological (or theological) perspective of the whole Gospel. The focus of the third group is self-evident.   We will in this last section select a few scholars who tried to focus on conflict from a sociological perspective.

I have taken the works that specifically deal with Matthew 8 and 9 as an entity, but there was not much published in this regard (see the works of Thompson 1971; Burger 1977; Louw 1977; Kingsbury 1978; Moiser 1985; Gnilka 1986; Luz 1987; Sanders & Davies 1989).[2]   This already presents a gap which I wish to fill, namely to present something on Matthew 8 and 9 specifically.   In the South African context in particular, there is an open possibility to present some work on the miracle stories of Matthew 8 and 9, especially from a social-scientific perspective.   This is confirmed by an article of Combrink (1994) on the recent research on Matthew in South Africa.   Much work has been done in the field of research on Matthew as a whole Gospel.   Discourse-analysis, the immanent-syntactic aspects of the text, literary and narrative criticism, structuralism, the language, pragmatic and rhetorical aspects of the parables and the Beatitudes, a contextual reading of the text, the theology and ethics of Matthew and the African context, all, according to Combrink (1994:173-190),   have received attention in the South African research.   Yet the challenges of the social sciences, and specifically that of conflict theory, with regard to Matthew 8 and 9, still need to be taken up.

Burger (1973:272-275), Gnilka (1986:348) and Luz (1987:149-152) present us with short overviews on the way the miracle stories of Matthew 8 and 9 were dealt with in the research. I have to a great extent been led by these articles in the selection of the presented scholars. Although the material being useful, I had to expand on this. This was not easy. I had to limit myself to those who, to my mind, would *explicate* the chosen scheme as presented above, rather than to cover the whole field of research done. With reference to the third section, we will in chapter 4 in greater detail attend to scholars like Carson (1982); Saldarini 1988a, 1988b, 1988c); Pantle-Schieber (1989); Overman (1990); Dunn (1991); Kingsbury (1991); Segal (1991); Stark (1991); White (1991); Stanton (1992b); Duling (1993), who all in some way or another contributed to the description of the community of Matthew in conflict with the Jewish leaders.

The difference between this chapter and chapter 1, which also contains reflections on research material, is that in the first chapter I accounted for my epistemological and methodological point of departure. In this chapter, I wish to account for the contribution I hope to make in terms of Matthew 8 and 9.

2.2.1 The christological function(s) of the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9

The miracle stories are viewed as illustrative material for Jesus' christological position and authority as the Messiah. Furthermore, the stories could be placed under a number of different themes to illustrate different aspects of Jesus' office and ministry. Conflict as such, conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders or conflict in relation to the Matthean community hardly ever features in this research. Under this heading the works of HJ Held (1963); W Grundmann (1971); B Gerhardsson (1979) and J Gnilka (1986) will be presented.

2.2.1.1 HJ Held

Held (1963:165) primarily intended to explain what the intentions were which governed the evangelist in retelling the individual miracle stories. By way of comparison between Matthew and the other two synoptic Gospels (and with Mark in particular), Held concludes that the abbreviations (and extensions) of Matthew's sources were to serve the interests of his own particular interpretation (cf Held

1963:167). In a quite extended discussion on the miracle stories (which exceeds the two miracle chapters of the Gospel), Held (1963:246-247) indicates that the collection of the miraculous deeds of Jesus has a christological function (see also Gnilka 1986:349). With the christological function Held (1963:246) means that in relation with the Sermon on the Mount, the double office of Christ - his teaching and his healing activity - is portrayed. Jesus is presented not only as the Messiah of the word (Sermon on the Mount), but also as the Messiah of the deed (by his miraculous deeds).

But the miracle collection not only has a christological function; it also serves to highlight the themes of faith and discipleship. Matthew re-interpreted his sources in such a way that these three themes in particular come to the fore.

The theme of 'Christology' is reflected for example by Matthew 8:2-4; 8:14-15; 8:16-17; 8:28-34; 9:2-8. Held (1963:172) indicates that, for instance in 8:28-34 (the expulsion of the demons of Gadara), the story is thus abbreviated so that all the attention falls on Jesus himself. There is a complete absence of the concluding section of Mark 5:18-20: 'As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said,"Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has mercy on you." So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed'. There is no mention of the healing itself. No interest is attached to the person healed, nor to his wish to follow Jesus. The christological interpretation in Matthew's pericope is seen in particular in the cry of the two possessed men (Mt 8:29): ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; and Τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ;. Matthew does not wish to depict the demons as trying to exercise counter-magic. Instead, by putting a christological statement (*Son of God*) into their mouths, Jesus has come to deliver the demons to the judgement of torture before the 'time', before the final irruption of the rule of God. Matthew abbreviates the Markan narrative in order to almost exclusively concentrate on the christological element (cf Held 1963:172-175).

By way of summary, Held (1963:252-253) presents the following christological aspects under which the miracle stories in Matthew must be understood:

(a) The miracle stories portray Jesus as the fulfiller of the Old Testament prophecy. Held (1963:257) uses the quotation from Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 9:13a (Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν) to support this point. It furthermore contains a self-attestation of Jesus about his mission: οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς (Mt 9:13b). It is intended as a christological statement. This leads Held (1963:258) to say that taking its reference strictly, Matthew 9:13a cannot mean that the opponents of Jesus should learn that God demands mercy and not sacrifice and that they should behave accordingly. It must rather be understood as summoning them to comprehend that he is doing the will of God as stated in Hosea 6:6. This is to Held (1963:258) *less a command regarding ethical behaviour* than the summons to the christological knowledge that Jesus acts in accordance with Scripture. It might be true of Jesus, but, as we will see later, Held in this *under-estimates the potential ethical command*, especially against the background of the previous episode that forgiveness is not granted by God alone, but is demanded on earth as well (9:7), and that Jesus also demands mercy from his opponents. In fact, in this he under-estimates the strong element of conflict with the Pharisees, that is, that Jesus with this citation from the Old Testament challenged the Pharisees' values.

(b) Jesus is furthermore presented as the servant of God acting with authority. Held (1963:264) correctly sees the servant of God working on behalf of the helpless. The congregation may still perceive how her Lord still proves himself mighty and as one who shows mercy. Here Held comes close to the view we wish to defend, yet he does not develop it to its full potential.

(c) The miracle stories portray Jesus as the Lord and helper of his congregation.

(d) In the miracle stories Jesus is portrayed as the one who lets his disciples share in his authority. With this notion Held comes close to the idea/theme of conflict because of Jesus' authority which he shares with his congregation. We do, however, still have to indicate how this authority contributes to conflict.

In dealing with the theme of faith, Held (1963:178) uses Matthew 9:18-26 (the raising of the daughter of the ruler and the healing of the woman with *haemorrhage*) as an example of how sharply Matthew abbreviated this story. As far as the woman with *haemorrhage* (Mt 9:20-22) is concerned, the seriousness of her illness is compressed into one small expression in 9:20. The crowd and the disciples have disappeared from the scene. Only Jesus and the sick woman are before us (cf Held 1963:179). What Jesus is concerned about, is made clear by the saying about saving faith (9:22). He replies to it by delivering her with his word and deed (9:22). Says Held (1963:179): 'In this way the healing of the woman...is made by Matthew entirely ancillary to the saying of Jesus which this story contains: ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε'. This is the reason why Matthew retells this story. Likewise, the story of Jairus' daughter is condensed. The name of the daughter is left out in Matthew. No attention is given to the magnitude of the task as in Mark 5:41, nor to the demonstration of the reality of the restoration (Mk 5:43b). Matthew is more concerned with the request of the ruler (ἄρχων) in which his faith comes to the fore. This is not a faith which is harassed and in need of consolation (Mk 5:36), but a faith that even in the face of death itself holds firmly and confidently on to Jesus. As with the woman with *haemorrhage*, we actually do not see a miracle story but a teaching about faith. The same is true of the story of the healing of the two blind men (Mt 9:27-31).

There is a clear connection between the miracle stories and faith. Insomuch as faith in Matthew is involved:

(a) faith is praying faith (cf Held 1963:284),
(b) faith is participation in the miraculous power of Jesus (cf Held 1963:288), and

(c) faith stands in contrast to little faith and doubt (cf Held 1963:291).

The stilling of the storm in Matthew 8:18-27 is used by Held (1963:200) as an illustration of the last theme, namely that of discipleship. To Held discipleship does not feature that strongly as a separate theme in Matthew 8 and 9. It does however in other miracle stories, namely in Matthew 14:15-21; 15:32-38; 17:14-20. In contrast to Mark, where Jesus is depicted as a typical miracle worker, and the stilling of the storm as an example of his mighty acts (δυνάμεις; Mk 6:2), Matthew uses it as an example of discipleship, particularly because of the insertion of this story in the pericope of Matthew 8:19-22 (the conversation with the two men - a scribe and a disciple - who wished to become his disciples). The catchword ἀκολουθεῖν forms the link between the two stories. At sea Jesus again had a discussion with the disciples. Held (1963:203-204) says that, in short, Mark places the nature miracle of the stilling of the storm in the centre and the words addressed to the disciples are an appendage. He proceeds:

> By transposing the scene Matthew has created a conversation between the disciples and Jesus and placed this in the centre, so that now the stilling of the storm looks like an appendage. In this way it is no longer Jesus and the elements that constitute the theme of the narrative but Jesus and his disciples who are in peril. The miracle story becomes a story about the disciples.
>
> (Held 1963:204)[3]

Held (1963) thus emphasizes the christological function of Jesus as the Messiah of the deed. Along with this main function, the miracles also illustrate the themes of faith and discipleship. However, the challenge (conflict) between Jesus and the Pharisees is understated. Furthermore, the notions of the help Jesus presents to the marginalized and the consequences of Jesus' authority in connection with the conflict with the Jewish leaders, have to be developed to its full potential.

2.2.1.2 W Grundmann

In close relationship to Klostermann (1927:72; see also Burger 1973:273; Sand 1986:173;[4] Harrington 1991:115), Grundmann (1971:110-111, 245-246, 281-283) divides the whole of Matthew 4:23-9:35 into two main parts under the headings: *Das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch das Wort: Bergpredigt 4,23-7,29* and *Das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch die Tat: Die Taten seiner Barmherzigkeit 8,1-9,34*. Through this, Grundmann links the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle stories in the sense that both are viewed as the deeds (*Taten*) of Jesus. The difference is that the former are Jesus' deeds through his words and the latter the deeds of Jesus through his actions. This is an indication that Grundmann (1971:245) sees the collection of 8:1-9:34 also as christologically determined. He says:

> Hat die Bergpredigt den Zuspruch des Gottesreiches und die Ausle-
> gung des Gesetzes und der Propheten in Richtung auf die Bezeugung
> der Vaterschaft Gottes und der Liebe untereinander zum Inhalt, so
> wird mit der Ordnung der Vollmachtstaten Jesu zu einem zusammen-
> hängenden Bericht durch Matthäus erneut eine Verbindung zu Gesetz
> und Propheten hergestellt.
>
> (Grundmann 1971:245)

Matthew pictures ten miracles that agree with the ten miracles of Moses, which features prominently in the history of Israel. Thus, both the Sermon on the Mount and the collection of miracles have a common christological purpose. As Grundmann (1971:246) says: 'Der dem Mose verheißene eschatologische Prophet ist erschienen (Deut.18,15.18)'.

Furthermore, Grundmann (1972:281) correctly views that Matthew presented Jesus as the Messiah in word and deed. The peculiarity, however, is expressed in what Grundmann (1972:281) sees as the radicalness of the demands that the hearers receive, while the peculiarity of his deeds appear in the radicalness of his mercy. He (Grundmann), however, nowhere indicated why this demand of

mercy, reflected both in his words and deeds are that peculiar and radical. As he views it:

> Die Zuwendung zum Sünder, zum Kranken, zum Ausgestoßenen und Verachteten...ist aber ...nichts anderes als die Tatsache, daß Jesus in seinem Verhalten zu den Menschen das von ihm als Liebesforderung verstandene Gebot selbst erfüllt und eben dadurch den Menschen zur Erfüllung dieses Gebotes in seiner Nachfolge befreit. Jesus fordert nichts anderes als was es gibt.

<div align="right">(Grundmann 1972:282)</div>

Further on Grundmann (1972:283) states:

> Das Wort Jesu als Forderung hält den Menschen an, der durch Gottes Barmherzigkeit, wie sie in seinem Verhalten begegnet, zum Glauben frei geworden ist, zu tun was ihm widerfährt, ganze und barmherzige Liebe zu erweisen, die das Recht des anderen Menschen ernst nimmt.

This could all be true and we even find it quite convincing, but Grundmann nevertheless still does not give an answer as to *why* Jesus' words and deeds were 'peculiar and radical'. Chapter 3 of this study, the chapter on conflict theory, and chapter 4 on the social location of Matthew, might help us in aswering this.

2.2.1.3 B Gerhardsson

Like Held (1963) and Grundmann (1971), Gerhardsson (1979) also concentrates on the christological function of the miracle stories, although he does not explicitly state it. He, however, depicts Matthew as describing the *Messiah* in terms of his ἐξουσία (cf Gerhardsson 1979:19, 36-37). This, together with the fact that he admits that he strongly relied on the work of Held (1963; see Gerhardsson 1979:7), lead me to place him in this section.

One of the purposes of all the so-called summarizing accounts in the Gospel (Mt 4:23; 4:24-25; 8:16; 9:35; 14:13-14; 14:35-36; 15:29-31; 19:1-2; 21:14),

is to show that Jesus himself teaches and heals with an authority which in some way is one with himself (cf Gerhardsson 1979:20-21; 37). Jesus' task is to teach and heal and this he does in a miraculous manner. 'Jesus acts as the *healer of Israel*, the one who heals the wounds of Israel. In the pericope of his individual healing miracles we are given a closer insight into his secrets: his incomparable *exousia* and the way in which he exercises it' (Gerhardsson 1979:37).

The pericopes on Jesus' miracles are divided into two main groups, each with its own peculiar theme: (1) 'The pericopes of Jesus' therapeutic miracles in individual cases' (cf Gerhardsson 1979:38), and (2) 'The pericopes of Jesus' non-therapeutic miracles' (cf Gerhardsson 1979:52).

Gerhardsson (1979:40) does not accept the fact that the so-called 'miracle cycle' in Matthew 8 and 9 has a simple aim in itself. The miracle stories do not, as Grundmann (1971:245; see above) showed, specially represent the Messiah of deeds. 'He (Jesus - EJV) makes no clear distinction between the Messiah of the Word and the Messiah of deeds. In his actions the Messiah teaches and preaches at the same time as healing and driving out demons. Thus he is the Messiah of the Word in chapters 8-9 as well'. This might be true, but Gerhardsson thus neglects the fact that there are any possible nuance differences between the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle stories. He consequently also underestimates the important role Matthew 8 and 9 might have as such within the Gospel, especially to explicate the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

The principle theme of the therapeutic miracles (Mt 8:1-4; 8:5-13; 8:28-34; 9:1-8; 9:18-26; 9:20-22; 9:27-31; 9:32-34; 12:9-14; 12:22-32; 15:21-28; 17:14-20; 20:29-34) is: the *exousia* of Jesus and the faith of the humans. The main interest of the evangelist is to focus on the relationship between Jesus and the supplicants. He wants to show the *exousia* of Jesus and the faith of the supplicants, and what happens when the two meet. As Gerhardsson (1979:45) says: 'Matthew considers that he has understood the inner secrets of Jesus' healing miracles, and he lets both Jesus and the supplicants speak of this explicitly and unmistakably. The most important points in these pericopes are expressed in the *dialogues*'.

According to Gerhardsson (1979:45), Matthew saw Jesus as a divine figure, he was the Messiah, the Son of the living God who had incomparable *exousia*. Nothing was too difficult for him. With ease he heals everyone. 'Matthew has long since ceased finding anything *surprising*...in the therapeutic miracles of Jesus' (Gerhardsson 1979:45). Jesus heals with 'majestic supremacy'. He does not ask God to heal, far less does he heal in any other name. He heals all by himself, sometimes by a mere word and sometimes by touching the sick person (see Gerhardsson 1979:46 for examples to substantiate his point). The emphasis falls more on the *words* of Jesus by which his willingness to cure comes to the fore (cf Mt 8:1-4). Gerhardsson (1979:46) says that Jesus' words cast light upon the healer, the healing and the person healed. And what heals the patient is in most cases these instructional words themselves. The teaching is healing and the healing is teaching. It is, to Gerhardsson (1979:47) obvious that Matthew is concerned with emphasizing that Jesus' healings are acts of *mercy* and love. In the summaries of 9:36 and 14:14 it is said that Jesus has compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη) towards the crowds. '[H]is intervention is to be interpreted as an act of mercy and love' (Gerhardsson 1979:47).

In a section on further aspects of the question of faith, Gerhardsson (1979:49) states that the picture Matthew paints of the therapeutic Jesus is very clear in one respect: his ministry is public and directed outward. There are no narratives about any disciples being healed. The therapeutic activity is directed towards Israel and individual Israelites. Along with this fact is that they are worked on demand (with a few exceptions). Jesus' intervention is asked for: the supplicants turn to Jesus in faith. In relation to Held (1963:275), the faith of the supplicants is described as 'supplicatory faith' (*Gebetsglaube*), and their requests are granted. The therapeutic narratives portray a certain type of faith; as Gerhardsson (1979:50) puts it:

> ...it is the faith which is granted help in need, the faith that receives miracles....It is simple confidence in the power of Jesus and in his will to help. It is also a faith that knows what it wants and which active-

ly...expresses itself in making a plea to Jesus....It is a question of a confidence in Jesus that expresses both a will and a fighting spirit.

In chapter 4 of his book, Gerhardsson (1979:52) proceeds to deal with the so-called 'non-therapeutic miracles' (Mt 8:23-27; 14:13-21; 14:22-33; 14:28-31; 15:29-39; 21:18-22; 17:(24-)25b-27). The main theme of this group of miracles is the *exousia* of Jesus and the disciples (for a discussion of each individual pericope, see Gerhardsson 1979:52-60). 'Jesus reveals his *exousia* to his disciples on his own initiative, and in an unexpected and surprising manner' (Gerhardsson 1979:60). Jesus is revealed as having power over wind and waves. A new side of his *exousia* is revealed: it is greater and richer than his disciples had believed (cf Gerhardsson 1979:61). Another aspect of these pericopes is that the disciples are to share this extraordinary *exousia* of Jesus. For example, in the narrative of the feeding of the crowd (Mt 14:13-21), Jesus gives the disciples the ability to feed the crowd; in the story of Jesus' walking on the sea (Mt 14:22-33), Peter has the ability to do the same and when Jesus rebukes the disciples for being afraid in the boat (see also Mt 8:23-27), this may reasonably be taken to presuppose that his power over the storm protects them as well; 'they share Jesus' immunity to all kinds of danger. This implies presumably also that they have access to his *exousia*' (Gerhardsson 1979:61-62).

There are distinct differences between the *faith* of the supplicants in the therapeutic miracles and that of the disciples in the non-therapeutic miracles (cf Gerhardsson 1979:62-65). The faith of the supplicants are presented as umprob-lematic and exemplary (cf Mt 9:18-26), whereas the faith of the disciples is presented as 'problematic'.[5] But, as Gerhardsson (1979:64) wants to stress: it is important to note that the two groups of stories present two different aspects of faith. He says:

In the pericopes of the therapeutic miracles it is a question of elementary, fundamental faith: faith which demands help and is allowed to receive help in its need. In the pericopes of the non-thera-peutic miracles...it is as a rule a question of the faith which is to work

miracles itself....(It is) the faith which the disciples...need to enable them to carry out miraculous tasks Jesus has given them - to enable the *exousia* which they have received from Jesus to function. Perhaps we could call it the faith in their ministry.

(Gerhardsson 1979:64)

Gerhardsson is correct in this: The miracles and especially the non-therapeutic miracles, should stimulate the disciples and the readers to turn to those who need help.

The chapter on *Material concerning resistance and controversies* (Gerhardsson 1979:68) is somewhat disappointing, because it only touches very briefly on the issue of conflict. As point of departure, Gerhardsson (1979:68) assumes (quite vaguely) that the total picture in the Gospel of Matthew presupposes the conception that official Israel has definitively rejected Jesus. But he doubts whether the adversaries' polemics (from Mt 13:54-58 and 11:20-24) can give any intimation of how the adversaries interpreted his mighty acts (cf Gerhardsson 1979:72). Furthermore, the reaction of the Pharisees on the exorcisms in Matthew 9:34 is simple and clear but negative through and through: 'Jesus' exorcisms have a satanic background. He stands in the service of Satan, works through his power, and strengthens his reign' (Gerhardsson 1979:74). By this he 'spiritualized' the conflict. The conflict is taken out of a real life environment (conflict) and placed in a spiritualized context of a conflict between God and Satan. Of course it can be viewed in this way, but we must not forget that even 'spiritualized conflict' is a reflection of a real conflict. The 'real life conflict' is transferred to a higher level, a symbolic universe, which should act as legitimation of the real conflict (see Van Staden 1991:93-101 for a discussion of the so-called symbolic universe). This real conflict still has to be described, and this we intend doing in chapters 3 and 4 below.

Gerhardsson (1979:75-77) does correctly indicate that forgiveness, which is strongly demonstrated by the controversy on the forgiveness of sins in Matthew 9:1-8, takes a very important place in the Gospel of Matthew, but does not sufficiently show how and why this really leads to conflict with his adversaries.

Although this was not his intention, it still explicates the gap to be filled. This leads Gerhardsson (1979:79) to a disputable conclusion:

> I must repeat one point which as far as I can see is of great import-
> ance: *the adversaries only play a small, casual role in the texts on
> Jesus' miracles.* Confining ourselves to Matthew, we can observe
> that they are not even mentioned in the summaries nor in the
> narratives of the non-therapeutic miracles (his emphasis!).

It is not true that the adversaries are not mentioned in the non-therapeutic miracles (see Mt 17:24-26; cf Van Aarde 1993a:14-20). More seriously, we ask, can Gerhardsson really not see that the adversaries do play a *more than small and casual role* in Jesus' miracles. *He simply neglects and underestimates the controversies present in the miracle stories* in an otherwise well-considered study.

A short remark can be made on the *christological appellations* (cf Gerhards-son 1979:82-92). By way of summary he comes to the conclusion that in the majority of the miracle narratives, there is no (sic!; what about 'Son of God' in 8:29 and 14:33, 'Son of Man' in 9:6 and 'Son of David' in 9:27) explicit christol-ogical title. 'The Christological appellations occurring most frequently in the miracle narratives ("Lord", and "Lord, Son of David") only tell us a superficial part of the "truth" about Jesus' (Gerhardsson 1979:91). The most important interpretative elements are the dialogue elements: the words of the supplicants and of Jesus. Gerhardsson (1979:92) states it as follows:

> In the dialogues a very clear statement is made on the one hand of
> Jesus' unlimited resources of power (his *exousia*) and his will (his
> *thelein*) to have mercy and to serve; and on the other hand of the
> faith that is required on the part of his disciples, these men who -
> with *exousia* from him and his name - are to continue his work on
> earth every day until the end of time.

Gerhardsson (1979) fully develops the mighty acts of Jesus to indicate that he behaves with incomparable *exousia* as the healer of Israel. No doubt, he clearly explained Jesus' christological function in terms of this *exousia*. But, *exousia*, or *authority* also features strongly in conflict theory. Gerhardsson, however, failed to link the *exousia* of Jesus to the *controversy* with his opponents. Indeed this was never his intention, but this identified deficiency, we intend to fill.

2.2.1.4 J Gnilka

Although Gnilka (1986:360) does not see that the so-called miracle cycle can have one general theme, he nevertheless presents one (see the citation below). He says that what is striking is that the narrative element is moved into the background in favour of the spoken words (dialogues). The miracles are used in the requests/appeals that were actual for the addressees of the Gospel. Two appeals (*Anliegen*) surface as Gnilka (1986:350) states: 'Deutlich…treten die Anliegen des Glaubens (Hauptmann, Totenerweckung, Blindenheilung) und der Nachfolge (Nachfolgesprüche, Seesturm, Zöllner Matthäus) in den Vordergrund'. He calls these appeals the 'zentralen Anliegen', which determines all other questions with regard to the forgiving of sin, showing of mercy, fasting and the question on the law which still resounds in the stories of the leper and of the ruler. Furthermore, one must not lose sight of the christological dimension. To Gnilka (1986:350) the term 'der Messias der Tat' for Matthew 8:ff is unsatisfying. A few important christological predicates come to the fore: Son of God, Kyrios, the bridegroom, Son of David. However, the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of David' feature most prominently. Gnilka (1986:350-351) concludes:

> *Der Wunderzyklus akzentuiert am Schluß die gnädige Hilfe, die der Davidsohn seinem Volk Israel gewährt*….Die vielfalt der Anliegen der Wunderzyklus verdichten sich zu der Zusammenschau, daß dem Gottessohn und Davidssohn Jesus, der sich gnädig seinem Volk zuwendet, im Glauben und in der Bereitschaft der Nachfolge zu begegnen ist (my emphasis).

It thus seems that Gnilka has indeed indicated that the miracles have one particular (christological) theme: to portray Jesus, the Messiah (Son of David), as the merciful helper of Israel. This might be true, but it does not bring us closer to an answer to the explanation of the emerging conflict in the two miracle chapters of Matthew's Gospel.

2.2.2 The ecclesiological function of the miracle stories

A citation from the work of Hummel (1966:54) can be seen as characteristic of the section to follow:

> Inwiefern auch die Streitgespräche des Matthäus christologisches Zeugnis sind, wird noch zu zeigen sein. Ein charakteristischer Unterscheid zwischen Markus und Matthäus liegt jedoch darin, daß bei Matthäus das Ziel nicht die christologische Aussage ist, *sondern die Legitimierung des gemeindlichen Lebens*, das durch die Schlüssel-gewalt (9,1-8), durch die Gemeinschaft mit Sündern und Heiden (9,9-13) und durch eine Anzahl von Halachoth gekennzeichnet ist, die den pharisäischen widersprechen (my emphasis).

Hummel (1966:54) combines four important aspects: (1) the dismissal of the christological function of (2) the disputes (*Streitgespräche*), in relation to the miracle stories, (3) in favour of legitimization of the community's life, (4) standing in relation to the sinners and the pagans. We will call this the ecclesiological function of the miracle stories.

It is a pity that Hummel (1966:124) does not develop this ecclesiological perspective in the miracle stories in chapters 8 and 9, but falls back to the twofold christological distinction of the 'Messiah of the Word' and 'The Messiah of the deed' as far as these two chapters are concerned.

The works of WG Thompson (1971), C Burger (1973), JD Kingsbury (1977) and U Luz (1987, 1990) will be discussed. They all do in some way or another emphasize this ecclesiological function, although some shortcomings will also be stressed in order to indicate the contribution I wish to make in this study.

2.2.2.1 WG Thompson

In following Held (1963), Thompson (1971:368) divides Matthew 8 and 9 into four parts: 8:1-17; 8:18-9:17; 9:18-31; 9:32-34. He differs from Held, however, in that he takes Matthew as a composition in its own right, without comparing it to Mark. He is also concerned with the fact that these chapters have a function in the Gospel as a whole.

Each of the four parts has its own theme, namely 8:1-17 focuses on the person of Jesus, his words and his actions (cf Thompson 1971:368-370); 8:18-9:17 is unified by the theme of discipleship (cf Thompson 1971:371-378); 9:18-31 develops the theme of faith (cf Thompson 1971:379-385) and, to Thompson (1971:385-388), the purpose of the miracle stories is summarized in the conclusion in 9:32-34, which deals with the reaction of the crowd and the Pharisees. The latter is of particular importance because Thompson comes to some significant conclusions.

The miracle of the healing of the dumb man introduces the double reaction in 9:33b-34: 'The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons." ' The reaction of the crowd is not unexpected, they are more often described as being astonished (cf 7:29) about his *authority* (*exousian*). But the Pharisees, as a well-defined group, for the first time in the Galilean ministry are openly hostile to Jesus (cf Thompson 1971:386). He proceeds: 'At the meal with tax-collectors and sinners the tone of their question about Jesus' conduct *does not reveal such opposition* (9:11)' (Thompson 1971:386; my emphasis). *But, this is a dubious statement*. Although the reaction of the Pharisees (as a distinct group) in 9:34 for the first time is openly (manifest), it cannot hold that the clash between Jesus and the Pharisees about the meal with the tax-collectors, does not reveal such opposition. As we will later illustrate in more depth, it reveals what we will call 'latent conflict'. Nevertheless, and this is of value, Thompson (1971) places this opposition in broader context: 'Now, however, their harsh accusation that Jesus casts out demons by the prince of demons sets the tone for future confrontations in which they become increasingly hostile (e.g., 12:14)' (Thompson 1971:386).

The conclusion Thompson (1971:387) comes to, is:

> Finally,...the double reaction to the cure of the blind and dumb
> demoniac with the following debate (12:22-37) builds on the
> conclusion to the miracle-section (9:32-34). The obvious connections
> reveal that Matthew selected, arranged and composed his version of
> Jesus' miracles (8:1-9:34) *to demonstrate that the greater part of*
> *Galilee...did not become his disciples because they failed to recognize*
> *in his activity that he was the promised Messiah* (my emphasis).

At first sight there seems to be little difference between Thompson and the scholars as presented in the previous section. As in the previous section, he also divided the material according to themes. The difference lies in that Thompson also uses the miracle stories as demonstrative material, but not as demonstration *backwards* to the Sermon on the Mount, but *forwards* to the forthcoming conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, which eventually leads to Jesus' crucifixion. Although he does not develop it in detail, he at least acknowledges that conflict (opposition) is an *emerging element*. This opens up the possibility to view the conflict in the broader context of the community of Matthew.

2.2.2.2 C Burger

Common to the different interpreters (Klostermann 1927:72; Schniewind 1964:36; Grundmann 1971:111; Marxsen 1964:130; Hummel 1966:139; Held 1963:246), says Burger (1973:274), is the fact that the miracle stories were used throughout as demonstrations: 'Jedes einzelne dokumentiert Jesu ungewöhnliche Vollmacht, und der Zyklus zeigt ihn als neuen Mose, Erfüller prophetischer Hoffnungen oder barmherzigen Helfer....Das Gewicht fällt auf Jesu Handeln als Wundertäter, und als gemeinsame Aussage des Zyklus ergibt sich ein christologisches Bekenntnis' (Burger 1973:274). Burger challenges this, according to him, widely accepted view. Chapters 8 and 9 of the Gospel of Matthew, can no longer be seen as a demonstrative collection of miracles with an exclusive christological aim (cf Burger 1973:275-276; see Burger 1973:276-283 for the six arguments he uses to

substantiate his view). The thesis he arrives at is that the two chapters are much more complicated than being just a simple collection. The chapters comprise not only miracle stories but also dialogues and explanations. He says: 'Und verschiedene Einzelstücke sind in einer Weise bearbeitet, die neben dem christologischen *ein starkes ekklesiologisches Interesse des Evangelium verrät*' (Burger 1973:283; my emphasis). He compares Matthew with modern art: 'Matthäus hat eine Collage geschaffen: ein Bild also, das aus verschiedenen Materialien besteht, die als solche durchaus identifizierbar sind, jedoch in ihrer gegenseitigen Zuordnung eine neue Aussagen ergeben' (Burger 1973:283).

As first focal point, Matthew puts three miracle stories together which all have in common that the persons involved all had no, or limited rights in the Jewish community. They all have the fundamental meaning (*grundzätzliche Bedeutung*) that Jesus was concerned with the well-being of those without rights (cf Burger 1973:284).

The second unit is marked by geographic information. Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Capernaum. The pericopes all involve the theme of following (*Nachfolge*). Chapter 9 takes place in Capernaum and is marked by the controversies between Jesus and the scribes, Pharisees and disciples of John (cf Burger 1973:285). Burger (1973:286) says: 'Das gemeinsame Thema der Folge von Streitgesprächen ist *die Lösung der christlichen Gemeinde aus dem verband des Judentums*. Als charakteristisch für die entstehende Kirche gelten Sündenvergebung, Tischgemeinschaft und Freiheit vom jüdischem Brauchtum' (my emphasis).

Matthew closes his composition with three miracle stories with the common theme of faith. Faith in Jesus creates new life, new visions and new discussions: 'Die drei Wundergeschichten führen das Thema der drei Streitgespräche sachgemäß fort' (Burger 1973:287).

The conclusion Burger (1973:287) comes to is:

Matthäus schildert zunächst Jesu Zuwendung zu den Ausgestoßenen, Fernen und Rechtlosen, er handelt sodann von der Nachfolge Jesu, kommt auf die neuen Gegebenheiten in der Gemeinde zu sprechen und schließt mit einer Szenenfolge, die der Glaubenden neues Leben,

neues sehen und neues Reden verheißt. Das Gesamtthema dieser Komposition ist die Kirche Jesu Christi. Matthäus schildert das Auftreten Jesu in einer Weise, daß darin Wesen und Aufgaben der Kirche im voraus abgebildet sind.

The evangelist legitimized the reality of the church. He transferred his understanding of the church back into the life of Jesus. Chapter 8 and 9 of his Gospel present the ἱερὸς λόγος of the church or, in Burger's (1973:287) own words: 'die Gründungslegende der Christlichen Kirche'.

Burger correctly sees Jesus as the merciful helper, turning to those in the Jewish community with limited or no rights. Furthermore, the worth of Burger's thesis is that he correctly takes the focus away from the exclusive christological point of view and places the miracle stories in the broader (ecclesiological) context of the opposition between the church and the Jewish community. This is a step forwards. It implies that conflict is present, which means that it now at least is recognized. Yet much work needs to be done to explicate this 'Lösung der christlichen Gemeinde' in terms of conflict theory. This make it necessary to be more specific about the community of Matthew, which I intend to do in chapter 4.

2.2.2.3 JD Kingsbury

To Kingsbury (1978), Matthew 8 and 9 have a twofold function: a christological and paradigmatic function. Kingsbury's (1978) discussion of these two chapters might as well have been grouped with the previous section on the christological functions of the miracle stories. But, it is because of this second function, i.e. the *paradigmatic* function, that we place Kingsbury here. He says: 'Chaps. 8-9 function not only as a major part of the gospel-story Matthew narrates, *but also as a form of theological address directed to the members of his community*' (Kingsbury 1978:568; my emphasis). The miracle stories are paradigmatic in the sense that they could reveal something of the real life conflict of the community.

In order to ascertain the christology of these two chapters, Kingsbury (1978:564) starts with the 'formula-quotation' in 8:16-17 in which Jesus' ministry of healing is described as one which 'took our illnesses and bore our diseases'.[6]

In his capacity as the Son of God, Jesus Messiah both delivers the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 and undertakes his ministry of healing in chapters 8-9 (cf Kingsbury 1978:565). In chapters 8 and 9, Jesus is presented as the Son of God, rather than as the Servant of God.

The two chapters also function as a form of theological address directed to the members of his community. Says Kingsbury (1978:568): 'In passages such as 8:18-22 and 9:1-17, Matthew employs words of Jesus and stories of his deeds in order to tell fellow Christians of the cost and commitment of discipleship *and of matters that distinguish them from contemporary Judaism'* (my emphasis). Kingsbury (1978:570) is of the opinion that Matthew in his editing of the miracle stories placed emphasis on the personal encounter, between Jesus and the suppliant(s), mediated as much or more by the dialogue than by the miraculous deed. In this encounter, Jesus stands out as a figure of exalted station and divine authority. 'They, in need, call upon him as "kyrie" ("Lord"), i.e., as one who wields divine power....He for his part mercifully hears their appeal for help or healing and...he "saves" them...or "heals" them..'. (Kingsbury 1978:570; see Kingsbury 1978:570 for textual substantiation of his statements). In their encounter with Jesus, the suppliants were described as persons of faith who desired and grasped after the help of God.

The key to a proper understanding of their paradigmatic function is provided by putting the personal encounter and the dialogue between Jesus and the suppliants at the centre of the miracle stories. Kingsbury (1978:571) says that the mystery of Jesus' divine sonship is that in him God has drawn near to dwell with his people to the end of the ages, thus inaugurating *the eschatological time of salvation*. In the presence of Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Rule of God, is present reality (Mt 8:29).

> As a present reality in Jesus, Son of God, the Kingdom of Heaven *has entered into eschatological conflict with the kingdom of Satan* (8:29; 12:25-28; cf. also 9:34). *The miracle-stories reflect this conflict....* Matthew looked back upon the exorcisms, healing, and nature miracles Jesus performed...and saw him as 'plundering' the kingdom,

or 'house', of the 'strong man' Satan (12:29),...In this sense Jesus fulfilled OT prophecy and 'took our illnesses and bore our diseases' (8:17).

<div align="right">(Kingsbury:1978:571; my emphasis)</div>

In frequently using terms like 'heal' (ἰάομαι, 8:8,13) or 'save' (σῴζω, 8:25; 9:21,22) in the miracle stories, Matthew refers in a more absolute way to the *eschatological salvation* that comes through Jesus. With this the miracle stories get a function as 'paraenetic paradigms'. This means, as Kingsbury (1978:572) says, that these stories invite the Christians of the Matthean community to approach the exalted Son of God, with their own petitions for help in the firm assurance that he will hear and mercifully employ his divine power to sustain them in time of distress and affliction, for they were a community wrecked by persecution from without and internal dissension from within. 'In these stories, Matthew held up Jesus to them as one who in their day also "takes our illnesses and bears our disease" (8:17)' (Kingsbury 1978:572).

By way of summary, Kingsbury (1978:572-573) says that christologically these two chapters presented Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God. *Paradigmatically* they state to Matthew's community the cost and commitment of discipleship. Paraenetically, they invite these Christians to approach the exalted Son of God and to offer to him their petition for help in the sure knowledge that he desires to hear them and will aid them in time of trial and need.

Kingsbury (1978), as indicated above, again falls back on the christological function of the miracle stories (which we as such do not doubt). Nevertheless, he does emphasize that there is emerging conflict (see below). He, however, nowhere indicates why there is persecution of the community and thus why there is conflict. Where he does refer to conflict, he spiritualizes it to an eschatological conflict between Jesus and Satan (as Gerhardsson 1979:74), which leaves open the question as to why there was such a severe tension between Jesus and Judaism.

In his later works Kingsbury (1987, 1988a, 1992) deals with conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel, but, there are still deficiencies. We could

have dealt with Kingsbury (1987, 1988a, 1992) separately from his 1978 work, reflected in this section, because in his 1978 work he under-estimated conflict as such. In these works he prominently deals with conflict. But because these works are of the same author, and there is progress in his thoughts, we have to give him the credit for that in this section. He especially introduces us to the aspect of conflict in the whole of Matthew. Kingsbury (1987:57) states:

> In the development of the plot in the respective Gospels, the Jewish
> leaders play a more significant role than the disciples. The reason is
> *that the element of conflict is of the essence of the Gospel-plot*, and
> at the human level it is particularly with the Jewish leaders that Jesus
> became embroiled in moral struggle (my emphasis).

Without going in too much detail, Kingsbury's presentation of conflict in Matthew will be given in order to indicate his shortcomings. Kingsbury deals with conflict as this unfolds within the broad outline of the story of Jesus in the plot of the Gospel. Jesus is, according to Kingsbury (1987:65), presented to the implied reader in the first part of the Gospel (Mt 1:1-4:16). But the implied reader also becomes acquainted with the Jewish leaders. As they at first appear (2:4-6), they act in service of Herod, their 'precursor' (cf Kingsbury 1987:65). As Kingsbury (1987:66) concludes:

> In their first major appearance (3:7-10), John, the forerunner of
> Jesus, denounces them (the Jewish leaders - EJV) as being 'evil' and
> for eschatological judgement. And in the pericope on the temptation
> (4:1-11), the groundwork is laid for a later point in the story at which
> they will be seen to have affinity with Satan, the tempter and the
> fountainhead of all evil.

According to Kingsbury (1987:66-67), the second part of the Gospel (4:17-16:20), can be divided into two sections namely 4:17-11:1 and 11:2-16:20. To Kingsbury (1987:66; see also 1992:349), the conflict in 4:17-11:1 *still remains preparatory*

to the real conflict to come in 11:2-16:20. In the first section (4:17-11:1), Jesus discharges his ministry to Israel of teaching, preaching, and healing. In the second section (11:2-16:20), Israel responds by rejecting Jesus which calls for Jesus' repudiation in 11:6, 16-24;13:57. But Kingsbury's view that the conflict in 4:17-11:1 is 'preparatory,' and more specifically *that the emerging conflict in chapter 9 is still preliminary to the more intense conflict to come*, is not convincing. We, however, challenge the arguments Kingsbury (1987:67-68) uses to support his view: conflict does not need to become mortal first to be intense or real (as we shall see later in the discussion on the definition of conflict). The fact that the conflict in chapter 9 is not yet 'to the death' does not imply that it is not intense at all. In fact, the suggestion of the crowd in Matthew 7:29 that the scribes are, unlike Jesus, 'without authority', already prepares the scene for the intense conflict to follow. Kingsbury's second argument is even less convincing, even contradicting in itself. It might be true 'that none of the issues that provoke the Jewish leaders to take exception to the acts of Jesus...touches on the Mosaic law as such' (Kingsbury 1987:68; see also 1992:351). But, although performing miracles under God-given authority (9:1-8), dining with tax collectors and sinners (9:11), temporary suspension of fasting (9:14) and casting out a demon (9:32-34), does not directly 'touch the Mosaic law', it does touch the fixed purity prescriptions in the Jewish community, certainly by having table fellowship with 'sinners'. Jesus knew these purity rules, but nevertheless touches the sick and reaches out for the 'unclean' (see Malina 1981:122). By doing this, Jesus openly transgressed the purity rules (see Malina & Rohrbauch 1992:83), and this brought him in direct confrontation with the leaders. Furthermore, Kingsbury (1987:68) contradicts himself when stating: 'Now it is true, of course, that not every matter, to be "utterly serious" within the world of Matthew's story, must have to do with the Mosaic law. After all, for forgiving sins, and affirming that he is the Son of God, Jesus incurs the potential capital charge of blasphemy (9:3;26:63-66)'. *The fact that the leaders already in 9:3 charge Jesus with blasphemy, even though not openly, indicates that here is more than just preliminary conflict.*

Kingsbury's third argument also falls down. Although it is true that Jesus is nowhere directly attacked in chapter 8 or 9, there is no reason to doubt at all,

given the context, that the leaders' attacks (9:11-12,14-15;34), are aimed at Jesus' address, and there is no argument to convincingly substantiate 'preliminary' conflict. His view here coincides with his previous dealing with Matthew 8 and 9 in particular, where conflict does not feature at all.

Despite Kingsbury's above indicated underestimation of conflict in Matthew 8 and 9, he goes on to indicate that in the second section of 4:17-16:20, 'the leitmotif of the story centres on Israel's repudiation of Jesus. Correlatively, Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders becomes an integral part of this motif' (Kingsbury 1987:70; see also 1992:352).

In turning to the third part of his analysis of Matthew's story (16:21-28:20), Kingsbury (1987:70) says: 'As is apparent, Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders is likewise integral to the leitmotif of this part of the story'. Here the conflict is mortal in nature, with the final clash and resolution of the conflict in dramatic detail in the passion narratives in chapters 26-28. Jesus reduces all the leaders to silence (22:46) and the only option left to them to resolve the conflict, was to put him to death (26:2-5). Ironically, it is by putting him to death, and later by the resurrection, that God vindicates Jesus in his conflict with the leaders (28:6,18-20; cf Kingsbury 1987:73).

It is obvious, up to this point, that conflict forms an integral part of Matthew's Gospel. In fact, Kingsbury has indicated (however not in detail in chapters 8 and 9), that conflict forms a strong *Leitmotif* in the Gospel. But, although Kingsbury clearly indicates the development of conflict, as it unfolds in the plot of the narrative of Matthew as a whole, he nowhere gives an explanation or an answer to the important question: 'Why is Jesus in constant conflict with the Jewish leaders?' It cannot be doubted that conflict is intertwined in the story of Jesus, but the question 'why', remains open. In order to help us answer this basic question, we will have to turn to 'conflict theory'.

2.2.2.4 U Luz

The article of Luz (1987): *Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9*, and the corresponding summary called *Die Wunder des Messias Israels* in his commentary on Matthew (cf Luz 1990:64-68), are so packed with information, that a short

overview is hardly possible, without losing some of the essence of it.[7] Matthew does not want to present a simple collection of miracle stories. We should rather (according to Luz 1987:152) start with the assumption that Matthew is, as he says: '...eine zusammenhängende *Geschichte'*. Matthew is a narrative in which the acts of Jesus create something. The reader of the narrative does not stand at the same point at the end of chapter 9 as he/she was at the beginning of chapter 8 (cf Luz 1990:65). The whole narrative, to Luz (1990:65) is directed to 9:33b-34: καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες, Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ. οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια, that is the differing (*gespaltenen*) reaction of the crowd and the Pharisees. At the end of the miracle cycle of Matthew 8-9, there came a splitting (division) in Israel: the negative reaction of the Pharisees, who were to Matthew the strongest representatives of the Jewish leaders, is contrasted with the neutral-positive reaction of the crowd. 'Die Wunder Jesu in Kap. 8-9 haben im Makrotext des Evangeliums die Function, diese Spaltung in Israel zu bewirken. Sie bilden die Exposition *des später ausbrechenden Konflikts....Sie bereiten die Spaltung in Israel vor'* (Luz 1987:153; my emphasis).

Luz (1987:153) here builds his thesis on an earlier assumption, as reflected in the first part of his commentary on Matthew (cf Luz 1985). He assumes that the Gospel of Matthew originated at a point were the Jewish-Christian community stood at a turning point (*Wendepunkt*). The congregation experienced the destruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish war as the judgement of God over Israel. He says: 'In dieser Situation entschloß sie sich, ihre Jesus-verkündigung zu tragen' (Luz 1985:67). On the mission to the heathen, Luz (1985:67) continues:

> Der ganze Ablauf der Jesusgeschichte begründet diesen Umbruch: Matthäus erzählt sie als Geschichte des Wirkens des Messias Jesus in seinem heiligen Volk Israel. Er schildert den *Konflikt*, der sich anbahnt, und den »Rückzug« Jesu aus seinem Volk in den Jüngerkreis. *Es kommt dann zum letzten, dramatischen großen Konflikt mit Israel in Jerusalem. Er kulminiert in der Passionsgeschichte*, wo

- sich das heilige Volk auf die Seite seiner es irreleitenden Führer schlägt (27,24f; my emphasis).

The Gospel shows how the Jews were seperated from Israel. The response to this was the command to the disciples to make disciples of the heathen (28:16-20). 'Dieser Bruch vollzog sich auch in der Geschichte der Gemeinde, die mit ihrer Israelmission scheiterte, das göttliche Gericht der Zerstörung Jerusalems erlebte und nun vom Evangelisten zu einem neuen Aufbruch gerufen wird' (Luz 1985:67).

The conflict Luz talks about is seen clearly as culminating in the last great conflict of the passion-narratives. But, the question can be raised: what about the previous conflicts? Are they also to be seen as 'preliminary' to the great conflict, as Kingsbury (1987:66-67) suggests? This view we challenged (see above).

There is still another outcome of chapter 8-9, which has consequences for the Gospel as a whole: in 9:36 Jesus sees the pastorless (*hirtenlosen*) crowd and he has pity on them. From 9:33f, we know they were without pastor (shepherd): the Pharisees, pictured as against the crowd, rejected Jesus, and through this they no more were their pastors. In this situation, the disciples are commanded to be workers in the crop or harvest (*Ernte*) - the shepherdless people. Towards the beginning of the miracle cycle, a new situation with regard to the disciples emerged. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, they were, with the crowd, *listeners* to the Gospel; in the miracle cycle, they were Jesus' partners and after chapters 8 and 9 they became the leaders themselves: 'Sie treten nun-mehr, nach Kap. 8-9, als Apostel Jesu dem Volk gegenüber' (cf Luz 1987:153-154).

> Das Thema 'Jüngerschaft' ist also in der Tat in Kap 8-9 nicht ein Thema neben mehreren, sondern in der ganzen Erzählung von Mt 8-9 geht es darum,...Als Antwort auf dieses barmherzige Wirken Jesu entsteht die Gemeinde....*An eben diesen Heilungen entstehen aber auch die Konflikte, die zur Spaltung in Israel führen...*
>
> (Luz 1987:155; my emphasis)

Thus, through the miracles of the Messiah, a community (*Gemeinde*) came into existence in Israel.

But, why is it that Matthew placed the miracles into one unit? To answer this question, Luz (1987:156) says that Matthew has a *depthstructure (Tiefenstruktur)* through which the author communicates with the readers. Matthew wants to comfort, strengthen, encourage, admonish and demand the reader on this level. In this, Matthew tells about the founding-history of his church. He not only tells the history (*Geschichte*) of Jesus, but also the history of the community of Matthew who follow him. This community originated out of Israel, departed from Israel, was persecuted by Israel, separated from Israel and finally turned to the Gentiles in mission (see also chapter 4 below). They experience the history of Jesus as their own basic history and also as the continuation of the deeds of God before and after Easter (cf Luz 1987:156-157; 1990:66). With this ground-thesis in mind, the following remarks can be made about the miracle stories:

(1) Matthew starts the history of Jesus' actions in Israel with a block of miracle stories. He shows that at the beginning of the history of the community, we find the unitary (*zusammenhängendes*) and uninterrupted act of God through Jesus. The history of the community starts with the acts of mercy of the Messiah. All the other, i.e. the call to follow, the faith of the healed, the conflict with Jesus, all are reactions to the initial history of the merciful acts of the Messiah. Matthew wants to convey that the acts of the Messiah are the acts of God (cf Luz 1987:157).

(2) Matthew repeatedly breaks through the timely retrospective. Says Luz (1987:157): 'Mt 8,11f und 9,15b sind Weissagungen des "omniscienten" Protagonisten Jesus, die sich auf die Zeit der Kirche, resp. der Endgerichts beziehen. Die Verallgemeinerung der ἐξουσία Jesu in 9,8...setzt die Erfahrung der Sündenvergebung in der Gemeinde voraus'.

Luz (1987:158) proceeds with the following statement: '*Neben der indirekten Gegenwartsbedeutung der Wunder Jesu als Anfang der eigenen Geschichte der Gemeinde haben sie auch noch eine direkte Gegenwartsbedeutung*' (his emphasis).

Jesus' deeds in the past act as 'transparancies' of the community in the present. The transparencies function on different levels. The miracles of Jesus could report experiences that the community are still able to experience. For instance, Matthew 10:1,8 indicates that the healings are constitutive for the command to the disciples and the nature of the congregation. Also, when there is referred to the faith of the healed or the 'little faith ' of the disciples, the faith experience of the congregation is immediately implied. The same is true of the forgiving of sin. 'Blindness' and 'seeing' are metaphorically meant as well: 'Die physische Heilung von Blinden ist gleichsam nur der Kern oder physische Ausdruck dessen, was mit jeden Menschen geschieht, wenn er Jesus begegnet: Er wird sehend' (Luz 1987:158). The word ἀκολουθέω denotes to be underway in obedience to, and with Jesus Christ. 'Zur Transparenz der Wundergeschichten helfen auch Elemente liturgischer Sprache, wie die Gebetsanrede κύριε' (Luz 1987:159). The raising of the daughter of the ruler is the transparency of the coming raising of the dead.

What is important to note is, as Luz (1987:159) says: 'Die meisten Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9 sind in ihrem Sinn *mehrschichtig*' (my emphasis). Thus, for instance, the healing of the paralysed in Matthew 9:2-8 has both an indirect and direct transparent meaning: it indicates that the *conflict* with the scribes was part of the congregation, and the possibility of forgiveness was also part of the present situation of the congregation. He concludes: '*Die matthäischen Wundergeschichten sind Teil der für die Gemeinde grundlegenden Geschichte Jesu und haben gerade als solche transparente Bedeutung*' (Luz 1987:159; his emphasis). This conclusion, as was the case with Kingsbury (see above), makes it necessary to present a chapter on the social location of Matthew (see chapter 4 below).

The miracles are part of Matthew's christology: 'Jesus der "damals" Wunder getan hat, ist für Matthäus von Anfang seines Evangeliums an der "Immanuel" (1,24), der alle Tage bei seiner Gemeinde ist bis Ende der Welt (28,20)' (Luz 1987:160).

We must acknowledge that Luz, in both his mentioned article and in the summary of his commentary on the two chapters, gave the most comprehensive view on Matthew 8 and 9 thus far, and therefore we cannot lightly pass him by.

He does not lie too much emphasis on the christological function of the miracle stories (except for the last remark cited above). In the interests of our study, we have to acknowledge that he rightly observed conflict to be already present in these two chapters.

But, as point of critique against Luz, it seems that he, like Kingsbury (1987:66-67; see above), stresses conflict, but sees the *real* conflict culminating in the passion narratives (at the end of the Gospel) and where he does deal with conflict in Matthew 8 and 9, it evolves only at the *end* of the so-called miracle cycle, in the reaction of the Pharisees in 9:34 (cf Luz 1987:153). This seems to contradict his own view that 9:2-8, as indirect transparent, involves conflict with the scribes. Furthermore, we accept the possibility of a split between Jesus and Israel (congregation and the Jews). However we differ from him that the separation between the Matthean community and Israel was completed and this opens up the need for a chapter on the social location of Matthew. But, *why* was there a possible split? This question (as we will also see in the following section), remains the question to elaborate on. We by now seem to have an obvious answer to the question why Jesus was in conflict with the leaders: Jesus was in conflict because he acted out of mercy and forgave sinners and the weak their sins. He was in conflict because he turned to the helpless. Yet, why should he be in conflict with the Jewish leaders at all, when it seems as if he (Jesus) had such 'noble motives'?

2.2.3 *Conflict* as phenomenon, studied in relation to the Gospel of Matthew

As we have already indicated, much mention is made of the existing conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, not only as this conflict prevails in Matthew 8 and 9, but also in the Gospel as a whole. For Luz (1990:63) Matthew 9:34 indicates a split in Israel: 'Die Schlußnotiz weist so darauf hin, welchen Ort Kap. 8-9 im Ganzen Evangelium haben. Sie leiten die Spaltung ein, die der Messias in seinem Volk bewirkt und die mit dem Nein Israels zu Jesus enden wird'.

There are a number of scholars who stress the aspect of conflict in the broader context of the Gospel or miracle stories (apart from Kingsbury and Luz). We will try to determine whether they did appropriately explain the conflict. In this

section we will view the works of G Theißen (1974), D Patte (1987), BJ Malina (1988b), BJ Malina & JH Neyrey (1988), AJ Saldarini (1991) and GN Stanton (1992a). With the exception of Patte (1987), these scholars view the miracle stories and the conflict from a sociological perspective, which explains why I chose them. This, of course, is only a selection from the scholars. Hummel (1966); Hare (1967);[8] Saldarini (1988a, 1988b, 1988c); Pantle-Schieber (1989); Overman (1990); Dunn (1991); Kingsbury (1991); Segal (1991); Stark (1991); White (1991); Stanton (1992b); and Duling (1993), who all in some way or another contributed to the description of the community of Matthew in conflict with the Jewish leaders, should have been taken into consideration. We, however, will account for them more specifically in chapter 4 in relation to the community of Matthew.

2.2.3.1 G Theißen

The miracle stories, to Theißen (1974:229), have a social function. What is of particular importance is his thesis that the belief in miracles (*Wunderglauben*), the ,miracle-charismatic (*Wundercharismatiker*) or charismatic miracles (*Wundercharisma*), have a legitimating and motivating function in social conflict (cf Theißen 1974:241, 244, 255). Distinction is made between the magic (*Magie*) of a magician (*Zauberer*) and the miracle (*Wunder*) of a miracle-charismatic (*Wundercharismatiker*). Magic is the individual reaction to social disintegration. It has no intention to become public. It remains in darkness. However, the miracle-charismatic operates in the open. He seeks new forms of social integration and articulates a new social identity. Through this he inevitably comes into conflict with his environment (*Umwelt*), whereas the magician avoids it (cf Theißen 1974:240). After presenting a few examples Theißen (1974:241) says:

> Bei...politischen...Widerstandsbewegugen ist unübersehbar, daß Wundercharisma eine Funktion in sozialen Konflikten hat. Das gilt aber auch für jene Wundercharismatiker, die weniger eine politische Erneuerung als eine umfassende Heilslehre oder neue religiöse Gedanke vertraten. *Fast alle stehen in Konflikt und Spannung zu ihrer*

Umwelt....Ablehnung von Wundercharismatikern hat tiefere Gründe: Sie waren religiöse Reformer, vertraten neue Gedanken und Impulse. Der gültigen Gestalt des Lebens setzen sie eine neue entgegen. *Dies mußte zum Konflikt führen*:...Jesus (wird) gekreuzigt....Die soziale function des Wundercharisma besteht in seiner legitimierenden und motivierenden Kraft in sozialen Konflikten verschiedener art (my emphasis).

Although every conflict has to be investigated in its own right, there are certain factors in relation to the early christian miracle stories that according to Theißen (1974:244) they all have in common. The first is generally speaking the rural environment of the miracle stories (cf Theißen 1974:244-247). Of more importance to our study, is Theißen's (1974:247-251) view that most of the miracle stories are directed at the lower layers the society. He says: '...die Wundergeschichten lassen sich als Ausdrucksformen unterer Schichten verstehen' (Theißen 1974:247). Both the exorcisms and healing benefit those who are isolated, and re-establish supplicants into society.

Although the miracle stories are directed at the lower layers, some are directed at the higher layers as well. Says Theißen (1974:250): 'Wenn charisma-tischer Wunderglaube generell in einem Konfliktfeld zwischen alten und neuen Lebensformen entsteht, so ist für diese Wundergeschichten zu konkretisieren, daß die durch sie legitimierte neue Lebensform ihren sozialen Ort vorwiegend in den unteren Schichten hatte. *Gewiß ist damit die in den Wundergeshichten zum Ausdruck kommende soziale Dynamik noch nicht ausreichend erfaßt*' (my emphasis). Therefore the miracle stories also include socio-cultural factors (cf Theißen 1974:251-255). The miracle stories went beyond the socio-cultural lines (*Grenzen*). They also articulated the consciousness of these lines. The gentile in Matthew 8:7ff comes across as having a low self-esteem.

Thus, the miracle stories do have a legitimating and motivating function in social conflict. In early christianity, says Theißen (1974:255):

...ist der Konflikt eines neues Heilsverständnisses mit den bestehenden Lebensformen durch drei soziale Faktoren mitbedingt: durch den Gegensatz von Stadt und land, der jedoch ohne entscheidende Bedeutung ist, den Unterschied verschiedener Schichten und die Spannung zwischen verschiedenen Kulturen und Volksgruppen.

It is clear that Theißen (1974) unambiguously linked the miracle stories to social conflict. I share this view. Theißen (1974) was, however, speaking in very general terms. In this study, we intend to elaborate more on this, placing particular emphasis on Matthew 8 and 9.

2.2.3.2 D Patte

Patte (1987) emphasizes the existence of opposition in the text, but does not link it to the conflict in the community. This is why I did not place him in the section above.

In the introduction of his commentary, Patte (1987:1) states that he particularly wants to focus on Matthew's faith. By faith he means *'Believing is holding to a system of convictions, or, better, it is being held by a system of convictions'* (Patte 1987:4; his emphasis). Matthew's function as religious text, is to communicate a faith to the reader, either to strengthen the faith of the reader, or to transmit a new kind of faith (cf Patte 1987:5). There are many kinds of oppositions, both *implicit* and *explicit* in a text. Patte (1987:6-7) concentrates more on the *explicit* oppositions, for these oppositions are fully expressed in the text, by which a direct expression of the author's conviction can be viewed. With regard to this *explicit* opposition, Patte (1987:7) further distinguishes two other types of opposition. On the one hand there is the *semantic oppositions*, i.e. '...by oppositions that specify the connotations in terms of which a situation, a personage, a phrase, or a word needs to be understood'. On the other hand, and of more importance to our study, there is the so-called *narrative opposition*, i.e. oppositions of action. He says that in a story, narrative oppositions are what makes the story progress. 'For instance, without the misdeed of a villain, there would be no need for counteraction of a hero who attempts to undo the villain's

misdeed. Thus, without this opposition of actions there would be no story' (Patte 1987:7). With this Patte stresses the importance of opposition (or conflict) in the progress of a narrative. He says: '...it appears *that narrative oppositions directly reflect the author's faith*' (Patte 1987:7; his emphasis). The fact that the oppositions in the narrative reflect the faith of the author is certainly true of the miracle stories in which there undoubtably is opposition between Jesus and the leaders. He does indicate (correctly) what the different aspects of the author's faith is, as it comes to the fore in the three different sections or groups of miracle stories through the different narrative oppositions in the text (see Patte 1987:112, 114, 116, 119, 122, 124, 125, 126-127, 128-129, 131).

What is said about Gerhardsson (1979) above, is also true of Patte (1987), for he also lays strong emphasis on the *authority* of Jesus, however, without linking it to the conflict with the adversaries. With regard to the miracle stories, that he concentrates on *authority* of course makes his work very useful, but the link still has to be laid with conflict theory. Patte (1987:109-110) suggests that the main theme of 8:1-9:34 concerns the *acknowledgment of the true character of Jesus' authority* as manifested in the miracles and other actions - rather than in his teaching as in the Sermon on the Mount (cf Mt 7:29). He says that the main theme concerns the acknowledgement of the extraordinary authority or power of Jesus as healer or as performer of miracles, in the same way as the main theme of chapter 5-7 concerned the acknowledgement of the authority of Jesus as teacher (cf Patte 1987:110). Matthew 8 and 9 are divided into three major units: 8:1-17; 8:18-9:13 and 9:14-34 (cf Patte 1987:110; see also chapter 5).

The first unit (8:1-17) indicates how Jesus' authority is defined by the way he interrelates with people in need of healing. 'He acts according to the faith of the supplicants' (Patte 1987:111). This is a valuable insight which should be developed in greater detail.

The second unit (8:18-9:13) underscores Jesus' divine power. It deals with the way in which he uses this power: (a) As the Son of man, Jesus has absolute power over the forces of nature which threaten him and the disciples; (b) Jesus has, as Son of man or as Son of God, absolute (divine) power over the demons that 'torture' them and (c) in the case of human beings, he has the power to

forgive sin and to heal in response to their faith (cf Patte 1987:117-118). Patte (1987:128) is correct in maintaining that the oppositions in 9:11-12, that is the controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees and the oppositions in 9:13: calling righteous people and calling sinners; desiring mercy and desiring sacrifice, contribute to the faith of the author to associate with sinners and act merciful to the condemned. This we have to develop in greater detail in the light of our own conflict theory.

The third unit (9:14-34) is about the euphoric character and the newness of Jesus' ministry, and this as a manifestation of divine mercy, is further described and finally acknowledged (Patte 1987:110). Because of his mercy, he eats with sinners (9:10), he heals according to the faith of the ruler (9:18-26), the woman (9:22), the blind (9:27-31) and the dumb man (9:32-33; cf Patte 1987:131-135). This is also a valuable contribution.

We have to acknowledge the emphasis Patte (1987) placed on the oppositions (conflict) in the text to show the faith of the author. I will in chapter 5 make considerably more use of his insights. However, although Patte (1987) laid the correct emphasis on the oppositions in the *text*, this opposition still has to be related to the community of Matthew.

2.2.3.3 BJ Malina

An attempt to bring the conflict in the Gospel(s) and 'conflict theory' together, is made by Malina (1988b). In an attempt to analyze Mark 7:1-23 in a paper which he calls 'A conflict approach to Mark 7', Malina (1988b:3-30), approaches the text from a 'conflict theory' point of view. He says: 'Conflict theory is one of a number of social science theories that are to explain how and why human beings interact the way they do' (Malina 1988b:3; see also Malina & Neyrey 1988:xii). It, will however, be argued that although Malina's approach does explain 'how human beings interact', the question 'why' they interact in a conflicting way still remains to be answered.

In his conflict approach, Malina (1988b:9), assumes that people are motivated to act *in terms of their own interests*, which normally impinge on the interests of others. He might, apart from Boissevain (1974:231-232), whom he

cites, even find support from Lenski (1966:25-32) and Collins (1975:60), who see the nature of mankind as one of maximizing its own satisfaction. Although Malina makes an important point, his view needs to be elaborated upon. Furthermore, according to Malina, conflict is always rooted in grievance. This view is deduced from Turner (1978), who in turn took it over from the conflict theories of Dahrendorf (1959) and Coser (1956; cf Malina 1988b:10). But this view also needs to be elaborated upon because the question asked here is whether there is not *more* to conflict than to be rooted in 'grievance' alone (see the discussion on the causes of conflict below). That conflict is based on self-interest and grievance, is an important and correct insight, but Malina does not sufficiently develop this in his conflict approach. To take the criticism one step further: the conflict approach of Malina (1988b:10-11) is based on a model for a disputing process, taken from Nader & Todd (1978:14-15). Following this model, disputes have three stages: the grievance or pre-conflict stage, the conflict stage and finally the dispute stage.

The model of Malina (1988a) is a useful tool to understand the process and the development of conflict (or disputes), but it does not sufficiently answer *how and why* conflict emerges, or where it originates from. The category 'grievance' or 'pre-conflict' (see Nader & Todd 1978:14; Malina 1988b:10), might be of help, but we still need to turn to 'conflict theory' in broader terms in order to find a firmer base from which to explain conflict. The basis of Malina's theory is regarded as being too slim.

2.2.3.4 BJ Malina and JH Neyrey

Malina and Neyrey (1988), in their book *Calling Jesus Names: The social values of labels in Matthew*, also approach conflict, this time the conflict in the Gospel of Matthew, from a so-called 'conflict approach'. In this book it is even more apparent that conflict is taken as the point of departure. They say: '...our approach will be one of conflict analysis, since *conflict* is the stuff of this Gospel' (Malina & Neyrey 1988:ix). But it immediately strikes one that Malina and Neyrey (1988:ix) make no mention of the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9 in their short overview of conflict in the Gospel:

From start to finish, the whole gospel is one extended account of Jesus' conflict, from the genealogy in chapter 1 that legitimates Jesus' familial standing as one of honour, to Herod's quest for the life of the child in chapter 2, to the battle between Jesus and Satan in chapter 4, to Jesus' fight with the Pharisees in chapter 12, eventually to his confrontation with the Chief Priests in chapter 21-27.

They view specifically chapter 12 as a major conflict scene (cf Malina & Neyrey 1988:58), and chapters 8 - 9 only provide scant evidence of Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees. Like Kingsbury (see above), they also view conflict in chapter 9 as intended to prepare the reader for future conflict. But their argument fails for the same reasons as those of Kingsbury's (see above), and the conflict could be viewed as much more intense and lively in chapter 8 and 9 than the way in which Malina and Neyrey (1988:58-59) presented it.

In their book, it is even more apparent 'how' conflict proceeds, than in the above-mentioned paper of Malina (1988b). But the question 'why' here also remains open. Malina and Neyrey present two models. The first is the model of witch and witchcraft accusations, in order to explain the accusations of demonic possession which the Pharisees made against Jesus in Matthew 12. The second model is a perspective from labelling and deviance theory, in order to explain the shameful execution of Jesus in the passion narratives of Matthew 26-27. *That* Jesus was effectively casted out as 'witch', and *that* Jesus was effectively labelled as deviant is indeed sufficiently explained in much detail. But *why* Jesus was accused of witchcraft, and *why* Jesus was labelled still needs to be answered. Malina and Neyrey (1988:35) effectively analyzed the very important *expressions* of conflict (witchcraft accusations and deviance), in fact, they explicitly state: 'Conflict can be expressed and monitored in the ways people hurl harmful epithets, derogatory names and negative labels against outsiders, as well as in the ways they affix honourable titles, laudatory names and positive labels on acclaimed insiders'. But they do not present a sufficient *explanation* of the basis of that conflict. Deviance and witchcraft accusations are part of a process of conflict, they *follow on existing conflict, they however do not form the basis for* conflict.

2.2.3.5 AJ Saldarini

In an article called: *The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict*, Saldarini (1991), like Malina and Neyrey (1988), approached the conflict in the Gospel from a labelling and deviance theory. The community of Matthew was a deviant Jewish group. They had been labelled deviant by the authorities. They were a minority group, still regarding themselves as Jewish. They had recently withdrawn or been expelled from the Jewish assembly and Matthew had a fading hope to prevail and make his programme normative for the whole of Israel. The community was a Christian-Jewish group. Matthew regarded himself as the true interpreter of the Torah, he is faithful to God's will as revealed by Jesus as the Messiah and seeks to promote his interpretation of Judaism over that of the Jewish leaders (cf Saldarini (1991:38-41).

Saldarini (1991:44-48) sees deviance as part of a functioning society. He says that calling the community of Matthew a deviant Jewish community is a pejorative labelling, that is, it is perceived as objectively evil because it is seen as contrary to divine or the natural order, or that it is inspired by evil powers. He proceeds to say that what a society considers to be deviant is related to its identity, shows where its boundaries are, and exposes key structures and values in its social and symbolic system. To define some behaviours as deviant, is normally part of a power struggle for control of society. Furthermore, defining deviance is a struggle to bring about order to human activities. The necessity of deviance lies in the fact that it keeps society from rigidifying and failing to fulfill its necessary functions. However, to be seen as deviant, the group still has to be part of a whole. 'They modify a social, political, or religious system that they judge does not make sense or work, but they build their new world with materials from the old world they share with those who have declared them deviant' (Saldarini 1991:47).

As far as deviance in the Gospel of Matthew is concerned, Saldarini (1991:48) proceeds saying: 'The Gospel of Matthew and the community behind it are Jewish in that they accept all the fundamental commitments of first-century Judaism, but argue about their interpretation, actualization, and relative import-ance'. Matthew's Jewish community is a deviant community because it modifies

the interpretation or actualization of the law so that it is in conflict with other Jewish groups. Matthew is deviant, as Saldarini (1991:49-50) sees it, not because of disagreement with a normative Judaism, but because he is a minority against the majority and because he recommends a more fundamental reorientation of the tradition than many other Jewish movements. Saldarini (1991:50-54) then presents us with five fields in which the innovations of Matthew can be seen, namely that of core symbols, cosmology, boundaries, laws, and social structure.

Saldarini (1991:54-60) views the Matthean community as a deviant association. To achieve legitimacy, Matthew uses all the sources of Jewish teaching and authority. He constructs an alternative community myth, centred on Jesus, to create a foundation for his community. 'The disputes with the Jewish community leadership and the changed customs in the Matthean community have led Matthew's community to form its own assembly and to compete with the other Jewish assemblies for members' (Saldarini 1991:54). This is how it became deviant. Says Saldarini (1991:55):

> At any rate, Matthew's community engages in many of the functions of a deviant association. It recruits members, is developing a coherent worldview and belief system, articulating an ideology and rhetoric to sustain its behaviour, and devaluing outside contact and norms. The formation of such a voluntary association requires adjustment to a new situation, the need to assign new community functions and status rankings, and the creation of new community goals.

Out of four different types of deviant groups, Matthew's community seems to be an *alienative-expressive* group (i.e. as both seeking societal change and focusing on the needs of their own members; cf Saldarini 1991:56-57). It offers its adherents a new Christian-Jewish world as an alternative to the conventional Jewish world. Because of the conflict, the members of the community find a new core identity as being believers in Jesus (see also the part on the identity of the Matthean community in chapter 4 below).

There are seven types of sects pictured by Saldarini (1991:58). We refrain from mentioning them all. 'The first-generation Jesus movement in Palestine was most probably a reformist movement (a movement that seeks gradual, divinely revealed alterations in society) within Judaism that was also characterized by thaumaturgical and millennial hopes' (Saldarini 1991:58). The Matthean community probably had been a reformative movement that became a sect (deviant association) in response to the rejection of its programme for the reform of Judaism (see also below in chapter 4 for more on the so-called formative Judaism). They were moving towards a new community organization (see below on the identity of the community).

As part of his conclusion, Saldarini (1991:60) says: 'Matthew's community or its successors were engulfed by their deviant role and adopted their deviance as a "master status", that is, as the set of values and characteristics that defined and controlled all other aspects of their lives'.

I have to admit that Saldarini's (1991) work presents us with very useful information, and I will especially in chapter 4 make much use of his insights. But, for the same reasons as pertaining to the work of Malina and Neyrey (1988), I will not use his work as starting point for the study of the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 8 and 9. For this work also fails to explain the *dynamics* of conflict properly. One can still ask this important question: Why, apart from forming a new (deviant) association, is there deviance at all? Is there not something even *more* basic to deviance and conflict (and I am not losing sight of the fact that these concepts are all related)? I think there is, and therefore chapter 3 was written.

2.2.3.6 GN Stanton

As part of the fourth chapter called: *Matthew's Gospel and the Damascus document in Sociological Perspective* of his book, Stanton (1992a:85-107) spread some light on the Gospel from the what he calls a 'social conflict theory'. He draws on the studies of Lewis Coser (cf Stanton 1992a:98), as we will later also attempt to do. Stanton (1992a:98) especially draws on three of the observations of Coser about conflict. They are: (1) *close relationship: intense conflict*, (2) *social*

conflict, boundaries, and dissent, and, (3) *group cohesion and centralized control*. However, and this is quite surprising and disappointing, Stanton does not really contribute to the agonizing question as to *why* there was conflict. He, however, does acknowledge that sociological models (and thus conflict theory), can give rise to fresh insights and fresh questions (cf Stanton 1992a:107). This is exactly what we will attempt to do in our presentation of conflict theory below.

2.3 CONCLUSION

In the section on the christological function of the miracle stories, we have seen that the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders hardly feature at all in works of Held (1963); Grundmann (1972); Gerhardsson (1979) and Gnilka (1986). Held (1963) understates the conflict and the miracle stories in their relation to the marginalized. Grundmann (1971; 1972) gives no explanation at all as to why he viewed Jesus' acts as 'peculiar' and 'radical'.[9] Gerhardsson (1979) does not link the important aspect of authority to conflict. Patte (1987), as we have seen in the third section, stresses Jesus' authority, but does not link it to the conflict.[10] Indeed, this was not their intention, but it now give rise to the necessity to do exactly this in a chapter on conflict. Furthermore, Gerhardsson (1979) in fact underemphasizes the conflict between Jesus and the adversaries in the miracle stories. Neither does Gnilka (1986) explain the emerging conflict in the miracle stories. They all, however, to their credit, emphasized the christological function of Jesus as it prevailed in the miracle stories.

The section on the ecclesiological functions of the miracle stories starts with the work of Thompson (1971). Although he is still closer to the section on the christological functions of the miracle stories, Thompson (1971) highlights the emerging conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Burger (1973) takes this a step further. The miracle stories legitimate the reality of the church as a community turning to the helpless. He moves away from a christological explanation of the miracle stories, and places the emphasis on the ecclesiological function. This is seen as a step forward. Burger (1973) is followed by Kingsbury (1978), in that he also see the miracle stories as having a paradigmatic function in the community, but Kingsbury (1978) again falls back to the christological function,

and spiritualizes the conflict as one between God and Satan. However, in his later works, he does emphasize the conflict in Matthew, but underemphasizes the conflict as it emerges in Matthew 8 and 9 (cf Kingsbury 1987, 1988a, 1992). Luz (1988, 1990) also stresses the tension and the split between the church and Israel. The Gospel is a transparency of the community. There is tension that culminates in the passion narratives. And although this is true, it does not mean that there is less tension in the miracle stories. Like Burger (1973), Luz (1987) also sees the miracle stories as 'Gemeinde grundlegende Geschichte'. He, however, like Kingsbury, still underemphasizes the tension in that he sees the emerging conflict only in the negative reaction of the Pharisees in 9:34. Conflict, as we have seen in the section on the ecclesiological function, is definitely an emerging element in the miracle stories. Furthermore, the miracle stories and the conflict therein, are correctly placed in the broader context of the community, which creates the need for a section on the social location of the text. However, as previously stated, no scholar, to my mind, has yet touched on the vital question of *why* there is tension. This makes a section on conflict theory necessary.

The link between the social function and the miracle stories has been correctly lied by Theißen (1974). The miracle stories have a legitimating and motivating function in social conflict. Emphasis is also placed on the lower layers of the society that benefitted from the miracle stories. We will follow this view, but will have to elaborate to indicate the more precise function of social conflict, as it prevails in the miracle stories. Patte (1987) correctly emphasized the opposition in the text as being connected to the underprivileged of society, but the link with the community of Matthew had been lost. Furthermore, Malina's (1988b), Malina and Neyrey's (1988); Saldarini's (1991) and Santon's (1992a) contributions in using a conflict approach as a means to interpret the text and, more specific, the conflict in the Gospels need to be acknowledged, but also need to be elaborated upon in order to answer the basic question: 'Why is there conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders?' Malina's (1988b) conflict approach is a useful tool to understand the process of conflict. But, as a tool to explain the basic cause of conflict, it is regarded as being too slim. As for the works of Malina and Neyrey (1988) and Saldarini (1991), no sufficient basis is presented to explain

the *dynamics* of conflict. Stanton's (1992a) work is useful for the insights he took from Coser (1956), but we have to develop this in greater detail to explain the intense conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees.

In conclusion then: Conflict hardly features in the section on the christological functions of the miracle stories. The representatives of what we called the ecclesiological function of the miracles, acknowledge that conflict features in these two chapters (cf Thompson 1971; Burger 1973; Kingsbury 1978, 1987, 1988a, 1992; Luz 1987, 1990), especially in relation to the community of Matthew. But, as the representatives of those who explicitly acknowledge conflict (Malina 1988b; Malina & Neyrey 1988; Saldarini 1991; Stanton 1992a), imply conflict is still inadequately dealt with. Conflict is either spiritualized as eschatological conflict with Satan (Kingsbury 1978),[11] or viewed as 'preliminary' to the 'real' conflict to come at the end of the passion narrative of the Gospel (Kingsbury 1987, 1988a, 1992; Luz 1987, 1990), or acute in the text, but loosened from the community of Matthew (Patte:1987). Furthermore, nowhere the real cause(s) for the underlying conflict is addressed. Either the basis for the explanation is too slim (Malina 1988b), or the process of conflict is explained in terms of deviance (Malina & Neyrey 1988; Saldarini (1991). However, the real cause(s) are not really explained. Although regularly stressed, the real consequences of Jesus' culture and ideologically breaking, conflicting and merciful acts, do not come to its full potential. By inadequately stressing the full dynamics of the conflict in the text, the full potential of the text is not only reduced, but also the *real interests* of Jesus, being that of the underprivileged and suppressed, is understated (with the exception of the work of Theißen 1974). The acuteness of the conflict needs to be stressed to see the dynamics thereof, even in the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore we turn to *conflict theory* as such in the chapter to follow.

ENDNOTES

1. Translated text taken from *The Holy Bible: New international version*, 1978, Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa.

2. I obtained the unpublished works of Dormeyer (1991) Lategan (1991) and Voelz (1991) on Matthew 8 & 9. Dormeyer (1991:1-2) presents a structural outline of Matthew 8 & 9, but in his analysis, he only focuses on Matthew 8:1-4. He presents a 'resisting-reading' of 8:1-4. I will not go into the technicalities of his study. I could not find much applicable for my present study except that he made me aware of the ever-important role of the reader in the interpretation-process (see also Lategan 1984:10). This applies to the miracle stories as well. He correctly distinguished between the first (naive) reader, the critical, and the present *forschender* reader (Dormeyer 1991:15-18; see also Lategan 1991:1). Especially for the latter, the miracle stories have little meaning, and therefore there has to be a sort of dialogue between the first and present reader. In this Dormeyer comes very close to the view of Bultmann (1958:214) on *Mirakels* (see endnote 4 of chapter 1). I agree with Voelz (1991:2) that the appropriate summery of this view seems to be: 'Der Auslegungsprozeß beginnt, wie bereits Bultmann richtig sah, mit der Selbtsauslegung' (Dormeyer 1991:16). Lategan (1991:4) challenges the view of Dormeyer (1991:16) that the modern reader will inevitably be a resisting reader, referring to the African context in which the religious, somatic and physical dimensions of human existence are more closely interrelated.

3. Held (1963:211-246) extensively deals with the form, definition, and formal characteristics of the miracle stories of Matthew, which makes them even more unique as compared to those in Mark. We, however leave it hereby, for it does not really say much more about Matthew's christological function with regard to the miracle stories.

4. Sand (1986:173-174) challenges this twofold christological distinction between 'The Messiah of the Word' and 'The Messiah of the deed' by refering to the works of Burger (1973) and Kingsbury (1978). He, however, is still convinced that the miracle stories have a christological intention to portray Jesus as '...den Messias...der in göttlicher Autorität Heil verkündend und heilshandelnd den Menschen begegnet' (Sand 1986:174).

5. The faith of the disciples is called 'problematic' for the adjective ὀλιγόπιστία (little faith) is only used for them (Mt 6:20; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). Their faith is little, frail and unsteady. They fail to understand the boundlessness of Jesus' *exousia* they have access to (cf Gerhardsson 1979:62).

6. Note the distinction that is made between disease and illness in the anthropology. See endnote 4 in chapter 5.

7. The summary in his commentary (Luz 1990:64-68) is a strongly reduced version of his article. It, however, gives a better overview on what he wants to say. For some clarity we present from his commentary the six functions the miracle stories have. For the rest we will rely on his extended article.
The miracles function as:
(1) part of the history of Jesus (*Jesusgeschichte*),
(2) they are expressions of Jesus' mercy,
(3) they are transparent of the 'inclusive' history of Jesus,
(4) they are presented as the founding history of the community (indirectly transparent),
(5) they are the basis of the community's own experience (directly transparent) and
(6) they function as testimony of the Immanuel.

8. It really is regrettable that so little of Hare's insights from his book (1967) are reflected in his commentary (1993). Disappointingly little is made of the disputes in 9:9-17 and 9:33-34 (see Hare 1993:101, 107).

9. In his fairly recent commentary, Harrington (1991:116) says that through the healings in 8:1-17, Jesus is portrayed as a doer of miracles and as a powerful healer. Almost no mention is made of the community except for 8:18-27 (The calming of the storm), which, to Harrington (1991:124) provides a model for a church under pressure. Furthermore, Harrington (1991:135) hardly makes any mention of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. To him, the centre of the third part is focused on the chief christological title 'Son of David' (9:27).

10. The same is true of the work of Sanders & Davies (1989:163-165; see also Sand 1986:174). They also stress the miracles as *authenticating* Jesus, not only as the unique metaphysical Son of God, but, also as God's spokesman and he had power from God. Also Hare (1993:87) sees the miracle stories as manifestations and demonstrations of Jesus' divine power, having *authority* as the Messiah. Garland (1993:91-92) also indicates that there are three themes in Matthew 8:2-9:95 (his own division): (1) The motive of matchless power and authority of Jesus. (2) The motive of discipleship. (3) The response to Jesus' power and authority, in which the rift between the scribes and the Pharisees, and Jesus appears in 9:2-17 and is taken up again in 9:32-34. Thus, although still dwelling on the christology, Garland (1993) indicates the emerging conflict, also in as far as the *community* is concerned. He says: 'His (Jesus' - EJV) rejection of the Pharisee's holiness paradigm will lead to bitter conflict. The consistent reference in Matthew to "their synagogues" (9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; see also 6:2,5; 23:6, 34) and once to "their cities" (11:1) hints of his own community's alienation from those who have disowned Jesus. Matthew's perspective is decidedly defensive: it is them versus us' (Garland 1993:108). The technicalities of this community still have to be worked out.

11. Powell (1992:202) comes to a similar conclusion: 'In short, the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders which is so important to Matthew's narrative *can be identified as a derivative of the basic opposition between God and Satan*' (my emphasis; see also Albright & Mann 1971:79; Combrink 1991:5; Harrington 1991:134).

CHAPTER 3

CONFLICT THEORY: A SYNTHESIS

Human beings are sociable but conflict-prone animals.

(Collins 1975:59; my emphasis)

3.1 WHY CONFLICT THEORY?

3.1.1 The gap

In the previous chapter it was argued that the challenge is to explain the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders from a conflict theory point of view. This is needed in order to explain the conflict for what it boils down to, namely a conflict of interests. We have indicated that there is still room for an extended study on the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9, for the research done up to now leaves room for such a possibility. We now take up this challenge.

3.1.2 Structural functionalism or conflict theory?

Before 'conflict theory' is presented, it is necessary to view it against the background of 'structural functionalism'. It is not the intention to present 'structural functionalism' in detail here (see Dahrendorf 1968e:55, n.46 and the works of Turner 1978:19; Van Staden 1991:114; Wallace & Wolf 1991:30, for more information; see also chapter 1). 'Structural functionalism' will be presented only as a sociological theory to which 'conflict theory' is confined.

One of the basic assumptions of structural functionalism is that society is in a constant equilibrium. The whole of society strives for order, stability, harmony, and balance. All elements in and of society strive towards the maintenance of that society (cf Van Staden & Van Aarde 1991:72). According to Angell (1965:104), 'the essence of this theory is that a community or society

forms a system of action, each of which has one or more functions to perform, all the parts being integrated into the ongoing system by virtue of some consensus'. Malina (1986:40-41), shares Angell's view:

> *Structural functionalism* studies society as: (1) an enduring system of groups (2) composed of statuses and roles (3) supported by values and connected sanctions (4) which values and sanctions operate to maintain the system in equilibrium. Thus life is described in terms of norms, hence as interactions which are morally sanctioned, reciprocal exchange of rights and obligations. Focus of attention is on enduring corporate groups, with analysis requiring nothing more than ascribed roles and statuses. Here a human being is a member of groups and institutional complexes passively obedient to their norms and pressures.

But one of the greatest problems of structural functionalism is that it too easily neglects the existence of conflict and inconsistency in society. Says Angell (1965:104): 'This way (structurally functionalistic - EJV) of looking at a society tends to make conflict appear as deviant or abnormal, since the central concern is the successful integration of the various parts into a smooth-running whole'. Everything that has to do with conflict, aggressiveness, disorder, violence or coercion could easily be viewed as negative and therefore neglected or underemphasized. Such a negative evaluation of conflict is for example given by Blau & Schwartz (1984:173), who want to give an explanation for conflict but nevertheless values it negatively as:

> Not all social relations are positive and involve integrative social bonds. Some are *negative* and find expression in discordant social interactions. There is animosity and conflict as well as love and friendship....In this last chapter...we turn briefly to an analysis of *negative social interaction and conflict* (my emphasis).

When conflict threatens or injures larger collectivities or systems, conflict is easily experienced as disruptive and could be evaluated negatively as harmful and evil (cf Kriesberg 1973:2-3). But a negative evaluation of conflict needs not be necessary. Conflict can, and has been valued positively as well (see Simmel 1957:194). Kriesberg (1973:2) even calls conflict 'exciting'. Conflict can be seen as part of an ongoing reality. It is even necessary for change in society. Strong, even vigorous criticism against structural functionalism comes from one of the classical conflict theorists, Ralf Dahrendorf. Along with his strong criticism also comes a strong positive evaluation of conflict.

But, at first it has to be acknowledged that he does accept a role for structural functionalism. He does not abandon it totally. He never nihilates structural functionalism as 'false'. Dahrendorf (1959:159) calls integration and values versus coercion and interests, the 'two faces of society' (see also Angell 1969:13; Layendecker 1977:70; Turner 1978:143). The theory, which is called 'integration theory of society', conceives social structure in terms of a functionally integrated system, held in equilibrium by certain patterned and recurrent processes. 'Coercion theory of society' views social structure as a form of organization, held together by force and constraint. These theories are mutually exclusive (cf Dahrendorf 1959:159). But, although it may sound para-doxical, he states: 'In sociology...a decision which accepts one of these theories and rejects the other is neither necessary nor desirable' (Dahrendorf 1959:159). There are sociological problems in respect of which only integration theory can provide adequate assumptions, but there are other problems in respect of which only coercion theory would be adequate. With regard to some problems both could be adequate. 'For sociological analysis, society is Janus-headed, and its two faces are equivalent aspects of the same reality' (Dahrendorf 1959:159). In a variety of forms, the elements of structural functionalism: (1) stability, (2) integration, (3) functional coordination and (4) consensus, all enable us to comprehend *many* problems of social reality. But, integration theory does not enable us to comprehend *all* problems of social reality. Thus coercion theory is needed to explain the four elements of (1) historicity, (2) exploitation, (3) disfunctionality and (4) coercion (cf Dahrendorf 1958:174; see also 1959:162,

1965:210; Layendecker 1977:70). To Dahrendorf (1958:174, 1959:163) neither of these models are *exclusively* valid or applicable. They are rather viewed as being *complementary*:

> Moreover it seems meaningful to say that both models are in a certain sense valid and analytically fruitful. Stability and change, integration and conflict, function and 'dysfunction', consensus and constraint are, it would seem, two equally valid aspects of every imaginable society. They are dialectically separated and are exhaustive only in combination as a description of the social problems.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1958:174-175; see also Coser 1956:31, 1968:235)

To Dahrendorf (1959:163-164) choosing between the two theories, is a matter related to the explanation of specific problems. It is a matter of emphasis rather than fundamental difference. An earlier work (Dahrendorf 1958:175) elaborates on this view:

> Both theories can work extensively with the same categories, but they emphasize different aspects. While the integration theory likens a society to an ellipse, a rounded entity which incloses all of its elements, conflict theory sees society rather as a hyperbola which, it is true, has the same foci, but is open in many directions and appears as a tension field of the determining forces.

In his choice, Dahrendorf employs a model that emphasizes the so-called 'ugly face' of society. But it is exactly because of this choice that Dahrendorf has sharp critique against structural functionalism (also called 'consensus theory' or 'integration theory'). This critique almost contradicts his positive evaluation of functionalism, as seen above. However, his sharp critique is against the *claim of generality* of the structural functionalist theory (cf Dahrendorf 1958:175).

He especially wants to abandon the utopian image of structural functionalism (cf Turner 1978:143).

3.1.2.1 Strong critique against structural functionalism

The strong critique of Dahrendorf against structural functionalism will be presented briefly in order to further strengthen and substantiate our motivation for the choice we made for conflict theory. His strong critique can be found in two of his articles: *Out of Utopia* (1968b, originally published in 1958); *In praise of Thrasymachus* (1968c), and to a less vigorous extent, in his work: *Class and class conflict* (1959).

The critique Dahrendorf (1959:120-123) has against structural functionalism, is directed against the use of the analogy of an (biological) organism to society:

> But by contrast with the structure of other objects of knowledge, especially of organisms with which they are frequently compared, social structures have one important peculiarity. They are not as such "given", they cannot in principle be analyzed independent of their historical context, but they are themselves subject to continuous change.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1959:120-121)

The entire structural arrangement of a society can change. In an organism, the functions of the different organs like the heart or the liver does not change. However, for instance, the function and functional importance of religious or economical institutions in society '...not only can change but are subject to a continuous process of change in all known societies' (Dahrendorf 1959:121). He proceeds: 'Anatomy and physiology have heuristic value and scientific validity even without a social psychology of relations between organisms' (Dahrendorf 1959:121). All social structures, however, already carry within themselves the seeds of other structures that lie beyond their (fictitious) borderlines. 'They reach...beyond themselves; at any given point in time they either

are no longer or not yet what they appear to be. Process and change are their very nature...' (Dahrendorf 1959:121).

But, change does not have to be imposed onto a society from the outside (as sometimes is the case within an organism). 'For this is the most difficult problem of analysis of structural change: by contrast to organic structures, the "dynamically variable elements" which influence the construction of social structures do not necessarily originate outside the "system" but may be generated by the structure itself' (Dahrendorf 1959:123). In any social structure, there are certain elements or forces which are at the same time both their constituent parts *and* the impulses operating towards their supersedence and change.

Structural functionalism (according to Dahrendorf) has failed to sufficiently explain this reality of change which lies inside the structure of society itself, because it does not account for the peculiar character of *social* as opposed to *organic* structures. It fails to see that certain elements in society, without being external, could determine stability, *and* could determine the kind and degree of change *as well* (cf Dahrendorf 1959:123). Dahrendorf (1968b:107) equates the structural functionalist theory with what he calls 'utopia', from which all change is absent. It is here where his strongest critique lies. 'Utopian societies', as Dahrendorf presents them, display five features: Firstly, they do not grow out of familiar reality, following realistic patterns of development. 'For most (utopian - EJV) authors, utopias have but a nebulous past and no future; they are suddenly there, and there to stay, suspended in mid-time or rather somewhere beyond the ordinary notion of time' (Dahrendorf 1968b:108). A second feature is that utopias seem to be societies of uniformity. There exists an universal consensus on prevailing values and institutional arrangements (Dahrendorf 1968b:108). And, because of this 'universal consensus', the third feature is that there is an absence of structurally generated conflict. Conflict over values is impossible and unnecessary: 'Utopias are perfect...and consequently there is nothing to quarrel about. Strikes and revolutions are...conspicuously absent....Social harmony seems to be one of the factors adduced to account for utopian stability' (Dahrendorf 1968b:109). This does not mean that

there are no disrupters of the unity. But, in utopian societies, they are the 'out-siders'. They are not the products of the social structure, they are the deviants and pathological cases infected with some unique disease. The fourth feature is that all activities sustain society:

> All processes...follow recurrent patterns and occur within, and as part of, the design of the whole. Not only do they not upset the status quo; they affirm and sustain it, and it is for this reason that most utopians allow them to happen at all.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1968b:110)

The final feature is that an utopian society would be isolated from all commun-ities. 'Utopias are monolithic and homogeneous communities, suspended not only in time but also in space, shut off from the outside world' (Dahrendorf 1968b:110).

But, the question is: Can we actually encounter all these features in *real* societies? Is a society ever without history? Can there be a society with universal consensus? Is there ever a society without conflict? Can the *status quo* only be sustained? Can a society be isolated at all?

> It is obvious that such societies do not exist - just as it is obvious that every known society changes its values and institutions continuously. Change may be rapid or gradual, violent or regu-lated, comprehensive or piecemeal, *but it is never entirely absent where human beings create organizations to live together.*
>
> (Dahrendorf 1968b:111; my emphasis)

From this last remark, it is obvious that Dahrendorf values change and also conflict positively. For according to Dahrendorf (1968b:127), the creative force of change is social conflict (see also Dahrendorf 1958:176; Pfuhl 1980:95).[1] Not the *presence* of conflict is abnormal, '...but the *absence* of conflict is surprising and abnormal' (Dahrendorf 1968b:127; my emphasis). By this he

abandons the utopian image of structural functionalism. It is seen as unrealistic and naive, even absurd (cf Dahrendorf 1968c:139), for we live in a world of uncertainty. We do not know all the answers. We do not know what the ideal society looks like. Because there is no certainty, constraint is to assure some liveable minimum of coherence. Because we do not know all the answers, there has to be continuous conflict over values and policies. Because of uncertainty, there is always change and development (cf Dahrendorf 1968b:128; see also 1965:129). Nowhere does Dahrendorf pretend conflict to be pleasant. It might indeed even be experienced on an emotional level as stressful and disruptive. Dahrendorf nowhere pretends that conflict is the paradigm or norm to live by. What he does, is to present conflict as part and parcel of a reality which needs to be explained. Dahrendorf is against the claims of 'utopian', structural functionalists, who claim that their theory is the most general or even the only possible model. He wants to replace this view with a more useful and more realistic approach (cf Dahrendorf 1968b:113). Conflict is thus not seen as 'evil'. It reminds us of our being humans, living in history:

> Antagonismen und Konflikte erscheinen dann nicht mehr als Kräfte, die auf ihre eigene Aufhebung in einer 'Lösung' drängen, *sondern sie machen selbst den menschlichen Sinn der Geschichte aus*: Gesellschaften bleiben menschliche Gesellschaften, insoweit sie das Unvereinbare in sich vereinen und den Widerspruch lebendig erhalten.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1965:130; my emphasis)

The answer to the initial question: 'Why conflict theory to explain Matthew 8 and 9?' could be as follows: Conflict is so obviously present in the whole of the Gospel, and in chapter 8 and 9 in particular, as we have seen in chapter 2 (see above), that it cannot be negated and has to be explained properly. Nevertheless, this conflict is not appropriately explained, as we have also seen in the previous chapter on the research overview. Furthermore, because conflict is valued as positive, even meaningful as *part and parcel* of human reality and

society - thus also of New Testament and Matthean society - we turn to conflict theory as an appropriate sociological model to explain the *dynamics*, conditions, causes and consequences of conflict in Matthew 8 and 9 (see also Elliott 1986:25).

3.2 WHICH MODEL OF CONFLICT THEORY?

To choose one specific model of conflict theory is not easy, if not impossible. There exists not *one unitary specific* conflict model. In fact, it would be inconsistent to the basic approach of conflict theory (see below) in broader terms to speak of *one* conflict model. Against the background of the consensus-conflict debate, it would be inconsistent, and even unnecessary to speak of 'consensus' amongst conflict theorists. Layendecker (1977:86) states: 'Gezien de veelheid van benaderingen doet zich opnieuw de vraag voor...of er wel sprake is van één specifiek conflictparadigma'. Accepting that there exist multiple perspectives, the question presents itself: Which model do we choose, or what tradition do we follow? Layendecker (1977:87) proposes two things to be done: firstly, to create some orderly structure amongst the different perspectives and secondly, to analyze the different perspectives as testable hypothesis. None of these two possibilities, however, will be followed, since, as Layendecker (1977:87) correctly sees it, there is a risk that different 'orders' of both ordering (or structuring) and analyzing, would not coincide with one other. This could be effectively illustrated by the efforts to create some order by Turner (1978), Collins (1985a), and Wallace and Wolf (1991). We will furthermore not follow Layendecker's second suggestion, since we are not really interested in 'analyzing' or evaluating the different perspectives. An own, third way, will be followed, namely an attempt at synthesizing the different models of conflict theory, in order to create our own theory of conflict.

In their efforts to create order amongst the different perspectives on conflict in line with tradition, Turner (1978), Collins (1985a), and Wallace and Wolf (1991), not only present it in a different order, but also group the theorists as representative of the different traditions, differently.

3.2.1 JH Turner

Turner (1978:122) identifies two basic traditions of conflict theory: The so-called 'dialectical conflict theory' of Ralf Dahrendorf (1968b), and the so-called 'conflict functionalism' of Lewis A Coser (1956). Dahrendorf has his roots in Marx's ([1867]1946) theory of conflict and Coser builds forth on Simmel (1955). Both Marx and Simmel, view conflict as a pervasive and inevitable feature of social systems, but their respective intellectual purposes as well as their assumptions about the nature of society were vastly different (cf Turner 1978:141). Marx's theory of conflict was a theory of how to change society (i.e. to eliminate capitalism) and Simmel's intellectual goals were more to reflect upon - and to understand - social life. Marx emphasized the divisiveness; Simmel the integrative consequences of conflict (cf Turner 1978:123, 141).

The dialectical conflict theory is called 'dialectical', following Marx's concept of dialectics that denotes the inherent contradiction in all social relationships. Social order already implies in itself the opposite: social disorder (cf Turner 1978 :125). Thus, Dahrendorf wants to analyze the 'ugly face' of society, i.e. conflict, which is the other side of society, as opposed to consensus (cf Turner 1978:143).

Coser sharply criticizes structural functionalism as underemphasizing or neglecting conflict. Nevertheless Coser wants to correct this by emphasizing the integrative and 'adaptability' functions of conflict for social systems. Conflict is seen to have a function to maintain the vitality and flexibility of institutionalized patterns of social organizations (cf Turner 1978:160).

Turner's critique against both Dahrendorf and Coser is that neither of the two really abandoned functionalism at all; Coser for obvious reasons as conflict *functionalist*, and Dahrendorf because his so-called ICA's (imperative coordinated associations), to Turner (1978:158), are remarkably close to Parsons' 'social system'. Turner (1978:158) continues:

> ...his (Dahrendorf's - EJV) concepts of roles and authority is
> Parsons' concern with social control; in his portrayal of conflict,
> the origin of conflict is just as unclear as he assumes it to be in

Parsons' work; and even in the analysis of social change, conflict is considered in a way reminiscent of Parsons, to meet the functional need for change. One extreme conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that little progress has been made on the road out of utopia.

As point of critique on Turner (1978:158) we can state that he does not provide us with appropriate references as to which work of Parsons he is referring. We thus cannot check on Parsons' credentials in this case. Therefore we disregard Turner's critique as uncontrollable, and not to be taken too seriously.

What Turner himself wants to present, after his critique of both Dahren-dorf and Coser, is a conflict theory which takes the best out of both traditions (cf Turner 1978:184). Turner (1973:243) refuses to call it a synthesis, but I fail to see why it cannot be called as such. The overall model Turner (1978:188) presents is one he calls a 'causal-model'.[2]

3.2.2 R Collins

The conflict traditions are schematized differently by Collins (1985a:48, 1985b:1) in chronological order, in order to give some structure to the represen-tatives of conflict theory as he views it. He presents the scheme seen in diagram 1 (this diagram is presented as asymmetric, as Collins 1985a:48, 1985b:1 presents it himself):

SOME MAIN POINTS OF THE CONFLICT TRADITION

1800-1840	Classical economics: Ricardo	Hegel		
1840-1870	German historical economics *Realpolitic*	Marx and Engels		
1870-1900	Nietzche		Engels' dialectical materialism	
1900-1920	Weber Michels		Marxist theories of imperialism	Simmel
1920-1940	Mannheim Lukács Gramsci		Frankfurt School Marxist sociologists of science	
1940-1960	Gerth; Mills Organization theory Stratification theory political sociology			Functionalist conflict theory: Coser
1960-	Conflict theory: Dahrendorf Lenski Collins Sex-stratification theory		neo-Marxism: World system theory; historical sociology of revolution, social movements, and the state	

Diagram 1.

It is remarkable that Collins (1985a:48, 1985b:1) deals with Simmel, and beneath him, Coser at the far right side of the scheme. It is even more remarkable that he deals with Simmel, Coser and functionalist conflict theory as an appendix to the text, as if functionalist conflict theory does not really belong to the conflict tradition at all (cf Collins 1985a:110). In fact, Collins (1985a:114) abandons Simmel and consequently the tradition following him, as not to be taken seriously: 'Despite his insights, I would judge that Simmel does not qualify as an intellectual giant of the discipline of sociology'. The reason for this, according to Collins (1985a:116) was that Simmel primarily writes about

conflict '...in order to disprove the contentions of the Marxian conflict theorists', and:

> For Simmel, conflict does not produce social change; it is merely another structural relationship endemic to any social form. He sees that it has something to do with domination, but it does nothing to change the system of domination. It is merely another drama of social life to be appreciated, scarcely more than another salon entertainment.
>
> (Collins 1985a:116)

But it is unfair to generalize and apply the critique on Simmel to the conflict-functionalist theory as a whole. Furthermore it is unfair to generalize the critique on Simmel 'not being an intellectual giant' as if it were applicable to the from-him-proceeded tradition as well. Coser indeed saw Simmel's limitations and thus elaborated on Simmel's theories in his own work (see Coser 1956).

3.2.3 RA Wallace and A Wolf

The last example of ordering (or structuring) of the conflict traditions is that of Wallace and Wolf (1991). They also divide conflict theory into two traditions. The three basic assumptions of conflict theory, as Wallace and Wolf (1991:76-77) see it, are: (1) There are the basic interests of people, (2) there is an emphasis on power and (3) values and ideas are weapons in groups (see below for more detail). These basic assumptions are common to all the proponents of conflict theory. But the traditions differ in their view of social science and whether they believe that conflict can ever be eradicated (cf Wallace & Wolf 1991:77). The first tradition they present, believes that scholars have a moral obligation to engage in a critique of society. It refuses to separate analysis from judgement or fact from value. Theorists in this tradition are sometimes called 'utopian writers' because they believe that a society could exist in which all grounds for social conflict are taken away. The theorists in this first group are the modern Marxists and the neo-Marxists, Habermas and his Frankfurt School

forerunners, and C Wright Mills. These theorists, say Wallace and Wolf (1991:77-78, 88), all have their intellectual roots in the work of Karl Marx.

The second group of theorists believe conflict to be inevitable and permanent in social life. Social science's conclusions are not necessarily value-laden. They are rather interested in establishing a social science with the same 'canon of objectivity' as that which informs the natural sciences (cf Wallace & Wolf 1991:77). To this group belongs the work of Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser and Randall Collins. The influence of Marx is still apparent, but their intellectual roots lie mostly in the writings of Max Weber (cf Wallace & Wolf 1991:78, 139). It is regrettable that Weber is seen as prime root, but his thoughts are nowhere discussed at length.

If the divisions of the traditions by Turner (1978) and Wallace and Wolf (1991) are compared, there might be some correspondence between the two traditions as presented by them. Turner (1978:123) presents Marx, the basis for the 'dialectical conflict theory' as being interested in a conflict theory to change society. This corresponds with Wallace and Wolf's (1991:77) view that the first group, namely 'conflict theory as the critique of society', see themselves to have a moral obligation to engage in critique of society. Similarly, Turner's second tradition, the so-called 'conflict functionalist-tradition', corresponds with Wallace and Wolf's (1991:139) second group called 'conflict theory and analytic sociology'. Turner's 'conflict functionalist-tradition' was taken over from Simmel, whose '...intellectual goals were more in the traditional academic mold' (Turner 1978:123). Wallace and Wolf call their second group 'conflict theory and analytic sociology', in which greater emphasis is placed on an 'objective' analysis of conflict. But what is striking, is the fact that the 'dialectical tradition', according to Turner goes from Marx through to Dahrendorf, *as opposed to* the tradition of Simmel and Coser. Wallace and Wolf, on the contrary, regard Dahrendorf as belonging to the analytic group, *along with* Coser. Furthermore, Simmel is not mentioned by Wallace and Wolf as the prime intellectual root of the second tradition. He is mentioned as having influence, but not as the prime source of 'conflict functionalism', as Turner views it.

3.2.4 Towards an own synthesis

The deduction made from these divisions is that it is difficult to place the theorists in a specific tradition which will be unanimously accepted. It is not easy to choose a specific tradition of conflict, for there is no consensus of who exactly represents what tradition. What is clear, though, no matter where they are placed, is that Dahrendorf and Coser are two prominent and leading theorists in the field of conflict theory (see also Boskoff 1972:83). Because there is no 'unitary, standard' theory of conflict, an own synthesis of the theories of (predominantly) Coser and Dahrendorf will be presented. This will not be the first effort towards a synthesis. Turner (1973:243) mentions the work of Pierre van den Berghe (1963): *Dialectic and functionalism: Towards a theoretical synthesis*, as one of the most influential attempts at synthesis. Even the work of Turner (1978) himself, although he denies it, is an example of a synthesis. Perhaps a remark of Valkenburgh (1969:7) is a good starting point for an own synthesis: 'Zo brengt de lijn Marx-Dahrendorf ons bij het probleem van het ontstaan en de *oorzaken van conflicten;* de lijn Simmel-Coser voert ons tot het tema van *de functies, de gevolgen* van conflicten voor mensen en maatschappij' (my emphasis). Furthermore, the three problems, stated by Turner (1978:187), will present us with the basic questions to deal with in a conflict theory: 'In sum then, these three problems - the definition of conflict, the units of conflict, and the confusion over the causes and functions - present a challenge to conflict theory'. This challenge will be taken up. The last question of Turner will be dealt with as two separate questions, which means that the questions to be dealt with are as follows:

(1) What is the definition of conflict?

(2) What are the causes of conflict?

(3) What are the units of conflict?

(4) What are the functions of conflict?

3.3 A THEORY OF CONFLICT

3.3.1 Towards a definition of conflict

3.3.1.1 The basic assumptions of conflict theory

We have already seen above that conflict is viewed positively by Dahrendorf as an inevitable and pervasive part of society. There is (dialectically speaking) not only harmony, but also disharmony. People are in constant interaction with each other and this (dialectically) creates both consensus and conflict. But conflict is not only inevitable, it is also necessary to create change in society. We have already seen that conflict is viewed to be the creative force that leads to change (Dahrendorf 1965:125, 1968a:127). Conflict is a dynamic impulse that keeps society alive, prevents boredom or, to say it in Coser's words (1957a:197, who took it from Sorel): '...conflict...prevents the ossification of the social system by exerting pressure for innovation and creativity....A social system,...is in need for conflict if only to renew its energies and revitalize its creative forces'.

With this - once again - positive evaluation of conflict, the basic assumptions of the conflict theory as Dahrendorf sees it, will be given. By way of summary, we have to once more see it against the background of structural functionalism (or 'consensus theory'), which displays the following essential elements:

(1) Every society is a relatively persistent, stable structure of elements

(2) Every society is a well-integrated structure of elements.

(3) Every element in a society has a function, i.e. renders a contribution to its maintenance as a system.

(4) Every functioning social structure is based on a consensus of values among its members.

(Dahrendorf 1959:161; see also 1958:174, 1965:209)

But, despite the above-mentioned presuppositions of structural functionalism, which boils down to the fact that every society is inherently stable and harmonious, why is it that people revolt, why is it that workers lay down their tools to strike?   It is clear that a theory of consensus cannot explain, cannot even describe the phenomena of social conflict.   'For this purpose, one needs a model that takes the diametrically opposite position on all the four points above' (Dahrendorf 1958:174), and these then are the essential elements of the conflict theory:

(1) Every society is at every point subject to processes of change; social change is ubiquitous.

(2) Every society displays at every point descensus and conflict; social conflict is ubiquitous.

(3) Every element in a society renders a contribution to its disintegration and change.

(4) Every society is based on the coercion of some of its members by others.

<div style="text-align: right">(Dahrendorf 1959:162; see also 1958:174, 1965:210)</div>

Conflict theory poses a few basic questions: How can we rationalize and understand the existence of power? How can we identify the limits of power? How can we rationalize clashes of interests and conflict of groups? How can we explain those sweeping social changes that we call revolutions, as well as the lesser, almost imperceptible changes that occur in our lives every day? In short, *why is there conflict at all?*

With these basic assumptions and questions of conflict theory in mind, we now can turn to the definition of conflict.

3.3.1.2 A definition of conflict: What is conflict?

To present a definition of conflict is not without problem. The question indeed is what is, and what is not conflict. How far could we stretch the concept 'conflict'? Can terms like hostility, war, competition, antagonism, tension, contradiction, quarrels, disagreements, inconsistencies, controversy, violence, opposition, revolution, dispute, to name but a few, all be put under the umbrella of 'conflict' (cf Turner 1978:180)? Is it correct to follow Mack and Snyder in saying (cited by Fink 1968:431): 'Obviously, "conflict" is for the most part a rubber concept, being stretched and moulded for the purpose at hand. In its broadest sense it seems to cover everything from war to choices between ice-cream sodas or sundaes?' Can 'conflict' be stretched thus far to include seemingly ridiculous quarrels, which is the problem Mack and Snyder (1957:212-213) have with too broad a definition (see also Fink 1968:431-432)? Should 'conflict' include only *overt* action between two parties? Or, should it involve *covert tensions*? Or, should 'conflict' involve *competition* between two parties striving for mutually exclusive, or even the same goals? Or, is conflict only antagonisms involving *overt violence or efforts to injure* one another. What is clear is that there is no consensus regarding the definition of conflict (see also Fink 1968:431; Turner 1978:180; Bieder 1988:58).

Both Fink (1968:431-456) and Bieder (1988:58-61), reduce the debate on the definition of conflict to two basic issues: whether a definition should be narrow, to include only conflict that leads to overt struggle, i.e. what Fink (1968:438) calls an 'action-centred' definition, or broad, to include latent antagonism, that is where opposition exists although no overt antagonistic interactions are visible (see also Bieder 1988:58). This is what Fink (1968:438) calls a 'motive-centred' definition. Fink (1968:432) presents a considerable list of representatives of a narrow view, but especially raises Mack and Snyder, and Coser as prime representatives. Bieder shares this view, but Turner (1978:181) takes Coser as representative of a broader definition. Turner's view, however, compared to Fink (1968) and Bieder (1988), is not convincing, therefore we will take Coser's definition as a narrow one. As prime

representative of the broader view, Fink (1968:432-433), Turner (1978:181) and Bieder (1988:58) all present Dahrendorf. Fink (1968) and Bieder (1988), after all, also opt for a broader conflict definition. But the narrow and broad views are but the extremes. Kriesberg (1973) can be regarded as a representative of an in-between viewpoint.

Fink (1968:431) cites Mack and Snyder in order to illustrate what they regard as *not* being conflict:

> *Competition* is not regarded as conflict or a form of conflict, though it may be an important source of the latter...the following are also considered differentiable: *antagonistic interests, misunderstandings, aggressiveness, hostility or hostile sentiments, desires or intention to oppose, social cleavages, logical irreconcilability of goals or interests, tensions,* and *rivalry.* The attitudes, behaviours, and states of affairs signified by these terms *may* be among the underlying sources of conflict. Or such factors *may* accompany or intensify conflict. But it seems generally agreed that none of these terms is a proper synonym for conflict, nor are the factors denoted singly or in combination sufficient preconditions of social conflict.

After they (Mack & Snyder) had considered what cannot be seen as conflict, they went on to list a set of properties which are present in all social conflicts:

> (1) At least two parties...having some minimum degree of 'contact' with and 'visibility' to each other;
> (2) Mutually exclusive and/or mutually incompatible values and opposed values, based on 'resource scarcity' or on 'position scarcity'.
>
> (Mack & Snyder 1957:217, see also Fink 1968:432)

Up to this point, there are remarkable similarities with the broader view of Dahrendorf (see below), but the definition is *narrowed* considerably by what

Mack and Snyder (1957:217-219; see also Fink 1968:432; Bieder 1988:59-60) add to the above:

> (3) (a) Behaviours designed to destroy, injure, thwart, or otherwise control another party or parties, and (b) a relationship in which the parties can gain (relatively) only at each other's expense;
> (4) mutually opposed actions and counteractions; and
> (5) attempts to acquire power (i.e., to gain control of scarce resources and positions) or to exercise power (i.e., to influence behaviour in certain directions), or the actual acquisition of exercise of power.

The same could be said of the definition Coser (1956, 1968) presents us. He also starts off with a broad base for a definition: 'Social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values, or claims to status, power and scarce resources', but then he narrows his concept of conflict by adding: '...in which *the aims* of the conflicting parties *are* not only to gain the desired values but also *to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals*' (Coser 1968:232; see also 1956:8; my emphasis). If the narrowing of Coser's definition is not yet clear, it certainly will be from the following remark:

> Unequal distributions of privileges and rights may lead to sentiments of hostility, but they do not necessarily lead to conflict. A distinction between conflict and hostile sentiments is essential. Conflict, as distinct from hostile attitudes or sentiments, always take place in interaction between two or more persons. Hostile attitudes are predispositions to engage in conflict behaviour; conflict, on the contrary, is always a *trans*-action.
>
> (Coser 1956:37)

In this way, conflict is limited to be the struggle, *the actual action* to eliminate the rival. Hostile attitudes are hereby excluded.[3] This indeed makes conflict very one-sided.

The claim of Mack and Snyder (1957:217) that 'it seems generally agreed' that antagonistic interests, hostility, tensions, etcetera (see the above-mentioned list) are no proper synonyms for conflict (cf Fink 1968:431), is contradicted by both Turner (1978:182) and Bieder (1988). To Bieder (1988:59) the narrow definitions of Mack and Snyder, and Coser: '...finden keine oder kaum noch eine Verwendung'. But, considerably more important is that both Mack and Snyder, and Coser in any case start off with a relatively broad base for a definition of conflict, but *narrow* it through the view that *only* actual struggle can be conflict. Mack and Snyder (1957:217; also cited by Fink 1968:431), themselves seem uncertain as to what they want: they jump from 'may be' to 'certainly not'. They state that the already above-mentioned list of terms (antagonistic interests, hostility, etc.), *may be* among the underlying sources of conflict, but then jump to the conclusion that they (the terms) are generally agreed *not to be* synonyms for conflict. This makes the leap from a narrow, to a broad definition very narrow in itself. It also makes the distinction between the two (a narrow or a broad view) very slight.

Kriesberg (1973:17-21) broadens his definition to include awareness of incompatible goals. Conflict is not restricted to be visible action or struggle alone. He extends this view and gives the following definition: '*Social conflict is a relationship between two or more parties who (or whose spokesmen) believe they have incompatible goals*' (Kriesberg 1973:17; his emphasis). In this definition nothing is said about the means used in trying to attain the goals, and this could lead us to think that he has a broader view. But this is not the case. He says that it seems that the only way to induce the other side to accept one another's incompatible goals is by coercion, and therefore the attempt to threaten or exercise coercion should be included in a definition of conflict. Yet, coercion, to Kriesberg (1973:17) is not the only way to pursue one's goals: 'But...in actuality, social relationships are never purely zero-sum. Therefore, we must consider non-coercive means to reach incompatible goals in

our analysis of conflict'. There are three ways of pursuing conflicting aims: coercion, persuasion, and reward. But, where the narrow view on conflict sees violence and coercion (which Kriesberg broadens also to include persuasion and reward)[4] as conflict *as such*, Kriesberg (1973:18) narrows his definition again by making these means *not* part of a definition at all. He is correct in seeing these (coercion, persuasion and reward) as a means to an end, but nevertheless, these means could in a broader definition also be included as conflict (see below). Furthermore, Kriesberg (1973:18) excludes competition to be conflict, for, where competition 'may or may not involve awareness', conflict does. But what he regards as competition, namely parties who are seeking the same ends (Kriesberg 1973:18), corresponds with what he later calls 'consensually based conflict', in which the adversarial parties agree about what they want (thus the same ends), but are in conflict as to the means by which to attain it (cf Kriesberg 1973:34). In this way, competition is not really excluded from conflict at all. Kriesberg (1973:18) indeed narrows his view of conflict as compared to a broader view (see below) on the question of *awareness*. He regards conflict only to be 'conflict' if the parties are aware of their incompatible goals, if they know and *believe* that they differ. Conflict may be potential or latent, but emerges only if the parties are aware of it. The broader view, to the contrary, would view even the *potential* presence of conflict to be part of conflict proper. But we agree with Dahrendorf (1965:202; see also Bieder 1988:65):

> Der Gegensatz zwischen den jeweiligen Elementen (der sich häufig - obwohl nicht immer - auch als gemeinsames Streben nach knappen 'Werten' beschreiben läßt) kann bewußt oder erschließbar, gewollt oder nur situationsbedingt sein; auch der Grad des Bewußtseins ist für die Bestimmung von Beziehungen als Konflikten nicht relevant.

Although Kriesberg (1973) slightly broadens his definition, it remains too narrow. What is true of the narrow views of Mack and Snyder, and Coser (see above), is even more true of Kriesberg: The leap to a broader view is very slight.

We, however, will take this slight step to a broader view to find a definition in order to eventually explain the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9, the prime focus of this study.

The prominent representatives of a broader definition of conflict are Dahrendorf (1959), Fink (1968) and Bieder (1988). Fink (1968:438) says: 'Dahrendorf's motive-centred definition broadens it (conflict - EJV) to *include latent antagonism* and also to include *other forms of struggle'* (my emphasis). A broad definition of conflict would read as follows:

> Some authors prefer to describe antagonisms and tensions which are not expressed in manifest struggles in terms other than con-flict. Thus, they distinguish conflict and tensions, conflict and disputes, conflicts and contests, or - most frequently - conflict and competition. Such terminological distinctions are in fact keeping with common usage. We do indeed, tend to associate with the word 'conflict' visible clashes between forces, i.e., antagonisms which are manifest as such. A football game, a competition between applicants for a job, a parliamentary debate, or a legal contest are not usually called conflict. However,...I am using the term 'conflict'...*for contests, competitions, disputes, and tensions as well as for manifest clashes between social forces. All relations between sets of individuals that involve an incompatible difference of objective* - i.e., in its most general form, a desire on the part of contestants to attain what is available only to one, or only in part - *are, in this sense, relations of social conflict. The general concept of conflict does not as such imply any judgement as to the inten-sity or violence of relations caused by differences of objective.* Conflict may assume the form of civil war, or of parliamentary debate, of a strike, or of a well-regulated negotiation.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1959:135; my emphasis)

Fink (1968), after a lengthy discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of a narrow - and broad - view, comes to take a broad view himself. He states:

> Such breadth is implied by defining social conflict as *any social situation or process in which two or more social entities are linked by at least one form of antagonistic psychological relation or at least one form of antagonistic interaction.*

> (Fink 1968:456)

To Fink, the common element in all conflict is *antagonism*, no matter in what form it manifests, and without really defining 'antagonism' (cf Fink 1968:456).

To proceed, we could concur with Bieder (1988:60) when she states that common to the mentioned definitions (both narrow and wide), is the fact that the distinctive aspect of conflict is opposition and/or incompatibility. But this incompatibility lies on different levels or involves different elements. The impinging elements in conflict are interests, goals, values and expectations (Bieder 1988:68). Although Bieder (1988:61, 69) indicates how she arrives at her view, it will be slightly rephrased. The idea of incompatible interests comes from Coser (1968:232; see above) and Dahrendorf (1959), that of incompatible goals is deduced from Dahrendorf (1959:135) and Kriesberg (1973:17), the element of incompatible values is from Berkel, who is cited by Bieder (1988:61), and the element of incompatible expectations can be deduced from Fink (1968:456). Bieder (1988:7,69-70) presents her definition of conflict as follows:

> Von einem *Konflikt* wird dann gesprochen, wenn in einer sozialer Situation zwischen zwei oder mehr Personen ein Konfliktgegenstand vorliegt und darauf bezogene Konflikthandlungen stattfinden.

> Ein *Konfliktgegenstand* zwischen zwei Personen ist dann gegeben, wenn deren Interessen, Ziele, Auffassungen oder Erwartungen unterschiedlich oder gegensätzlich sind und entweder unvereinbar

sind, weil sie kontradiktorisch einander entgegengesetzt sind oder sie sich logisch ausschließen oder aber weil eine Bedingung gegeben ist, unter der sich die Interessen, Ziele, Auffassungen oder Erwartungen der Akteure nicht vereinbar lassen.

Als *Konflikthandlung* wird jedes Handeln einer Person bezeichnet, das eine Umsetzung ihrer Interessen, Ziele, Auffassungen oder Erwartungen verfolgt und dabei den Interessen, Ziele, Auffassungen oder Erwartungen einer anderen Person in einer gemeinsame Interaktionssituation bewußt zuwiederläuft (her emphasis).

In a broad definition of conflict, the concept 'conflict' can indeed be stretched almost indefinitely to include from the manifest, slumbering (potential) discomfort (antagonism) between two persons or groups, to violent clashes between two rivals or rival groups. These elements could be stages in the development of conflict (see Kriesberg 1973:19), and there can be variables in the intensity of conflict by one stage. But, the rate of intensity of conflict cannot be taken to restrict the concept 'conflict', as is done in the narrow views of Mack and Snyder, and Coser (see above). The difficulty Mack and Snyder (cf Fink 1968:431) have with a wide definition, is that it can reach a ridiculous level of including quarrels over choices between 'ice-cream sodas or sundaes'. In reality, what Mack and Snyder do not want, does happen: people *do* quarrel about almost everything under the sun, from serious matters to almost ridiculous matters.

Thus, what the representatives of a narrow definition view to be conflict: *only* visible action or struggles, and what Kriesberg (1973:17) views as means to an end: persuasion, reward and coercion, can all be included in the concept 'conflict'. A definition of conflict could then be:

Conflict is the ever presence of antagonism (wittingly or unwittingly), opposition and incompatibility between two or more persons or groups. This antagonism, opposition and incompatibility lie on the

level of interests, goals, values and expectations,[5] *and may or may not escalate to the point of violent coercion.*[6]

3.3.2 What are the causes of conflict? Why is there conflict?

A matter closely related to the definition of conflict, is the question of its cause(s). In fact, arguing from a broader perspective, the question of the causes of conflict is related to the definition of conflict in such a way that it is perceived as part and parcel of conflict itself. This differs from the way Nader and Todd (1978:14-15; see also Malina 1988b:10) see it. They perceive 'grievance' as the first phase (and cause) of a 'disputing process', and 'conflict' as the second phase thereof. The question is whether the cause(s) of conflict can be reduced to one or more basic principle(s), or is it more a question of a complex interplay of different factors. What is/are the basic cause(s) of conflict? Nader and Todd (1978:14-15), as seen above, reduce the cause of conflict to 'grievance'. One person or group feel(s) him/herself/themselves wronged and injured. Or, is inequality the ultimate source of conflict? (cf Dahrendorf 1968d; Turner 1978:185). Can scarcity of resources, and the control over these scarce resources be valid causes for conflict? Scarce resources can be material goods: food, housing, land and income, as well as non-material resources: values, status, power, domination over territory, honour, pride and prestige (cf Coser 1968:233; Nader & Todd 1978:19; Galtung 1990:307; see below in a specific section on *Scarcity of resources*). Is the materialization of self-interests of individuals or groups the basic cause of conflict? (cf Collins 1975:60; Rex 1981:7; Malina 1988b:9). Are the categories that Bieder (1988:68) presents, i.e.: incompatible interests, goals, values and expectations the grounds for conflict? Unfortunately Bieder (1988:68) does not elaborate on how these elements relate to each other and whether they are causes for conflict, or mere manifestation levels of conflict. Deduced from her definition of conflict (Bieder 1988:7, 69-70; see above), the latter seems to be the case. Also deduced from the following citation, she apparently sees interests, goals, values and expectations as levels on which conflict manifests rather than as causes thereof:

> Unvereinbarkeit von Interessen, Zielen, Auffassungen oder Erwar-
> tungen *ist keine Tatsache, die sich aus dem Nichts ergibt, sondern*
> *die aus Ansprüchen, Vorstellungen, und Forderungen der Akteure*
> *resultiert.* Wann Unvereinbarkeit von Interessen gegeben ist und
> nach außen sichtbar wird, hängt weitgehend von den Akteuren ab,
> denn diese verhalten sich in einer Form, die Unvereinbarkeit pro-
> duziert, bzw. aus der Unvereinbarkeit resultiert.
>
> (Bieder 1988:70; my emphasis)

To Bieder (1988:68) then, the categories: incompatible interests, goals, values and expectations are the result of the claims, ideals and desires of the actors in the conflict involved. But the question regarding the relation between these elements remains open. Nevertheless, these four categories remain useful as point of departure to systematize the discussion on the causes of conflict. These concepts are frequently used by the distinguished conflict theorists, for the moment regardless of what their relations are. The above-mentioned questions do not bring us closer to a single principle as cause of conflict. What it does show us, is the complexity of the matter. What Bieder (1988) fails to do, namely to give content to, and to indicate in what relation the elements: interests, goals, values and expectations stand to each other, we will attempt to do.

3.3.2.1 Incompatible interests

In the discussion on interests, a number of closely related issues will be dealt with, namely survival, pursuing of own interests, inequality, scarcity of resources, control over resources, power and the distribution of power, author-ity, privilege, status and prestige.[7] In order to give content to the concept 'incompatible interests' as a basic cause of conflict as such, we will turn to Dahrendorf (1959) and Lenski (1966). For the related issues, i.e., inequality and scarcity, etcetera (see above), we will primarily make use of the insights of Dahrendorf (1968c), Coser (1968) and Nader and Todd (1975). On the issue of

authority we will use Dahrendorf (1958, 1959, 1965, 1968b) and again Lenski (1966). The above-mentioned issues, however, are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to keep them apart, especially in the way they are used by the different authors.

Common to the above-mentioned authors, is the basic assumption that a human being acts (generally speaking) in order to pursue his/her own interests. Therefore, this pursuing of own interests is the most important cause of conflict, especially when these interests clash with each other (or are *incompatible* to each other). This phenomenon involves both individuals and groups, for individual interests can be shared by a large group as common interests. Dahrendorf (1959:14) uses the term 'interests' in the context of 'class interests', terms which he took over from Karl Marx. Dahrendorf (1959:14-16) heavily interprets Marx on this issue (as we of course in turn do with Dahrendorf). Classes do not exist in isolation. They exist in relation to other classes to which they are opposed. The relation lies in the conflicting interests between different classes. It is important to see that the concept of 'class' here, as in the thoughts of Dahrendorf (1959:136, 138), is rather a *relational*, than a gradational concept (see Rohrbaugh 1984:529, 531). In due course in this study we will indeed make some gradational distinctions between the different classes in agrarian societies (see below). The emphasis is on the qualitative positions in a society. Basic to this emphasis is, for instance, not how much money a person has which classifies him/her in relation to the others, but, to look at a person's position in relation to others as that which enables him/her to acquire the money. 'Position is the key' (Rohrbaugh 1984:531). It is a matter of mutually defining relations in which one party to the relation is in control (cf Dahrendorf 1959:136; Rohrbaugh 1984:531). It is not a matter of the static description of the strata of society (although related to that), but to provide an explanation for both the source of inequality and the dynamics by which it thrives.

There are various types of relational views, as Wright (1979:5) and Rohrbaugh (1984:532) put forward. These relations are market, production, technical division of labour, authority and exploitation relations. Of interest for

this study is the so-called *authoritative relations* by which classes are defined. Authoritative relations of dominance/subordination have been experienced in almost all societies everywhere (cf Rohrbaugh 1984:534). By *domination* we understand the possession of authority, i.e. the right to issue authoritative commands. By *subordination* or *subjection* we understand the exclusion from authority, i.e. the duty to obey authoritative commands (cf Dahrendorf 1959:2-37). Rohrbaugh (1984:534) continues: 'The term "social class" can be broadly defined a "power group", charting any and all power relationships and therefore pointing to groups which participate in or are excluded from the exercise of power' (see also Lenski 1966:75).

Classes are formed by individuals (and groups) who are engaged in a common struggle with other classes. *'The force that effects class formation is class interests'* (Dahrendorf 1959:14; my emphasis). Class interests are not merely the random personal interests of one person or even many persons. The shared interests exist in the mutual dependence of the individuals among whom, for example, labour is divided (cf Marx, interpreted by Dahrendorf 1959:14). Members of one class have contradicting interests with other classes. This occurs as soon as they are confronted by other classes.

Class interests can be expressed in various ways. The immediate interest of, for instance, the 'proletariat', is the wages, and that of the 'bourgeoisie', the profit. 'This means that two particular interests are increasingly articulated: the conservative interests of the ruling class, and the revolutionary interests of the oppressed class' (Dahrendorf 1959:15).

Misled by the revolutionary tradition of the eighteenth century, says Dahrendorf (1959:125), Marx faulted by believing that the only way in which social conflicts could produce structural changes, was by revolutionary upheavals. 'But despite such errors he (Marx - EJV) did discover the formative force of conflicting social groups or classes' (Dahrendorf 1959:125). Dahrendorf sustains two aspects of Marx's analysis: firstly, that conflicts that effect change are traced back to the pattern of social structure itself. Conflicts are necessary outgrowths of the structure of any society, in particular of capitalist society. Dahrendorf (1959:125-126) disagrees with Marx's assumption that

property relations are the structural origin of conflict. He nevertheless acknowl-edges that the analytical achievement of tracing in the structure of a given society are the seeds of its supersedure. The idea of a society which produces in its structure the antagonisms that lead to its modification, appears an appropriate mode for the analysis of change in general.

The second aspect Dahrendorf (1959:126) sustains from Marx is even more significant: in any given situation there is always the dominance of *one* particular conflict. Any theory of conflict operates with a 'two-class model'. 'There are but two contending parties - this is implied in the very concept of conflict'. He proceeds:

> There may be coalitions, of course, as there may be conflicts internal to either of the contenders, and there may be groups that are not drawn into a given dispute; but from the point of view of a given clash of interests, there are never more than two positions that struggle for domination....If social conflicts effect change, and if they are generated by social structure, then it is reasonable to assume that of the two interests involved in any one conflict, one will be pressing for change, the other one for the *status quo*. This assumption, again, is based on logic as much as on empirical observations. In every conflict, one party attacks and another defends. The defending party wants to retain and secure its position, while the attacking party has to fight in order to improve its own condition.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1959:126; see also 1988:28)

It is clear that Dahrendorf defines 'interests' in terms of 'class interests'. Class interests become the force that *forms* the classes. Classes have different 'interests', that is there are different desires or motivational forces to either retain the *status quo*, or to change the social structures. One class' interest is to defend, the other is to attack. The value of Dahrendorf's analysis, along with Marx's, is to clearly indicate that there are, in fact, only two contending parties

in conflict. This seems quite obvious, but it needs to be stressed again. Nevertheless, Dahrendorf fails to clearly explain what 'interests' are. In fact, he even acknowledges his own limitation: 'Once again, it is clear that these statements (cited above - EJV) remain on a high level of formality. *They imply no relevance to the substance or the origin of conflicting interests'* (Dahrendorf 1959:126; my emphasis). To explain 'interests' in terms of 'attacking' or 'defending', or in terms of 'changing' or 'retaining' the social structure, says more about the *means* with which 'interests' are pursued, than about 'interests' themselves. This is indeed correct in order to explain the *relationship* there is between the different classes. Furthermore, to explain 'interests' only in terms of 'class interests', raises the question whether conflicting interests really have no other manifestations than in 'classes', which is a category frequently used in relation to more industrialized societies. Can 'interests' not be used in relation to other terms than 'class interests'? To answer this question, and to give a clearer indication of what 'interests' are, we turn to Lenski (1966, 1985).

To understand how Lenski deals with 'interests', we have to know how he views the nature of human being. The first postulate of his general theory is the '...simple assertion *that man is a social being obliged by nature to live with others as members of society'* (Lenski 1966:25, 1985:89; his emphasis). Not only is social life essential for survival, it is also needed for the maximum satisfaction of human needs and desires. 'Through cooperative activity men can satisfy many needs and desires which could never be met otherwise and can satisfy most other needs much more efficiently, that is, with greater return for less effort or other investment' (Lenski 1966:26, 1985:90).

The *second postulate* of Lenski's theory more or less coincides with the view of Dahrendorf (1968b), who wants to abandon all utopian views of human nature. Lenski (1966:26; 1985:90) also undermines the romantic view on the 'natural goodness of humankind'. From a very young age (as a child), human-kind tends to be a self-centred creature. But, as taken from the first postulate that he/she is a social being, he/she has to take others into account. This does not mean that he/she is any less motivated to maximize his/her own satis-factions. It rather means that he/she has learned that the attainment of his/her

own goals is inextricably linked with the interests of others. For example, a boy who acquires a taste for football soon finds that he can satisfy his taste only by cooperating with others who share his enthusiasm (cf Lenski 1966:27, 1985:90-91). To maximize self-interests, individuals are forced to work (or play) together. Lenski (1966:27, 1985:91) takes over Sumner's 'coined' phrase 'antagonistic cooperation' as a source of conflict, although it may sound paradoxical and ironical. If humankind were a solitary species, each living apart, conflict would be less. But, because people join forces, 'the opportunity and motivation for conflict are increased' (Lenski 1966:28, 1985:91).

Lenski (1966:28, 1985:92) reasons that even self-sacrificial, morally highly commendable activities, involve a strong element of self-seeking. Even noble activities of self-sacrifices have to be seen in a larger context: 'Seen in context, such actions appear as part of a mutually beneficial system of exchanged favours' (Lenski 1966:28, 1985:92). These actions are seldom taken on behalf of strangers or outsiders. He argues that another questionable form of self-sacrifice is the practice of *noblesse oblige.* Charity, alms giving and public service yield no obvious returns. But, he says: 'Again, however, the element of self-interests intrudes. For the very wealthy, philanthropy costs relatively little but usually yields substantial dividends. It is one of the few trustworthy routes to honour and prestige,...This is not to say that all charitable actions are prompted by self-interest but only that the element of self-interest is not incompatible with philanthropy' (Lenski 1966:29, 1985:92-93). He does not intend to say that *unselfish* deeds *or, altruistic love* is impossible or never happens. In fact, he reasons that altruism or unselfish love remains extremely important from both the psychological and moral standpoints, and human existence would be much poorer and harsher if it were absent (cf Lenski 1966:30, 1985:93). But, as Lenski argues, this pattern of response has only a limited development. Altruistic actions are most likely to occur in minor events of daily life where little is really at stake. Many people desire to be generous and kind, but find it impossible when much is at stake. Thus, altruism and unselfish love, says Lenski (1966:30, 1985:93): 'Is not, however, a major determinant of the distribution of power and privilege'. He concludes:

Thus, when one surveys the human scene, one is forced to conclude that *when men are confronted with important decisions where they are obliged to choose between their own, or their group's, interests and the interests of others, they nearly always choose the former* - though often seeking to hide this fact from themselves and others.

(Lenski 1966:30, 1985:93-94; his emphasis)

The *third postulate* pertains to the objects of humankind's striving. 'Some, such as the air we breathe, are readily available to all, but most are not. *Most are in short supply* - that is, the demand for them exceeds the available supply' (Lenski 1966:31, 1985:94; his emphasis). The normal feature of the world of nature is that there is a limited supply of food and resources which allows/causes large numbers of creatures to die before the end of their lifespan and others live close to the margin of subsistence. But humankind, to some extent, has freed itself from the difficulties of nature and learned to increase its food supply and to control reproduction. Lenski (1966:31, 1985:94) says:

Yet while man enjoys certain advantages when compared with other living things, he also suffers from certain disadvantages. Unlike various plants and animals, *man has an insatiable appetite for goods and services.* No matter how much he reproduces and consumes, he always desires more. This is true chiefly because the goods and services he consumes have a *status value as well as a utilitarian value....The very nature of status* striving makes it inevitable that the demand will exceed the supply: those of lower status constantly strive to equal those of higher status and those of higher status always seek to preserve the difference. Given these conditions, satiation is impossible no matter how much man increases production or restricts population increase (his emphasis).

He concludes, taken from these three postulates, that it follows logically that a struggle for rewards will be present in every human society (Lenski 1966:31-32, 1985:94-95).[8]

The nature of society is subsequently presented by Lenski (1966:32-34), but we have already dealt with it in the discussion on social structuralism and/or conflict theory, in relation to Dahrendorf's views (see above). We will proceed by presenting Lenski's viewpoint on the relation between 'social interests' and 'individual interests', which will bring us closer to an understanding of the concept 'interests'. Building on the following statement: '...we must learn to think of distributive systems as reflecting simultaneously system needs and unit needs, with each often subverting the other' (Lenski 1966:34), he says that 'conservative theorists' (a term he uses as an equivalent for the 'structural functionalist' view - EJV) wrongly deny that there is a basic conflict between the interests of the group and the interests of the individual, 'asserting that what is good for the society is good for the individual, and vice versa' (cf Lenski 1966:35). There surely is a link between the destinies of an individual and his/her society, but there is no simple one-to-one relation between them. To Lenski (1966:35) it is impossible for the interests of society to be compatible with the interests of *all* its members, if the interests of these members are themselves incompatible to any appreciable degree. He says:

> ...the most that is possible is that the interests of society are consistent with the interests of *some* of its members.... There is good reason to believe that in many societies throughout history the interests of only a small minority of the members were significantly identified with the interests of the total society.
>
> (Lenski 1966:35)

Lenski (1966:36) admits that he uses the terms 'social interests' and 'individual interests' without stating what they are, as if they are quite obvious to understand beforehand. Under the two headings: 'Individual Interests: Their

nature', and: 'Social interests: Their nature' (cf Lenski 1966:36-41, 41-42 respectively), he gives content to these concepts.

3.3.2.1 (a) Individual interests

The majority of humankind regard *survival* as the highest priority. The implications of the fact that most people strive for survival are that *it* firstly *causes might or force to be the most effective deterrent and also the supreme sanction in human affairs.* 'It is no coincidence that violence is the last court of appeal in human conflict' (Lenski 1966:37; see also Sites 1990:11). Furthermore:

> ...anything which facilitates survival is also valued highly. Practically, this means that food and other goods and services which provide *sustenance* are highly valued, especially since they are normally in short supply.
>
> (Lenski 1966:37)

After survival, *health* and *status or prestige follow.* For the sake of health, people are prepared to pay dearly and freely admit it. But, says Lenski (1966:37), with status, or prestige it is different. Few people will admit that they value status highly. But, from their actions, the concern for status becomes evident. 'Fear for the loss of status, or honour, is one of the few motives that can make men lay down their lives on the field of battle' (Lenski 1966:37). This is certainly true in an 'agrarian society', or more specific in the first-century Mediterranean world in which honour and shame were regarded as the pivotal values (cf Malina 1981:25-50; Duling 1992:108; Van Aarde 1993b:535-536). *Self-respect* is another facet of status. 'Where self-respect is destroyed, motivation is undermined' (Lenski 1966:38).[9] Other interests are creature comfort, salvation and affection, and some instrumental values.[10]

3.3.2.1 (b) Social interests

In turning to the discussion on 'social interests', Lenski (1966:41) starts off by saying that 'social interests' are difficult to define because human societies are

such imperfect systems. Their members frequently work at cross-purposes with one another, and the actions of the whole are often harmful to the parts. Nevertheless, Lenski (1966:41) defines the goals (interests) of a given society as:

> ...*those ends towards which the more or less coordinated efforts of the whole are directed - without regard to the harm they may do to many individual members, even the majority.* This means, in effect, that those societies controlled by a dominant class which has the power to determine the direction of the coordinated efforts of the society, *the goals of the society are the goals of this class* (his emphasis)

This approach, says Lenski (1966:41) helps clarify the relation between social and individual interests. It explains why the interests of the individual need not necessarily be the same than those of the society. They could be the same, but this largely depends on the nature of the society and the individual's position in it.

The coordinated actions of societies are directed largely towards one or the other of two basic interests (goals). Firstly,

> ...they are directed towards *the maintenance of the political status quo within the group.* Since perfect stability or equilibrium is impossible, this goal might better be described as *the minimization of the rate of internal political change.*
>
> (Lenski 1966:42; his emphasis)

The second basic goal of societies, Lenski (1966:42) describes as:

> ...*the maximization of production and the resources on which production depends.* Sometimes this has been sought by efforts to

promote technological advance; more often it has been through war and conquest (his emphasis).

Depending on the kind of society, one or the other of the above goals receives priority. He says:

> In general it appears that *the goal of maximizing production has priority in relatively unstratified societies and that the goal of minimizing political change has priority in societies in which power and privilege are monopolized by a few.* In societies in which neither of these conditions exist, the two goals seem to be given roughly equal priority.
>
> (Lenski 1966:42; his emphasis)

As conclusion, Lenski (1966:42) suggests *that societies, like individuals, are basically self-seeking units.* In fact, the history of intersocietal relations suggests that the self-seeking element in societies is, if anything, more pronounced than in individuals.

We now return to the initial question of what 'interests' are. With what does Lenski present us? Like Dahrendorf (1959), Lenski also takes the notion of *self-interests*, whether in a society or in an individual, as the *basic force* which brings humankind in motion. *Self-interest* is viewed as the basis of all humankind's activities and therefore it is also viewed *as the basic cause of conflict.* On its own behalf, humankind cooperates with others, which even makes cooperation or consensus a possible, deductive (deduced from the principle of self-interests) cause of conflict. In fact, even consensus could be forced upon someone else.

Lenski (1966; 1985) is much more clear on the matter of interests than Dahrendorf. This is, in fact, the great value of Lenski's work. He gives content to the concepts 'individual' and 'social interests'. Individual interests, by way of summary, are described as the desire or striving for survival, health, status and prestige, comfort, salvation and affection, and a few instrumental values

(like money). Social interests are described as striving for the minimization of the rate of internal political change and the maximization of production by one dominant group. Social interests are furthermore interpreted as the *interests of the dominant group in a society.*[11]

Closely related to the issue of the pursuing of one's own interests, but nevertheless distinguished from it, are the issues inequality and scarcity, which in turn are related to the *control* over scarce resources and the desire for *power, privilege and prestige (status).*

3.3.2.1 (c) Inequality

To Dahrendorf (1968d:151) it is clear that what remains a 'stubborn' and remarkable fact, is that people are unequally placed. Society not only has crude forms of graduations such as property and income, prestige and power, but is also characterized by a multitude of differences of rank which can be subtle and yet penetrating. This existing inequality, whether crude or subtle, can, and does cause conflict among people. 'Throughout our society, social inequality *is still turning men against men*' (Dahrendorf 1968d:151; my emphasis). This does not mean to say that there could or should not be a *strife* towards some form of equality. It merely describes inequality as an empirical fact (see also Honecker 1978:180; Huber & Tödt 1988:91). To Dahrendorf, inequality becomes the dynamic impulse that serves to keep social structures alive. He says:

> Inequality always implies the gain of one group at the expense of others; thus every system of stratification *generates protest against* its principles and bears the seeds of its own suppression.
>
> (Dahrendorf 1968d:177; my emphasis)

Because *inequality* and social stratification exist, it remains likely that society is intrinsically explosive. Dahrendorf (1968d:151-178) presents an exhaustive work on the origin of inequality among men. Suffice it to say that as long as there is inequality between individuals or groups (and there indeed *will* always

be), there will always be a cause for conflict, since everyone, to his/her own interest, will strive to gain advantage over the other, and better his/her own position.

3.3.2.1 (d) Scarcity of resources

Scarcity of resources can be another cause of conflict, closely related to own interests. Scarcity of resources can be viewed broadly as Coser (1968:233) sees it: 'Conflict may break out over the distribution of a great variety of scarce *values* and *goods*, such as income, status, power, dominion over territory, or ecological position' (my emphasis), or as Nader and Todd (1978:19) presents it: 'Scarce resources have generally been defined in *material* terms (e.g., land, money, control over women [sic]). But...*non-material* resources may also be considered scarce: honour, pride, prestige, valour' (my emphasis; see also Dahrendorf 1959:209; Galtung 1990:307). Because, as we have seen before, humankind needs to survive (cf Lenski 1966:37; see above), and because humankind has an insatiable appetite for goods and services (cf Lenski 1966:3-1; see above), the desire for the above-mentioned scarce resources will always remain strong. It could also lead to conflicting desires to *control* these resources.

In an 'agrarian society' surpluses were not produced because the farmers only produced enough for themselves. Therefore the elites used the means of heavy taxation to force the farmers to produce surpluses. Taxation on crops was often between thirty and seventy percent. This contributed to severe crises on Palestine soil. In the first-century Mediterranean society things of value were always scarce. This was in particular true of honour and prestige, and its symbols. Very few had the privilege to have a position of status. Not only was honour a limited good, there also were other aspects that functioned as symbols of honour. This included aspects such as financial means (money), power and position/means by which manipulation could have taken place. The peasant community was impoverished by heavy taxation, but the members were also in strong competition with each other in order to gain scarce

resources. Therefore the agrarian society is often referred to as an 'agonic' (strongly competitive) society (cf Van Aarde 1993b:530).

Since control over scarce resources and power are interconnected (cf Nader & Todd 1978:19), great emphasis is placed on power and the unequal distribution of power, by Dahrendorf (1958, 1959, 1965, 1968b) and Lenski (1966). To get a clearer picture of 'power and authority', we once again turn to Dahrendorf.

3.3.2.1 (e) Power and authority

3.3.2.1 (e) (i) Authority as Dahrendorf sees it
In dealing with *power and authority*, Dahrendorf (1959:165; see also the work of Van Gennep 1989:389-415) once again places the 'coercion theory' in opposition to 'integration theory'. He says that it is not voluntary cooperation or general consensus that makes social organizations cohere, but enforced constraint. This means that in every social organization some have the right to exercise control over others to ensure effective coercion. There is a *differential distribution of power and authority.* When people live together, says Dahren-dorf (1958:176) '...there always are positions whose occupants have powers of command in certain contexts...and there are other positions whose occupants are subjected to such commands'. The *differential distribution of power and authority* is the determining factor of social conflicts (cf Dahrendorf 1959:136, 165, 1965:216, 1968b:138). He says:

> The structural origin of such group conflicts must be sought in the arrangement of social roles endowed with expectations of *domina-tion or subjection.*
>
> (Dahrendorf 1959:165; my emphasis; see also Rohrbaugh 1984:531)

Dahrendorf makes a distinction between 'power' and 'authority'. This distinc-tion he took over from Max Weber:

Power is the 'probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests'; whereas authority (*Herrschaft*) is the 'probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons'.

(Dahrendorf 1959:166; see also 1958:176, 1965:214)

The important difference between power and authority is that power is related to the personality of individuals whereas authority is always associated with social positions or roles. 'Power is merely a factual relation, authority is a legitimate relation of domination and subjection. In this sense, authority can be described as legitimate power' (Dahrendorf 1959:166; see also Van Gennep 1989:393).[12]

The preference of Dahrendorf lies with authority, because authority alone is part of social structure. Whenever authority is exercised, group conflicts are likely to arise in all societies under all historical conditions. Authority consists of the following five elements:

(1) Authority relations are always relations of super- and subordination. (2) Where there are authority relations, the superordinate element is socially expected to control, by orders and commands, warnings and prohibitions, the behaviour of the subordinate element. (3) Such expectations attach to relatively permanent social positions rather than to the character of the individuals; they are in this sense legitimate. (4) By virtue of this fact, they always involve specification of the persons subject to control and of the spheres within which control is permissible. Authority, as distinct from power, is never a relation of generalized control over others. (5) Authority being a *legitimate relation*, noncompliance with authoritative commands can be sanctioned; it is indeed one of the

functions of the legal system...to support the effective exercise of *legitimate authority.*

(Dahrendorf 1959:166-167, 237; see also 1958:176-177, 1965:214-215; my emphasis)

Dahrendorf's (1959:166) view is confirmed by a remark of Van Gennep (1989:394): 'Over het algemeen heeft de term "gezag" een veel gunstiger klank dan "macht", omdat het nauw verbonden is met "recht", met de *bevoegdheid* om bepaalde dingen te doen of bepaalde woorden te zeggen' (my emphasis). With his definition of authority in mind, Dahrendorf (1958:177; see also 1959:167-168) holds the view that in every group, which he calls 'imperatively co-ordinated associations' (see below on 'the units of conflict'), whether the state, a church, an enterprise, a political party, a trade union, or a chess club, two aggregates can be distinguished: those which have only general ('civil') basic rights and those which have authority rights over the former. To him (as a point of critique against Marx), *authority,* rather than property or even status, is a universal element of social structure (or society). Authority is a more general and significant relation. 'Authority relations exist wherever there are people whose actions are subject to legitimate and sanctioned prescriptions that originate outside them but within social structure' (Dahrendorf 1959:168). That is why he sees conflict as based on authority 'under all historical conditions' (Dahrendorf 1959:166). He says that there is a clear dichotomy in authority relations: Every position in an 'imperatively co-ordinated association', can be recognized as belonging to either one who dominates (participating in the exercise of authority) or one who is dominated (subjected to, but excluded from the exercise of authority - cf Dahrendorf 1958:177, 1959:167).

The conclusion Dahrendorf (1959:172-173) comes to is:

(1) The distribution of authority in associations is the ultimate 'cause' of the formation of conflict groups, and (2), being dichotomous, it is, in any given association, the cause of the formation of two, and only two, conflict groups.

The first statement, he takes as a logical assumption. The second statement implies that some have authority and others have not; authority implies both domination and subjection, and therefore two distinct sets of persons.

The link between Dahrendorf's notion of 'class-interests' (see above) and that of authority, is obvious: those in control, those who exercise authority, their interest lies in maintaining the *status quo* in society in order to remain in a position of authority. But, those who are in a subordinate position, strive for change to gain authority and therefore they are in constant conflict with each other. Dahrendorf, I suppose, is correct in that as soon as groups are in conflict with each other, this conflict is about their own interests and prevails on the level of 'who takes control over whom', or who attacks and who defends, or who wants to remain at the *status quo* or who desires to change.

3.3.2.1 (e) (ii) Power, privilege and prestige as Lenski sees it

Lenski (1966:44-46, 1985:95-97) deals with *power, privilege and prestige* under the heading: *Two laws of distribution. Privilege* is defined as possession or control of a portion of the surplus produced by the society. Prestige is seen as a function of power and privilege. Whereas Dahrendorf focuses on authority as social relation, Lenski focuses more on *power*, also following Weber's definition of power as the probability of persons or groups carrying out their will even when opposed by others (cf Lenski 1966:44, 1985:95).

Based on his three most important postulates about human nature, namely (1) that humankind is a social being, (2) that all humankind's actions are motivated mostly by self-interest, and (3) that struggle for rewards are present in every human society (cf Lenski 1966:31-32, 1985:94-95; see above), he remarks that there is a curious, but important dualism in the dynamics of distribution. He says that almost all the products of people's labours will be distributed on the basis of two seemingly contradictory principles, *need* and *power* (Lenski 1966:44, 1985:95). The postulate that most human actions are motivated by self-interest or partisan group interest, could suggest that power alone governs the distribution of rewards. But, this is hardly the case because most of the essentially selfish interests can only be satisfied in cooperation with

others. It is absolutely essential to cooperate with others for both survival and for the efficient attainment of most other goals. People's selfish interests compel them to remain members of society. Lenski (1966:44, 1985:95) proceeds:

> If these postulates are correct, then it follows that *men will share the productions of their labour to the extent required to insure survival and continued productivity of those others whose actions are necessary or beneficial to themselves.* This might well be called the first law of distribution, since the survival of humankind as a species depends on compliance with it (his emphasis).

But this first law of distribution does not say anything of how the *surplus,* i.e. goods and services, *over and above* the minimum to stay alive and productive will be distributed. Because of self-interest and because the desired resources normally are in short supply, *any surplus will inevitably give rise to conflict and struggles aimed at its control.* Furtherrnore, it follows that *power* (being the probability of persons or groups to impose their will on others) *will determine the distribution of nearly all of the surplus possessed by a society* (cf Lenski 1966:44, 1985:95-96; see also Van Aarde 1993b:530 for a description of surpluses in agrarian society; see above).

The second law of distribution as Lenski sees it, points to an important relationship between power and *privilege:*

> If privilege is defined as possession or control of a portion of the surplus produced by society, then it follows that *privilege is largely a function of power, and to a very limited degree, a function of altruism.* This means that to explain most of the distribution of privilege in a society, we have but to determine the distribution of power....If we can discover the causes of a given distribution of

power, we have also discovered the causes of the distribution of privilege linked to it.

(Lenski 1966:45, 1985:96; his emphasis)

Prestige is also related to power and privilege, but not as a simple function of privilege. Lenski (1966:45, 1985:96) says that empirical evidence strongly suggests that *prestige is largely, though not solely, a function of power and privilege, at least in those societies, where there is a substantial surplus.* The relationship between these three variables, can be graphically depicted in the diagram below. The solid lines indicate the major sources of influence, the dashed lines secondary sources. The dashed line from *prestige* back to *power*, indicates some feedback between the two.
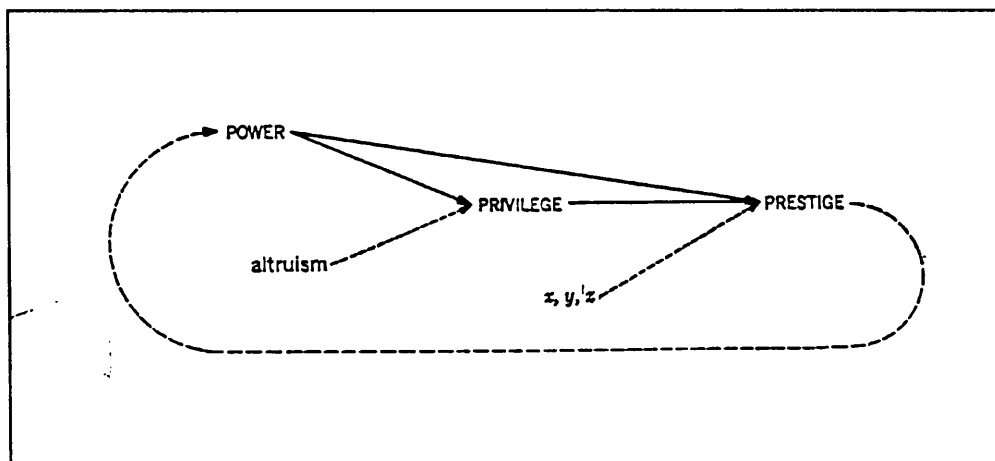
Diagram 2.

(Diagram taken from Lenski 1966:46, 1985:97)

The question here is, what insights have we gained from Lenski as far as power, privilege and prestige and their relation to the causes of conflict is concerned? How can these categories be viewed as possible causes of conflict? To answer these questions, we have to see them in relation to the three postulates Lenski (see above) made about the nature of humankind, especially the second and the third postulates, namely that humankind is primarily a self-

interested being and that most things (products of humankind's labour - EJV) are in short supply, not only regarding basic needs,[13] but also goods and services. If survival is the highest priority of self-interest, it leads to the fact that to survive, humankind is in constant need of basic material resources, which can be in short supply. But to survive, humankind also needs non-material resources, and humankind needs to control the eventual surplus of resources to remain in constant supply of needs (see the work of Burton 1990 for more on conflict in relation to the human need theory). To be able to control the surplus of resources as well as the basic needs, humankind needs power, privilege and prestige. In its striving for the maximizing of its own interests, that is survival, basic needs, control over surpluses by power, privilege and prestige, it is likely that humankind would clash with others whose interests are more or less the same. Furthermore, as Lenski (1966:28) has indicated, to survive humankind also needs to cooperate with others, and cooperation creates contact with people, and in this contact some people will experience unequal distribution of needs, surplus or power, which *will inevitably give rise to conflict and struggle aimed at its control* (cf Lenski 1966:44, 1985:95).

3.3.2.1 (f) Summary

To conclude this section on incompatible interests, we summarize. The most dominant motivational force of any action, whether individual or in societies, is the pursuing of self-interests. Dahrendorf places more emphasis on interests in the context of classes, Lenski more on the interests of the individual, which are based on striving for survival. Dahrendorf only identifies two basic interests, those of the rulers (who have the authority) to retain the *status quo* and those without authority, who want to change the structure of society. The interests of the one group is to defend and the other is to attack. Lenski identified more interests, but the most dominant interest is to survive. To ensure survival, humankind has basic needs *and* the means to control these basic needs, by power, privilege and prestige.

The basic assumption then (that I hope by now is more than just an assumption), is that humankind is always pursuing or maximizing its own inter-

ests. But humankind wants more than just to survive (although this *more* can also be seen as a need). It wants to fulfil more than basic needs. On a more individual level, survival is indeed the highest priority.[14] But humankind also wants to control the surpluses of society (see above).[15]

As for social interests, as Lenski identified it, we would rather, along with Dahrendorf, speak of class (or at least group) interests. For it seldom occurs (especially not within agrarian societies) that the interests of a few individuals (or groups) really correspond with the interests of the whole society. There always will be one class in domination that will pursue its interests *as if* in the interests of the whole.

For both Dahrendorf and Lenski the ever-existence of inequality in status, stratification in society, scarce resources, unequal distribution of power and status, are all seen as empirical, logical, and realistic evidence of the fact that self-interest lies at the basis of all actions and also of all struggles, and therefore there will always be conflict generated because of these aspects.

Dahrendorf places the emphasis more on *authority* as a sociological term, indicating some sort of relation between domination and subordination. Authority is legitimated power. Lenski, however, is correct in stressing *power.* Although these two concepts can be distinguished, they are interrelated. For an authoritative person, sociologically speaking, has a better chance of enforcing his/her own will (power; see above).

But, is self-interest the only cause of conflict? It will be argued that interests remain at the basis of all conflict, but that it has to be explicated by goals, values and expectations. Therefore interests can never be seen as loosened from these aspects.

3.3.2.2 Goals

For social conflict to emerge from potential conflict as manifest conflict, three conditions are needed, namely (1) the groups must be conscious of themselves (identity), (2) they must be dissatisfied with their condition and (3) '...they must think that they can reduce their dissatisfaction by the *other* group acting or being different; that is, they must have aims which involve the other group

yielding what it would not otherwise yield' (Kriesberg 1973:61; we will however concentrate no further on this third aspect). Kriesberg (1973:63) formulates the question as: 'Who we are, what we have to complain about, and who is to blame for it? ' These questions are all related to each other and help determine each other.

3.3.2.2 (a) Identity

With identity is understood the sense of knowledge a person or group has about its own character, its boundaries and who is included and who is excluded from the group. This identity is fed by a number of factors. Says Kriesberg (1973:64): 'A prerequisite for a sense of common identity is communication among the members of the category'. In as far as communication is hindered, it is less likely that a sense of commonness or collective identity will be developed. Furthermore, homogeneity of the members, says Kriesberg (1973:66): '...facilitate communication and the growth of a sense of solidarity and common fate'. The clearer the boundaries, the more likely it is that a group will develop a sense of common fate.

3.3.2.2 (b) The sense of grievance

The sense of grievance entails that the members of a group think that they have less than what is wanted and that they think that it is possible to have more. But, what are the sources of a sense of grievance? Kriesberg (1973:68-81) gives three sources that stimulate grievance: deprivation, rank disequilibrium and change in attainments and expectations. Relevant for this study is only the latter.[16]

3.3.2.2 (b) (i) Changes in attainment and expectations

The third major source of grievance is the changes in attainment and expectations of which Kriesberg (1973:76) says: 'Dissatisfaction arises as people have a decreasing proportion of what they feel they should and could have'. If what has been attained falls below what is expected (fig. 1), and when the rate of what is attained decreases, compared to what is expected (fig. 2), and when

expectations rise compared to attainments that remain constant (fig. 3), there is a rise in the gap or a discrepancy between the two, and it is likely for grievance to increase. Kriesberg (1973:77) gives three figures to illustrate this point:

Figure 1.

Figure 2.

C. Rising Expectations
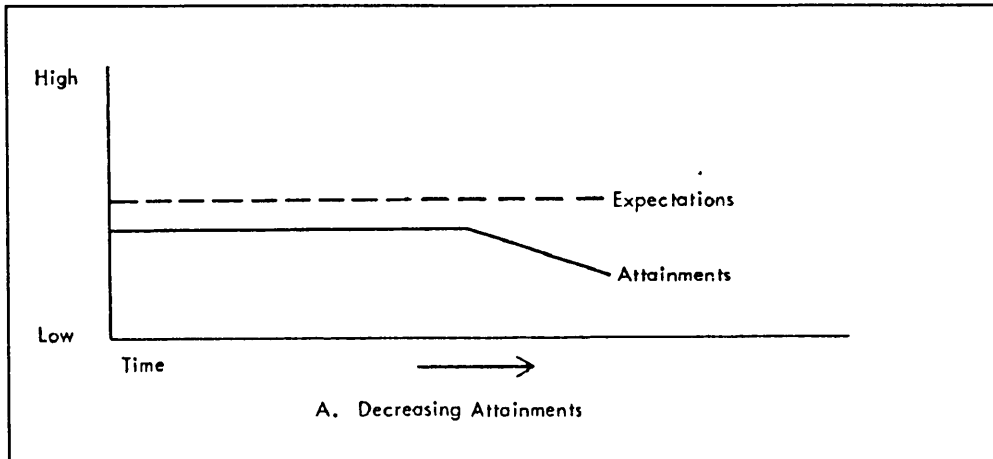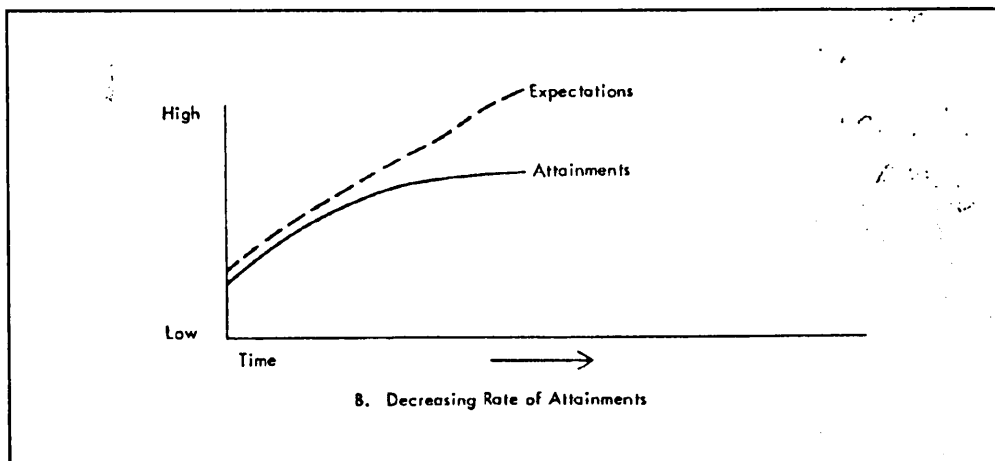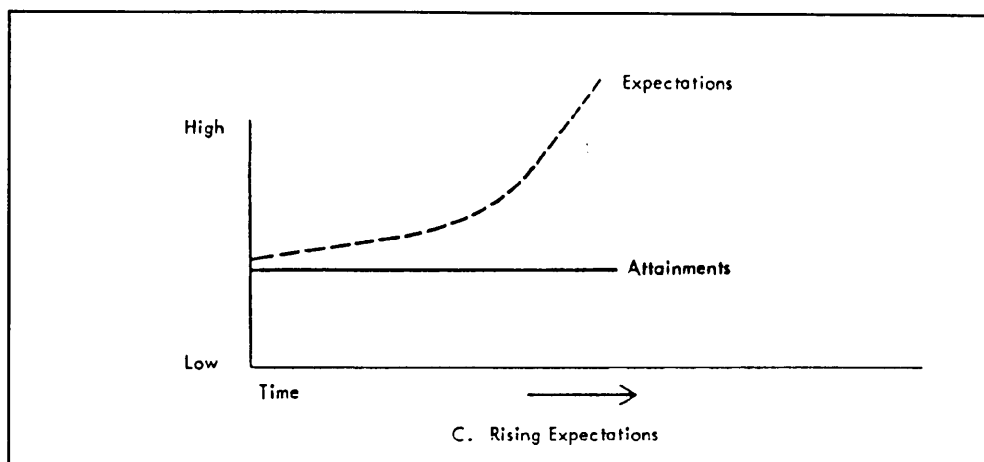
Figure 3.

Kriesberg (1973:81) continues: 'For a social conflict to emerge, groups must believe that they *hold incompatible goals*' (my emphasis). Furthermore, a necessary component of any goal is that those who desire it, believe that it is possible to attain. A second dimension of goals as cause of social conflict, is that it should be those of a group. Kriesberg (1973:82) argues that goals are ideas of what might be. 'As such they are embedded in a set of ideas about the present plight and what can be done about it. These ideas may be more or less well articulated. When they are explicit and elaborated we refer to them as an ideology' (see below on ideologies).

3.3.2.2 (c) The leaders of a group

Any thoughts on goals and ideologies cannot be given without reflecting on the leaders of a group. The spokesman or the leader plays a primary role in formulating the aims of the group. They articulate the interests of the group. In elaborating goals, the leaders promulgate beliefs about the past, present and future (cf Kriesberg 1973:85). They increase the sense of grievance or discontent, and at the same time hold out a better and attainable future.

The role of the leaders is also dealt with by Coser (1968:234). He, however, places more emphasis on what he calls the 'intellectuals'. He says that conflicts are likely to be more intense to the degree that the contenders are collectively oriented. Their struggle is then waged for the sake of supra-individual ends. Ideological struggles transcend individual ones and allow participants a 'good conscience' in the means of struggle. But this phenomena highlights the importance of intellectuals (and the leaders), who make the ideologies of society. Says Coser (1968:234):

> Intellectuals who transform conflicts of interests into conflicts of ideas help provide public justification of conflicts and hence to make them more intense. Conflicts may involve the pursuit of personal interests by private individuals or they may arise from the pursuit of the interests of various types of collectivities. Intellectuals, when they function as 'ideologists', tend to strip such conflicts of their merely personal or merely interested aspects and to transform them into struggles over eternal truths.

The *nature and direction* of the goals are strongly shaped by the grievance underlying it. If economic deprivation is experienced, then efforts usually will be directed at improving those conditions (cf Kriesberg 1973:86).

What, then is the relation between 'interests' and 'goals'? We saw that Lenski (1966) made no differentiation between the two. In fact, he used the terms as synonymous concepts (see Lenski 1966:36). This indicates that the

terms are closely related, to the degree that both goals and interests can be seen as part of the concept 'interests'. Nevertheless, there are some nuance differences. Where interests lie at the basis of humankind's actions and form the motivating force, goals are the more visible expression of these interests. De Jager and Mok (1983:128) see goals as the concretizing of interests. Out of self-interest humankind seeks identity, experiences grievance and formulates specific goals to improve its situation. Self-interest (or interests as such) are the motivating forces which create goals in the interests of the self or the group. Therefore, in relation to goals, interests come first and stand at the basis of goals.

3.3.2.2 (d) Summary

Latent conflict needs a sense of identity to become manifest, that is knowledge of one's own character. Furthermore, there should be a sense of grievance among the members of s group, that is that they must feel dissatisfied. They may feel deprived in that they feel that they have less compared to others. They may experience a rank disequilibrium in that they feel themselves mis-placed with regard to their own rank and place. There may also be a change in attainment or expectations (see figures 1, 2 and 3 above). The leader has a role in that he/she usually formulates the aims and goals of a group. He/she articulates the interests of a group, and legitimates a particular conflict. Self-interest is seen as the motivating force to establish specific goals. Goals are interests made concrete.

3.3.2.3 Values

The terms values, ideologies, and norms, are all interrelated terms. Different concepts are often used when dealing with 'values'. It is therefore necessary to give some clarification of the use of the concepts 'values', 'ideologies' and 'norms'.

A set of *values* provide a group (or individual) with broad social defini-tions of what is good, right, or preferred. Or, when used in the context of conflict, values present the *rightness* of the claims and beliefs (beliefs are that

what are thought to be true; cf Benkin 1981:69) for which one will even be prepared to go into confrontation with others. De Jager and Mok (1983:412) define values as: '...collectieven voorstellingen binnen een maatschappij of groepering omtrent hetgeen goed, juist en daarom (in het algemeen belang) nastrevenswaardig is'.

In every society there exists a variety of values and often there is disagreement on how to interpret major values such as equality and morality. But despite these variations, Benkin (1981:70) sees the link between values and ideologies as:

> ...every society's social structure - the interrelationships of family, the state, the church, the economy, the mass media, and so forth - must, in order for the society to survive, *rest on a relatively coherent and consistent set of values and their rationalizations, that is, on an ideology* (emphasis mine).

Values that legitimize a society, or a system of legitimation that characterizes a particular society is called its *ideology.* De Jager and Mok (1983:400; see also Van Staden 1991:86) also define ideology in terms of legitimation. They see ideology as: '...geheel van opvattingen en overtuigingen dat aan het streven van een groepering zin geeft en het tevens *rechtvaardigt*, en dat voor de aanhangers ervan boven iedere twijfel verheven is' (emphasis mine).

Norms are values translated into behaviour, that is what people should and should not do. Says Benkin (1981:71): 'Norms are shared standards of behaviour rooted in values and (they are - EJV) enforceable'.

In conflict theory, these sharp distinctions between these terms are never made. They are even in some cases used synonymously. Values, ideologies and norms play a more important role in functional structuralism, than in conflict theory. What is important to realize, is that these terms are all translated in terms of *interests*. Consistent to conflict theory, we will take the same position.

Ideologies and norms, to Dahrendorf (1959:184-186), are all part of a process of forming interest groups. It forms part of what he calls the 'technical conditions of organization'. Taken from Malinowski, he says that there are six features of importance for interest groups: '...such groups require a charter, a personnel, certain norms, a material instrumentarium, certain regular activities, and an "objective" function' (Dahrendorf 1959:185). Two of these are of considerable importance, namely charter and personnel.

3.3.2.3 (a) Charter

Dahrendorf (1959:185) defines the charter of an organization (again in Malinowski's terms) as: '...the system of values for the pursuit of which human beings organize'. He says that in the particular case of conflict groups, these values consist of what he had earlier called 'manifest interests'. *Manifest interests*, as opposed to *latent interests*, are 'conscious goals', they are 'psychological realities'. They describe the fact that the emotion, will, and desire of a person are directed towards some goal (cf Dahrendorf 1959:178). He goes on:

> The specific substance of manifest interests can be determined only in the context of given social conditions; but they always constitute a formulation of the issues of structurally generated group conflicts of the type in question. In this sense, manifest interests are the *program of organized groups*....While latent interests are, in a psychological sense, 'nonexistent', manifest interests *are always realities in the heads of the occupants of positions of domination or subjection in association.*
>
> (Dahrendorf 1959:178-179; my emphasis)

Manifest interests are articulate, formulated (or at least possible to formulate) programmes. Furthermore Dahrendorf (1959:186) states:

The articulation and codification of such interests is again a process that presupposes certain conditions. Either there must be a person or circle of persons who take on them the task of articulation and codification, or, alternatively, *an 'ideology'*, a system of ideas, must be available which in a given case is capable of serving as a program or charter of groups (my emphasis).

But, ideologies as articulated and codified manifest interests, to Dahrendorf, are again but a technical condition of organization. He says: '*Ideologies do not create conflict groups or cause conflict groups to emerge*. Yet they are indispensable *obstetricians* of conflict groups' (Dahrendorf 1959:186; his emphasis). Political conditions - and social conditions of organization are also needed in the forming of interest groups, but we will not elaborate on this. Suffice it to say that to Dahrendorf, ideologies and values serve as 'articulated manifest interests', and thus they can only in an indirect sense act as cause of conflict.

Coser (1956) is even more clear on this point. To him values (and ideologies) *intensify* conflict. Coser (1956:111-119) devotes a whole chapter to 'Ideology and conflict'. Objectified struggles, which transcend personal struggles, are likely to be more radical and merciless than conflicts over immediate personal issues (cf Coser 1956:112). He continues:

The consciousness of speaking of a super-individual 'right' or system of values reinforces each party's intransigence, mobilizing energies that would not be available for mere personal interests or goals. He (Simmel - EJV) bases this assertion on two arguments: (1) that individuals entering into a super-individual conflict act as *representatives* of groups or ideas; and (2) they are imbued with a sense of *respectability* and self-righteousness since they are not acting for 'selfish' reasons.

(Coser 1956:112)

3.3.2.3 (b) Personnel

We proceed to elaborate on Dahrendorf's concept of personnel. If personal interests can be transformed to impersonal values with a sort of 'objective' quality, conflict can be pursued with a 'good conscience' because it is collectively approved. Collective orientation and approval adds to the 'respectability' of a conflict. 'The "respectability" of a conflict may be held to depend on whether individual success orientation *is approved in the normative system* (Coser 1956:113; my emphasis). Coser (1956:115) regards Marx's interpretation of class struggle as a good example: the struggle has to be 'depersonalized' by insisting on the impersonal character of the struggle. The impersonal character of the struggle strengthens the group's (or individual's) interests. Struggle (or conflict) is thus intensified when depersonalized by ideologies or values that transcend the individual. Elsewhere, Coser (1968:234) states on the same issue: 'The *ideological end may justify the means* in the eyes of the participants and lead them to consider justifiable, in the public ideological contention, means that they might reject in private conflict' (my emphasis).

This depersonalization of conflict, to Coser (1956:116; see also 1968:234), throws light on the role of the intellectuals in social issues. Coser here is clearer than Dahrendorf (1959:185) on the discussion of personnel and the leaders or the founders of a group. Intellectuals are of importance in transforming interest groups into ideological movements. *They transform conflicts of interests into conflicts of ideas or ideologies.* 'Intellectuals have contributed to the deepening and intensification of struggles by stripping them of personal motivations and transforming them into struggles over "eternal truths" ' (Coser 1956:116; see also 1968:234).

The role of the intellectuals, to Lenski (1966:70-71), is to create new ideologies to challenge and destroy the existing ones. They are the opinion leaders with respect to important philosophical questions. But, they are easily alienated by systems of power and privilege to take a conservative position. By this they are to prove to the common people the inevitability and the advantages of the *status quo*. But, not all intellectuals support the elites. Says Lenski (1966:71):

Sometimes, however, elites become careless, or certain intellectuals have refused to respond to their blandishments. By themselves, rebellious intellectuals are no threat to a political elite. They lack the numbers and resources necessary to bring about a successful revolution. However, working in conjunction with others, they can provide the catalytic agent, the counter-ideology which is necessary for every successful social revolution.

In relation to power, those who have been able to seize it, will do their best to keep it, and remain in a position of authority and power. There are a variety of means available of which force is one. But, force is a costly means and in the long run inefficient. 'So long as it (a ruler - EJV) relies on force, much of the profit is consumed by the costs of coercion' (Lenski 1966:51). In the long run, it is more advantageous to legitimize their rule by persuasion of an ideology (and laws). We could say then that values, ideologies and norms are normally created to suit the interests of the rulers. Usually the ruler's interests are maintained (and even coerced) by power and authority (cf Lenski 1966:50-54; see also Dahrendorf 1968b:180, 1968c:174-175). Of course, ideology does not only strengthen the position of the rulers; it makes them particularly vulnerable as well, for all ideologies incorporate the thesis that they exist to serve the 'common good'. But, '...since no ideology can long survive if there is *no* substance to back up this claim, a ruler must make some delivery on the promises inherent in it' (Lenski 1966:181).

The question remains whether values (or ideologies) can cause conflict, or, put in other words, whether two parties can be in confrontation with each other because they represent different sets of values or ideologies. This is of course possible; people do clash because of different ideologies. But, consistent to conflict theory, value differences will never be the basis for conflict; it will always be possible to reduce it to differences in interests, because value differences can almost always be translated back to differences in interests. Conflict of ideology almost always is an intensified conflict of interest, as we have seen above.[17]

Values and ideologies, then suit the interests of those who have them. In the now past period of the so-called 'cold-war', the USA and the former USSR competed for world domination, prestige and power. These where their interests. But they legitimized their claims by using their different ideologies and presented *their* own view as 'superior' to the other. What presented itself as a conflict of ideologies, capitalism versus communism, could in terms of conflict theory rather be seen as a conflict of interests. This probably lies behind a humorous Russian saying, cited by Lenski (1966:297):

> Question: What is the difference between Capitalism
> and Communism?
> Answer: Under Capitalism man exploits man; under
> Communism it's the other way around!

Interests usually are presented in terms of values. Two parties value power highly, therefore, in their own interest, they strive to gain the power. Their struggle can be intensified and legitimized by a set of values or an ideology. An ideology, as we have seen before, is seen as manifest interests which is the product of intellectual reflections on interests.[18]

The difference between values and interests remains difficult to indicate clearly. De Jager and Mok (1983:67) distinguish between the two in terms of the verbs *being* and *having*. For values one says: I want to *be* honest, courageous or loyal. In the case of interests one says: I want to *have* money, power or prestige. But again, consistent to conflict theory, one is never honest for no reason: because I want to have prestige, it suits my image to be honest.

3.3.2.3 (c) Summary

In conflict theory, the concepts of values, ideologies and norms are all interrelated, in fact, not clearly distinguished. Values or ideologies are to be translated in terms of interests. Ideologies are part of forming a group. A group, in Dahrendorf's terms needs a charter and personnel. A charter, Dahrendorf sees

as a system of values, also called ideologies. They are manifest interests, or also seen as the underlying programme of organized groups.

These manifest interests are formulated, articulated and codified in terms of an ideology (or sets of values) by a circle of people, mostly intellectuals. They transform the conflict of interests into a conflict of ideas (values or ideologies). Intellectuals are often 'needed' by the rulers to legitimize, strengthen and pursue their interests by creating an ideology.

Can incompatible values cause conflict? Yes, they can. But, still we have to see it in terms of contradicting interests, for the basic assumption of conflict theory remains that values, ideologies and norms are *articulated interests*. When there is a clash of interests, this conflict is legitimized and often intensified by values or ideologies. They (the interests) are maintained and enforced by the norms and laws of those in power.

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3.3.2.4 Expectations

On the category 'expectations' we can be brief, for it has already been discussed under the other categories, especially under 'goals'. We have seen above that Kriesberg (1966:76) views change in attainment and expectations as a major source of grievance. Suffice it to say here that expectations are desires of what one thinks should be, both in the social conditions of the subject or in its relation to others. What is expected from social conditions or personalities, largely depends on the values of the subject, which, as we have indicated, are dependent on the interests of the individual or the group. If these expectations are not met, they could indirectly lead to conflict.

3.3.2.5 Concluding summary on what the causes of conflict are

What the real causes of any particular conflict are, of course depends on the particular conflict itself. Nevertheless, following Dahrendorf and Lenski, as a

'rule of thumb', and on a high level of abstraction, almost all conflicts can be reduced to having a basic cause and that is the *strive/drive for the maximizing of own interests*.[19]   Dahrendorf presented interests relationally in terms of class-interests, meaning that it is in the interests of the rulers to remain in power, to remain in a position of authority and the *status quo* to remain as it was. But, in the interests of the subordinates, it is better to change, for they also want to in some way or another gain power and authority. Dahrendorf correctly saw that in any *particular conflict* there are only two types of interest amongst the groups in conflict: those who attack and those who defend. There can be more than two interest groups in one society, but as soon as conflict emerges, it is between the two groups only. Dahrendorf, however, does not present us with an adequate explanation of what interests are, except as 'defending' or 'attacking'.

Lenski distinguishes between 'individual' and 'social' interests.   He identifies a number of individual interests and ranks *survival* as the highest. After survival follows health, then status and prestige, comfort, salvation and affection and finally the instrumental interests like money, wealth and education. How these interests are ranked may differ from person to person or group to group (see Fisher 1990:91; Galtung 1990:309). But, to Lenski, they are subordinate to survival. Survival, however, means more than just staying alive. To stay alive, one has constant basic needs like food and housing. However, humankind has always been able to produce a surplus of goods, which is an advantage it has above nature. For these needs of survival to remain available, and for humankind to have constant access to the surplus services and needs, there is a constant struggle for control over these needs and services. Furthermore, power and authority are constantly needed to be able to control these scarce goods and services.

But, power and authority as such are not only interpreted in terms of survival, as we have done above. Dahrendorf places the emphasis on authority, that is a sociological relation of domination and subordination. Authority is legitimated power. To Lenski, power (and following on power: privilege and prestige) is the second part of what he calls a 'curious dualism' next to needs

(or survival). Humankind (and especially the elites of the society) strive for power and authority to be able to determine the distribution of the surplus goods and needs in society. This causes inequality of power and authority in society, as well as unequal distribution of scarce resources, and this causes conflict. This brings us back to Dahrendorf's view: If there is a group who has access to the basic needs and the surpluses, and who has the power, privilege and prestige, there will be a constant struggle between those who want to *keep* it (authority) and those who want to *get* it.

We have seen Lenski's definition of 'social interests'. Social interests are the ends towards which the coordinated efforts of the whole are directed. But these interests hardly ever represent the interests of the whole of society, rather, as he sufficiently indicated, they are the interests of the dominant group that present their interests as being those of the whole of society. Therefore, we cannot really ever speak of 'social interests', but as Dahrendorf does, of 'class' or as group interests.

Almost all causes of conflict can be translated back to interests in some way or another, as we have seen above. This is how reality presents itself to us. But, interests have to be brought into terms, they have to be identified and expressed. They are then expressed in terms of group identity, which in turn finds expression in goals. But if goals are hardly met, if expectations (expressed in terms of goals) are not met, if people feel deprived or experience misplace- ment with their rank or experience rank disequilibrium relative to their goals and values, there is cause for grievance and conflict.

Furthermore, interests are intensified and explicated in terms of values. Values articulate the interests of individuals or groups. Mostly this articulation and codification are done by intellectuals in service of the rulers. Or to put it differently, interests are presented in the form of values or ideologies and there- fore, conflict caused by different interests can be harshly expressed in terms of ideologies, and consequently ideologies seem to be very incompatible. They serve different interests.

We now have to turn to another vital question: What are the units of conflict or who is in conflict with whom?

3.3.3 What are the units of conflict? Who are in conflict?

At first sight this question seems impossible to be answered apart from the particular conflict involved. We have to know the particular situation to know who is in conflict with whom. To know whether they are individuals, groups, organizations, classes, nations or communities depends on the particular conflict at stake. We opt for a general theory to explain the units of conflict.

A general theory of conflict, in which the units are left vague, has the advantage of making theory abstract and hence applicable to all social units, from individuals to nation states (cf Turner 1978:183). Theoretical statements can potentially be more powerful for explaining conflict among all social units. But, as Turner (1978:183) proceeds:

> On the other hand, however, it is likely that the nature of the units influences the nature of the conflict among them. While conflict between individuals and nations may have certain common properties, and thus be subsumable under some general laws, there are also likely to be clear differences in conflict between such disparate units.

In a general theory of conflict, the units will remain vague and abstract. But, with this critique of Turner on Dahrendorf's (and Coser's) theories in mind, we nevertheless turn to Dahrendorf's (1959:179) views on the units of conflict. We are, in fact, searching for a general theory with basic trends by which all sorts of conflict could to a great extent be explained, also the conflict in the Matthean community and between Jesus and the Pharisees. We therefore want to accentuate the other side of Turner's (1978:184) critique; or rather rephrase his critique: although the general theories are vague, they are 'highly insightful'. Realizing the danger that a general theory can be 'enforced' on a particular conflict situation, we do not want to throw out the baby with the bath water. We need those 'basic laws' of conflict to understand the phenomenon of conflict. The variables of the situation involved will be dealt with as soon as the model is

applied in the identifying of the conflicting parties in the Matthean community. Furthermore, as Malina (1988b:14), in describing the conflict in Mediterranean society, uses terms like *the elites* (Roman imperial and aristocratic establishment, Greek decurions, Judaean Sadducees or Galilean Herodians) and the *non-elites*, he comes considerably closer, in any case, to the general principles of Dahrendorf's theory.

Much of the theory of Dahrendorf has already been dealt with in our discussion on 'interests' above. We can therefore be quite brief here. We will present Dahrendorf's theory on the units of conflict as he deals with it in the distinction he makes between 'quasi-groups' and 'interests groups'. Then we will see how Lenski's views on 'agrarian communities' substantiate Dahrendorf's assumptions, and lastly we will try to determine what consequences these views have in respect of the conflict in the Matthean community.

3.3.3.1 Quasi-group

As we have seen above, Dahrendorf postulated two distinctive, conflicting orientations of (latent) interests in any 'imperatively coordinated association': those who dominate (have authority) and those who are subordinate (have no authority). He uses the term 'association' in such a way as to imply the coordination (willingly or unwillingly by virtue of authority - thus 'imperatively' - EJV) of organized aggregates in roles of domination and subjection (cf Dahrendorf 1959:168). 'The aggregates of incumbents with identical role interests are at best a potential group' (Dahrendorf 1959:180). In their position of domination or subordination, they may have latent interests, but are not necessarily organized into groups as yet. They are at best, says Dahrendorf, a potential group. This potential group, with certain common latent interests, Dahrendorf, following M. Ginsberg, calls a *quasi-group.* Not all collectivities or aggregates form groups. Groups are masses of people in regular contact or communication, possessing a recognizable structure. A group needs a feeling of belongingness (consciousness) and a minimum of organization (in order to interact on a regular basis; cf Benkin 1981:151). Ginsberg (cited by Dahrendorf 1959:180) says that there are aggregates or portions of the community which

have no recognizable structure, but whose members have certain interests or modes of behaviour in common, which may at any time lead them to form themselves into definite groups. To this category of quasi-groups belong such entities as social classes, which, without being groups, are the recruiting field for groups, and whose members have certain characteristic modes of behaviour in common. Dahrendorf uses the so-called 'peasant class' as an example: by virtue of their situation (being in a subordinate position), their conditions of existence, their way of life and their (latent) interests, they constitute rather a quasi-group than a class, for they have a common identity and interest, but lack the organization to regard themselves as a group. They remain recruiting ground for those *interest groups* who organize themselves amongst the ranks of these aggregates, on behalf of these aggregates or quasi-groups (cf Dahrendorf 1959:180, 182).

3.3.3.2 Interest groups

Interest groups, says Dahrendorf (1959:180) are groups in the strict sense of the sociological term. They are the real agents of the group conflict. They have a structure, a form of organization, a program or goal, and a personnel of members. They are in regular contact or in communication, although often secondary. The members have contact with each other by virtue of their membership or by way of their elected or appointed representatives.

In what relation do quasi-groups and interest groups stand to each other? In what sense are interest groups to be regarded as representative of the quasi-group behind them? First, the interest group is always smaller than their recruiting field, the quasi-group. Furthermore, in social conflicts, the interest group functions as units of manifest interest, which can be explained in terms of latent role interests and their aggregation in quasi-groups. Interest groups make manifest the latent interests of the quasi-groups. To Dahrendorf (1959:183) the movement from quasi to interest group under ideal conditions follows a certain process. He says that in every 'imperatively coordinated association', two quasi-groups, united by common latent interests, can be distinguished. Again Dahrendorf comes back to an already known explanation: Their orienta-

tion of interest is determined by possession of, or exclusion from authority. He says that from these quasi-groups, interest groups are recruited, the articulated programmes of which defend or attack the legitimacy of existing authority structures. In this movement to interest groups, six features are of importance: a charter, personnel, certain norms, a material instrumentarium, certain regular activities and an objective function. We have, however, already dealt with a charter and personnel previously. Suffice it to say that in the forming of interest groups, leaders and ideologies, as we have seen before, articulate those manifest interests which came forth out of the latent interests of the quasi-group, and therefore also represent a larger group than just the interest groups themselves.

3.3.3.3 Agrarian society

Dahrendorf's theory is almost entirely based on industrial society. This might be seen as a limitation for the explanation of conflicts in other kinds of societies, and the conflict in the Matthean community to which we are eventually moving. However, much of his views can also be applied to the so-called agrarian societies, in which the gap between those who rule (and have authority) and those who are subordinate (who have little or no authority), is much more apparent. If we assume that the Matthean community, and in fact all the first century Mediterranean communities, were typical advanced agrarian societies, the huge gap between rulers and subordinates also existed in these communities and also caused conflict in these communities (cf Saldarini 1988a:20-27; see also Crossan 1991:43-46; Duling 1992:101, 1993:650; Van Aarde 1993b:528; Rohrbaugh 1993b:383). There is good reason to assume that the first century Mediterranean communities were typical agrarian societies, for Lenski (1966) regularly refers to the Roman empire of that time as a good example of such a society. Furthermore, Lenski and Lenski (1982:88) indicate that agrarian societies existed predominantly over the time span of more than 5000 years, spanning from more or less 3000 B.C. to, to a lesser extent, right into certain societies in the present century (especially in the so-called Third World).

A distinction is made between 'simple' and 'advanced' agrarian societies. 'Simple' agrarian societies went beyond the so-called horticultural societies because of major advances in technology and production, especially in the field of agriculture (plows, weeds control, harnessing of animals; cf Lenski 1966:192; see also Duling 1992:100). 'Advanced' agrarian societies were similar to simple agrarian societies, but more advanced in some areas. Iron was increasingly used for ordinary everyday tools and implements. However advanced, these societies were constantly characterized by famine, plagues, poor sanitary conditions, and high infant mortality rates. Regional and local economics were specialized. There was a stronger command economy in that it was commanded by the politically powerful and urban elite. They were strengthened by taxation, growth in commerce, weakening kinships, the growth in the expendable people. Exploitation of the peasants was the rule (cf Duling 1992:101; note that Lenski in his work of 1966 does not make a distinction between 'simple' and 'advanced' agrarian societies).

One of the outstanding features of agrarian communities (or states) is that they were all *conquest states;* social groups (units) formed by the forcible subjugation of other groups by another. Lenski (1966:195) says that few agrarian states ever came into being simply through the peaceful political evolution and expansion of a single people or through the voluntary federation or union of separate people. War was a chronic condition in all agrarian states, and if struggles with foreign enemies were lacking, internal struggles often developed. An example is to be found in the Roman empire:

> Of the seventy-nine Roman emperors from Augustus to Romulus Augustulus, no less than twenty-one were murdered, while six others were driven to suicide, four were forcibly deposed, and several others met uncertain ends at the hands of internal enemies.
>
> (Lenski 1966:197)

Another striking feature of agrarian societies is the *enormous inequality* that existed in those societies, especially between the ruler(s) and the common

people (see above; see also Saldarini 1988a:39-45, 1988b:200-202; Fiensy 1991:158; Duling 1992:101, 1993:651; Rohrbaugh 1993b:383 on the class system in agrarian empires who all took it over from Lenski 1966). The interests of the common people, in case of wars between opposing factions of privileged classes, were hardly ever considered. The rulers regarded their subordinates as their 'property' with which they could do as they pleased. No distinctions were made between official duties or interests, or private interests. Says Lenski (1966:214): 'Guided by the proprietary theory of the state (according to which the state is a piece of property which its owner, that is the ruler, may use, within broad and somewhat ill-defined limits, for his own personal advantage - EJV), agrarian rulers saw nothing improper or immoral in the use of what we, not they, would call "public office" for private gain'.

In support of the *rulers*, there was the so-called small *governing class*. Furthermore there was the so-called *retainer class*. Along with the *priestly class*, these classes formed the *upper classes* of the society (cf Saldarini 1988a:313, 1988b:200).[20] The *lower classes* contained the so-called *merchant, peasant, artisan, unclean or degraded* and the *expendable* classes (cf Saldarini 1988a:312, 1988b:200). These classes are discussed in much more detail by Lenski (1966:189-296). He also presents examples to support his statements. The description of these classes we intend to present in chapter 4 on: *The social location of the community of Matthew* (see below).

The possibility of upward mobility in these agrarian societies was slim (it did of course happen, especially when the individual's wealth in some way or another improved). Downward mobility was more likely because of increased population growth and very few positions of privilege. Therefore, social stratification was very apparent and conflict was an ever present possibility. This makes the model of Dahrendorf even applicable to agrarian societies as far as authority is concerned (see chapter 4 below on *Group boundaries and self-definition*, for the consequences of both Dahrendorf's and Lenski's views for the conflicting situation in the community of Matthew).

3.3.3.4 Summary on the units of conflict

We have identified the quasi-groups, along with Dahrendorf, as potential interest groups. They have latent interests, but are not yet organized in an interest group. They act as the recruiting field for the interest groups. Interest groups are groups in the strict sense of the word. They have a structured organization, programme/goal and personnel.

We have seen that in an agrarian society, a huge gap existed between the upper classes, who had the authority, and those who were part of the lower classes, and who had virtually no authority. Thus, in agrarian societies, as the society of the Matthean community was, there was an ever present potential for conflicting interests and conflict.

3.3.4 What are the functions of conflict?

As we have already noted, the basic assumption of conflict theory is that conflict is ubiquitous. Wherever there is life, there is conflict as well. Dahrendorf (1959:208) even asks: 'May we perhaps go so far to say that conflict is a condition necessary for life to be possible at all?' This leads to a further assumption, also previously mentioned, that *conflict is the creative force of change in society* (cf Dahrendorf 1958:178; see also 1959:208, 1965:125, 1968b:127). Conflict is an essential feature in any society in the process of development, not only for the maintenance of the *status quo*, as Coser (1956:8-0) sees it, *but also to bring about fundamental and structural,* as well as ideological changes. Conflict is important, not only to foster the stability of a society (Coser), but, also to help abandon old systems and create new ones.

But, one of the main points of critique against Dahrendorf is that he views conflict as the motivational force for changes, but the question of what changes he has in mind, remains open. Turner (1978:186) undoubtable is correct when he says: 'Conflict is seen to emerge and cause change, but theories sometimes fail to specify what kind of conflict revealing what properties causes what alterations in what subsystems or systemic wholes'. Turner (1978:186) asks: 'Is Dahrendorf seeking to explain conflict, or to assert an

image of social organization as constantly in change?' Indeed, Dahrendorf remains vague on what kind of changes are involved. One can only imagine him to mean, as Turner (1978:185) also points out, that he concentrates more on severe and violent conflicts, causing the redistribution of resources into new patterns of inequality, which in its turn, cause a new wave of conflict and recourse distribution. Conflict and change are never ending, but, on what these changes involve, it seems, we have to rely greatly on our own imagination, and of course, the particular conflict that is to be focused on. Turner (1978:185) is of the opinion that neither Dahrendorf (and the dialectical theory of conflict), nor Coser (and conflict functionalism) really succeeds in abandoning structural functionalism (see also Turner 1973:243, 1975:433). But, as far as Dahrendorf's theory is concerned, this point of critique is rather in support of his view of the 'two-facedness' of society, than meant as substantial critique. Conflict contributes both to the integration of social 'systems', *and* the changing thereof (see Dahrendorf 1959:157; 207).

A more elaborated view on the functions of conflict, comes from Lewis A Coser (1956, 1957; see also Van Parys 1980). Despite the (justified) criticism of both Dahrendorf (1959:207) and Turner (1978:185) that Coser is only concerned with conflict in as far as it has a 'positive' function to re-establish unity and stability (and integration), his insights are most useful in the search for an answer on what kinds of change conflict could bring about. His view is an important elaboration on what Dahrendorf failed to do, namely to give content to the concept of 'change'.

Coser (1956; see also 1957b:199-203) postulates sixteen propositions on the functions of conflict. Almost all of them are reformulations of the work of George Simmel, who also views conflict as having a 'positive' function in society. We will not discuss all Coser's propositions, only those we argue to be of value for our prime focus: the conflict in the Matthean community, and in Matthew 8 and 9 in particular.

3.3.4.1 The group-binding functions of conflict.

Only when challenged by another group, it becomes important to become conscious of one's identity. In terms of this view, conflict has a clarifying effect (cf Boskoff 1972:88). The distinction between ourselves, the we-group, or in-group, and everybody else, or the other-groups, the out-groups, is established in and through conflict (cf Coser 1956:35). Coser (1956:38; see also 1968:235) states:

> Conflict serves to establish and maintain the identity and boundary lines of societies and groups.
>
> Conflict with other groups contributes to the establishment and reaffirmation of the identity of the group and maintains its boundaries against the surrounding social world.
>
> Patterned enmities and reciprocal antagonisms conserve social divisions and systems of stratification. Such patterned antagonisms prevent the gradual disappearance of boundaries between the subgroups of a social system and they assign position to the various subsystems within a total system.

However, according to the views of Dahrendorf, conflict also can lead to change. This leads us to see that, depending on the force of the challenge, conflict can *also* lead to changes in boundaries, and the change of identity, (and in extreme cases even the total breakdown of systems). Thus, conflict has adaptive consequences (cf Boskoff 1972:89). It is especially the aspect of *renegadism* that breaks through established boundaries (see below). This is particularly true of the Matthean community, that is that they underwent a fundamental change of identity as opposed to their next-door neighbours, the Jews, of which they viewed themselves as still being part (see below in chapter 4 on *Group boundaries and self-definition*).

3.3.4.2 Group-preserving functions of conflict and the significance of safety-valve institutions

Conflict is not always dysfunctional with regard to relationships. By setting free pent-up feelings of hostility, conflict serves to maintain a relationship. It 'clears the air'.

Social systems do provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments (cf Coser 1956:48).[21]

3.3.4.3 Conflict's function to intensify relationships and vice versa

3.3.4.3 (a) Hostility in close social relationships

Although it apparently may sound like a contradictory statement, every close social (as in personal) relationship involves both converging and diverging elements. It involves both love and hatred. Close relationships, in which the participants are deeply involved, in which they are engaged with their total personality, often create ambivalent feelings of affection and hostility. Marriage relationships often serve as good examples of this fact. Coser (1956:62) says that the closer the relationship, the greater the affective investment, the greater also the tendency to suppress rather than to express hostile feelings. Increased social interaction often is likely to bring about an increase of hostility as well as of liking. Antagonism is often involved as an element in intimate relationships (cf Coser 1956:64).

3.3.4.3 (b) The closer the relationship, the more intense the conflict.

Arguing from the previous proposition, in close relationships, fear for intense disagreement or conflict often leads to the suppression of these hostile feelings but, ends up in an accumulation of such feelings, which in turn is likely to further intensify the conflict, once it does break out. Coser (1956:69) says that if total personalities are involved, there is a greater likelihood that nonrealistic elements, that are mere aggressive impulses, will enter into realistic conflict situations. Conflict, when suppressed at first, will nevertheless occur, and then it will be intense and passionate. As we will later indicate, this is particularly

true of the relationship between the Jewish leaders and the Matthean community.

Coser (1956:69) continues to say that individuals who participate intensely in the life of such groups are concerned with the group's continuance. Says Coser (1956:69):

> If they witness the breaking away of one with whom they have shared cares and responsibilities of group life, they are likely to react in a more violent way against such 'disloyalty' than less involved members....Renegadism is perceived by a close group as a threat to its unity.

Reactions towards the 'enemy from within', the renegade or heretic, threatens a group's values and interests, and its unity. Renegadism threatens to break down the boundary lines of the established group:

> Therefore the group must fight the renegade with all its might since he threatens symbolically, if not in fact, its existence as an ongoing concern. In the religious sphere, for example, apostasy strikes at the very life of a church, hence the violence of denunciation of the apostate contained in the pronouncements of early Church fathers or in rabbinical statements from the time of the Maccabees onwards.
>
> (Coser 1956:69-70)

To the group the renegade has left, he/she appears as a symbol of the danger. The reaction to him/her (or the renegade group) is often more hostile than against the apostate. A heretic is a more insidious danger for the upholding of the group's central values and goals. He/she threatens to split the group into fractions that will differ with each other as to the means for the implementing of the goals of the group. The heretic will continue to compete for the loyalty of the members of his former group. 'Moreover, by professing to share the

values of the group, the heretic creates confusion and hence his actions are perceived as an attempt to break down the boundaries' (Coser 1956:71). Conflict then, tends to be more passionate and intense if it arises out of a close relationship. As soon as conflict evolves inside a group, the one side often hates the other side more intensely if it is felt to be a threat to the unity and the identity of the group. Reaction to disloyalty often tends to be more violent, the greater the participation in the group and the greater the personality involvement of the members (cf Coser 1956:71-72).

3.3.4.4 The search for enemies

In following Simmel, Coser (1956:104) says that groups in conflict may actually 'attract' enemies in order to help maintain an increased group cohesion. An almost strange, but real phenomenon is that with the disappearance of the original enemy, there emerges a search for a new enemy. Through this, the group may continue to engage in conflict and thereby maintain a structure that it would be in danger of losing were there no longer an enemy.

Alongside the search for an 'outside enemy', is the search for an 'inside enemy', when these rigid structures encounter defeat or an unexpected increase in external danger (cf Coser 1956:106). When a group experiences the increased strength of the adversary, or it experiences a defeat of some sort, rather than admit its own defeat, a guilty party has to be found. All sorts of scape-goating mechanisms are used. Defeat, or experienced defeat due to out-siders, leads to searching for hate objects among insiders:

> Those group members who must bear the burden of being the scapegoats through their sacrifice, cleanse the group of its own failings, and in this way re-establish its solidarity: the loyal members are reassured that the group as a whole has not failed, but only some 'traitors'; moreover, they can now reaffirm their right-eousness by uniting in action against the 'traitors'.
>
> (Coser 1956:106-107)

The inner enemy can be real, he/she can be a dissenter who has opposed certain aspects of group life. He/she can, however, also be 'invented', in order to bring about - through a common hostility towards him/her - the social solidarity which the group needs. An example might be the 'devil'-figure in the Judean-Christian tradition.

3.3.4.5 Conflict binds antagonists

Under this point, Coser (1956:121-128), along with Simmel, points out that conflict has a threefold function, and this is his most useful insight:

> (1) Conflict initiates other types of *interaction* between antagonists, (2) it acts as a *stimulus for the establishing of new rules, norms and values* and (3) it *reaffirms dormant norms* and thus intensifies participation in social life.

By definition, engaging in conflict means that a relationship between the parties has been established. Conflict causes cross-fertilization of ideas, norms, values and cultures of previously unrelated (or broken-related) cultures. Conflict establishes relations where none existed (or have broken down) before. Hostile interaction often means to 'test' and 'get to know' the previously unknown.

During the course of the conflict between two parties, new rules (of conflict behaviour) and overall social rules are created. Coser (1956:124) sees it as a change in the meaning of conflict, but we will view it wider: because of the interaction between groups, it in order to include changes in values and norms, even changes the initial interests. Old rules and norms are modified because of the interaction and the conflict. Mere interaction (or contact) between groups or individuals, does not necessarily lead to the changing of values, but to my mind, conflicting interaction does: 'By bringing about new situations, which are partly or totally undefined by rules and norms, conflict acts as a stimulus for the establishment of new rules and norms' (Coser 1956:124).

Furthermore, conflict brings into the conscious awareness of the contenders and the community at large, norms and rules that were dormant before the particular conflict. Conflict brings about the needs for the application of rules that, had no conflict occurred, might have remained dormant and forgotten. Conflict brings about new conditions, and adjustments in norms, and re-evaluation of the old norms. This has implications for our later evaluation of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees, and the conflict between the Matthean community (Jesus-believers) and the Jewish leadership. What changes in values and norms did the conflict of interests between these two groups bring about?[22]

3.3.5 The spiral of conflict

We have chosen a broad definition of conflict to include both latent and manifest conflicts as *conflict*. Nevertheless, distinctions can be made as far as the development of conflict is concerned, as long as we keep in mind that one stage of conflict is no more, or no less, *conflicting* than the other. Because conflict can be viewed as a process as well (cf Turner 1978:188), some nuance differences in the development have to be noted.

The model of Kriesberg (1973:18-19, 268-273) is quite simple and convincing. Conflicts are seen as moving through a series of stages. Not every conflict goes through all the stages but, each stage significantly depends upon an earlier stage.

> Nevertheless later stages affect what is analytically prior. This recursive quality occurs through feedback and anticipations of later stages. Finally, specific struggles never revert to prior conditions exactly as they were. One struggle generally leads to another in an on-going spiral of conflict.
>
> (Kriesberg 1973:269)

To Kriesberg (1973:269) a full cycle in a social conflict consists of five stages. Firstly there are the objective or underlying social conflict relationships.

Secondly, the two or more parties start believing they have incompatible goals. Thirdly, there is the initial way in which the adversaries pursue their contradictory aims. Fourthly, the intensity and the scope of the struggle escalates and de-escalates, and then finally the conflict comes to some kind of an end and there is an outcome. But this outcome at the same time holds the potential for a new conflict to emerge.

3.3.5.1 Awareness

Firstly, there is the *objective or underlying conflict relationship*. We can call this stage the 'latent' phase of conflict.

This first stage implies that there exists a number of slumbering emotions, vague frustrations, aggression and grievances, which are present, but are not that apparent or clear. Also from Turner's (1978:188-196) analysis of the stages of conflict (which he derives from Dahrendorf and Coser), it is clear that conflict in this phase remains vague, yet present. In the social system of interdependent units we find unequal distribution of scarce and valuable resources available to these interdependent social units. But, why and how these inequalities are present is not clear; it surely has to do with the specific kind of society. In agrarian societies, as we have seen above, inequality is imbedded in the system itself.

3.3.4.2 The manifest stage

The second stage in Kriesberg's (1973:61; 269) model is the phase where two parties believe that they have incompatible goals, and a social *conflict emerges*. The conflict becomes manifest, it surfaces when adversaries define their goals which are then opposed by the other side. 'These aims (and interests - EJV) are based upon some collective identity and sense of grievance' (Kriesberg 1973:269). Those in conflict become, or are made aware of their differences.[23]

3.3.5.3 The stage of the conflict mode

A further stage of conflict, the third in Kriesberg's (1973:107, 269-270) perspective, is the way in which the adversaries pursue their contradictory aims. Kriesberg (1973:272) calls this the phase of *conflict mode*. Once the adversaries are in conflict, they select some way of contending with each other. Says Kriesberg (1973:270): 'Three fundamental ways of inducing the other side to yield what is desired were distinguished: coercion, persuasion, and reward'.

Coercion involves trying to make the other side yield for feared or actual injury. The one who uses this mode believes that the pains of not complying will be greater than those of complying. Coercion means punishment if not complying (cf Kriesberg 1973:108).

By *persuasion*, the conflicting parties believe that the adversary should comply because what is pursued (or sought) is consistent with his own longer term or more general interests and values. The idea here is to appeal to more abstract principles, shared identifications or previously neglected values and considerations. This is done by communication or convincing the other side through deeds and demonstrations (cf Kriesberg 1973:107).

Reward is also called 'positive sanction'. The idea is that one side offers the other a reward for compliance rather than a punishment for not complying (cf Kriesberg 1973:108-109).

3.3.5.4 The 'termination mode' of conflict

The next phase, as Kriesberg (1973:270) sees it, is that of the termination modes: the *escalation* or the *de-escalation* of conflict.

3.3.5.4 (a) Escalation

Escalation means increased magnitudes of conflict behaviour either in the scope or in the way in which the struggle is conducted. Under the process of escalation, Kriesberg (1973:155-163) deals with *changes within a struggle unit* and *changes in the relation between adversaries*. Since the former has more to do

with *intra*-group conflict (as opposed to *inter*-group conflict), we will only reflect on the latter. Changes in the relation between adversaries with regard to the expectation of the issues in contention, the polarization of relations and third party involvement, is likely to allow conflict to escalate.[24]

3.3.5.4 (b) De-escalation

There is always a change in the relationship between adversaries, also with regard to the de-escalation of conflict.

As a conflict continues, *new ties and bonds do emerge*, even while they are struggling against each other. Strangely enough, mutual respect can erupt out of this contact, and two parties can reach an agreement and understanding.

As far as the *contraction of goals* are concerned, each side believes that its actions will stop or prevent the escalation of conflict behaviour by the other side. This, however, is hardly ever the case. Coercion hardly ever leads to the intimidation of people and their withdrawal of support from the leaders. Nevertheless, coercion *can* lead to de-escalation in two ways: one possibility is that coercion is sufficient to physically prevent the other side from continuing in its conflict behaviour. The other side then loses its capacity to continue its conflict behaviour at the same level and must allow the conflict to de-escalate (cf Kriesberg 1973:167). The other possibility is that one side loses its will to persist in the conflict. It doubts its abilities and questions the desirability of continuing the conflict. However it is brought about, says Kriesberg (1973:16-7), if one side finds that the adversary's coercion has reduced its ability to pursue its goals, it is likely to contract the goals; the issues in contention are likely to become more limited. De-escalation has happened.[25]

De-escalation comes before conflict termination. Under termination of conflict is understood that some people agree that the conflict has ended. Turner (1978:192-193) only views the *increased intensity* (escalation) in his model. Intensity involves emotional arousal, but it also denotes the channelling of emotional energies and willingness to sustain these energies in the pursuit of objective interests.

3.3.5.5 The termination or the outcome of conflict

Every conflict has an end. The last stage is the outcome of conflict. There are four kinds of outcome: withdrawal, imposition of goals on the other, compromise, and conversion. Many of the outcomes can be combined (see Kriesberg 1973:206-208 for more detailed information).

3.3.6 Summary of the functions and the spiral of conflict

No society or group can remain untouched whenever conflict occurs. Furthermore, no society can remain unchanged after conflict has emerged. Whether the whole system breaks down in a revolutionary way, or whether there is a readjustment of the system, change has been brought about. Thus conflict can contribute both to the disruption, and to the maintenance of a system. In both cases changes are recognized. Dahrendorf, who focuses more on the violent disruption of a society, which in turn grows into a new system, does not really indicate what kind of changes are involved. Coser, while focusing on the influence conflict has on a system in maintaining it, gives us some indications of the changes involved, especially as much as it has an influence on the parties involved.

Conflict has a number of functions, apart from the overall, generalized function of bringing about change. It brings about change in both the inner relationship within the party, and in the relationship to the outside. In summation: conflict has a group-binding function. Through conflict, boundaries are set, and identity is created and a sense of belongingness is achieved. Part of this search for identity is the ever searching for an enemy, both in and outside the group. Furthermore, conflict can function as a safety-valve within a group. Conflict can function as an indication of the intenseness of the relationship - in as far as it increases in intenseness, the closer the relationship. But the reverse is also true: the closer the relationship, the more intense the conflict. Both love and hate, affection and antagonism, consensus and coercion, are always dialectically present in any relationship, and in a society. Conflict causes great intolerance, especially within the group as soon as outside pressure increases. This is particularly true of renegadism. For a heretic competes for the continued

loyalty of the in-group. Renegadism threatens the unity of a group and can cause a split within a group.

Challenged by the conflict of an outside group, but also by an inside group, conflict functions as a means to the readjustment of inner values and identity. Conflict also has a changing effect. Extreme conflict, especially if the opponent is strong and influential, leads to contact which inevitably leads to the readjustment of both the conditions of the struggle, and the reasons for the struggle, i.e. a re-adjustment of values and ideologies. New norms and values are created, but old dormant ones are re-evaluated and even given new content and meaning. Conflict thus not only causes structural change, which Dahrendorf proclaims, but, and especially, since conflict cannot leave a group untouched, it acts as stimulus to a readjustment and re-evaluation of own and opposite values, and even leads to the change of these values to suit the newly evolved interests. In this regard, conflict contributes to the breaking through of boundaries, not only in maintaining them.

There are various stages in conflict as Kriesberg (1973:269) identified them: the stage of awareness, the stage of manifestation, the stage of the choice of the conflict mode (coercion, persuasion or reward), mode of termination (escalation and de-escalation) and the outcome of conflict. But according to Dahrendorf, the outcome of the one particular conflict already holds the seeds for a new conflict to emerge.

3.4 WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF OUR INVESTIGATION? A CONCLUSION

3.4.1 Summary
Our intention was to develop our an synthesis of a conflict theory, deduced from two representatives as we identified them: Dahrendorf and Coser. We have seen, following mainly the critique of Dahrendorf, that structural functionalism does not adequately explain the phenomenon of conflict. It does not view conflict positively as part and parcel of human experience and society, therefore we turned to conflict theory. The basic assumptions of conflict theory is summarized by Dahrendorf as:

(1) Every society is at every point subject to processes of change; social change is ubiquitous.

(2) Every society displays at every point descensus and conflict; social conflict is ubiquitous.

(3) Every element in a society renders a contribution to its disintegration and change.

(4) Every society is based on the coercion of some of its members by others.

(Dahrendorf 1959:162, 1958:174, 1965:210)

After a lengthy discussion on whether we are to define conflict in a narrow or a wide sense, we opted for a wider definition, following especially Fink (1968) and Bieder (1988). We defined conflict as follows:

> Conflict is the ever presence of antagonism (wittingly or unwittingly), opposition and incompatibility between two or more persons or groups. This antagonism, opposition and incompatibility lie on the level of interests, goals, values and expectations, which are seen as the causes of conflict. Conflict may or may not escalate to the point of violent coercion.[26]

As far as the causes of conflict are concerned, we have previously stated that on a high level of abstraction, almost all conflicts can be reduced as having a basic cause, and that is the *strive/drive for the maximizing of own interests*. Dahrendorf presents interests relationally in terms of class-interests, by which is meant that it is in the interests of the rulers to remain in power, to remain in a position of authority. Their interest lies in the *status quo* to remain as it is. But the interests of the subordinates, demand change, since they also want to gain power and authority, for they have none. Dahrendorf correctly saw that in any *particular conflict* there are only two different kinds of interest amongst the groups in conflict: those who attack and those who defend. There can be more than two interest groups in one society, but as soon as conflict emerges, it is

between the two dominant groups only. Dahrendorf, however, does not present us with an adequate explanation of what interests are, except that they are 'defending' or 'attacking'.

Lenski distinguishes between 'individual' and 'social' interests. He identifies a number of individual interests and ranks *survival* as the highest. After survival follows health, then status and prestige, comfort, salvation and affection and finally the instrumental interests like money, wealth and education. How these interests are ranked may differ from person to person or group to group (see Fisher 1990:91; Galtung 1990:309). But, to Lenski, they all are subordinate to one basic need: survival. Survival, however, means more than just staying alive. To stay alive, humankind has constant basic needs like food and housing. But, humankind has always been able to produce a surplus of goods, which is an advantage it has above nature. For these needs of survival to remain available, and for humankind to have constant access to the surplus services and needs, there is a constant struggle for control over these needs and services. Furthermore, power and authority are constantly needed to be able to control these scarce goods and services.

But, power and authority as such are not only interpreted in terms of survival. Dahrendorf places the emphasis on authority, that is a sociological relation of domination and subordination. Authority is legitimated power. To Lenski, power (and following on power: privilege and prestige) is the second part of what he calls a 'curious dualism' next to needs (or survival). Humankind (and especially the elites of the society) strive for power and authority to be able to determine the distribution of the surplus goods and needs in society. This causes inequality of power and authority in society, as well as unequal distribution of scarce resources, and this causes conflict. This brings us back to Dahrendorf's view: If there is a group who has access to the basic needs and the surpluses, and who has the power, privilege and prestige, there will be a constant struggle between those who want to *keep* it (authority) and those who in some way or another want to *get* it.

We have seen Lenski's definition of 'social interests'. Social interests are the ends towards which the coordinated efforts of the whole are directed. But

these interests hardly ever represent the interests of the whole of society, rather as he sufficiently indicated, they are the interests of the dominant group that present their interests as being those of the whole of society. Therefore, we cannot really speak of 'social interests', but, as Dahrendorf does, of 'class' or 'group' interests.

Almost all causes of conflict can be translated back to interests in some way or other, as we have seen above. This is how reality presents itself to us. But, interests have to be brought into terms, they have to be identified and expressed. They are then expressed in terms of group identity, which in turn finds expression in goals. But if goals are hardly met, if expectations (expressed in goals) are not met, if people feel deprived or experience misplacement with their rank or experience rank disequilibrium relative to their goals and values, there is cause for grievance and conflict.

Furthermore, interests are intensified and explicated in terms of values. Values articulate the interests of individuals or groups. Mostly this articulation and codification is done by intellectuals in service of the rulers. Or to put it differently, interests are presented in the form of values or ideologies and there-fore conflict caused by different interests can be harshly expressed in terms of ideologies, and consequently ideologies seem to be very incompatible. They serve different interests.

With regard to the units of conflict, we have identified the quasi-group, along with Dahrendorf, as a potential interest group. They have latent interests, but are not yet organized in a group. They act as the recruiting field for the interest groups. Interest groups are groups in the strict sense of the word. They have a structured organization, programme/goal and personnel.

We have seen that in an agrarian society, a huge gap existed between the upper classes, who had the authority, and those who were part of the lower classes, who had virtually no authority. Thus, in agrarian societies, as was also the case with the society of the Matthean community, there was an ever present potential for conflicting interests and conflict. We will, however, go into this aspect in more detail in the following chapter.

There are certain functions of conflict that need to be stated. Conflict can contribute to both the disruption, and the maintenance of a system. In both cases changes are recognized. Dahrendorf, who focuses more on the violent disruption of a society, which in turn grows into a new system, does not really indicate what kind of changes are involved. Coser, while focusing on the influence conflict has on a system in maintaining it, does give us some indications of the changes involved, especially in sofar as it has an influence on the parties involved.

Conflict has a number of functions, apart from the overall, generalized function of bringing about change. It brings about change in both the inner relationship within the party or group, and the relationship to the outside group. To sum up: conflict has a group-binding function. Through conflict, boundaries are set, and identity is created and a sense of belongingness is achieved. Part of this search for identity is the ever present search for an enemy, both in and outside the group. Furthermore, conflict can function as a safety-valve within a group. Conflict can function as an indication of the intenseness of the relationship. In as far as conflict increases in intensity, the closer the relationship might be. But the reverse is also true: the closer the relationship, the more intense the conflict. Both love and hate, affection and antagonism, consensus and coercion, are always dialectically present in any relationship, and in a society. Conflict causes great intolerance, especially within the group as soon as outside pressure increases. This is particularly true of renegadism. For a heretic competes for the continued loyalty of the in-group. Renegadism threatens the unity of a group and can cause a split within a group.

Challenged by the conflict of an outside group, but also by an inside group, conflict functions as a means to the readjustment of inner values and identity. Conflict also has a changing effect. Extreme conflict, especially if the opponent is strong and influential, leads to contact which inevitably leads to the readjustment of both the conditions of the struggle, and the reasons for the struggle, i.e. a re-adjustment of values and ideologies. New norms and values are created, but old dormant ones are re-evaluated and even given new content and meaning. Conflict thus not only causes structural change, which Dahren-

dorf proclaims, but, and especially, since conflict cannot leave a group untouched, it acts as stimulus to a readjustment and re-evaluation of own and opposite values, and even leads to the change of these values to suit the newly evolved interests. In this regard, conflict contributes to the breaking through of boundaries, not only in maintaining them.

Whether conflict contributes to a disequilibrium, i.e. the breaking down of boundaries (Dahrendorf), or to an equilibrium, i.e. the maintenance of bound-aries (Coser), it brings about change and almost always brings about *renewed* conflict. The fact that almost all conflict theorists agree that every society bears in itself the seeds of conflict in a spiralling way (see Kriesberg 1973 and Turner 1978), makes a synthesis between the views of Dahrendorf and Coser possible. Conflict is viewed positively to eventually contribute to the mainten-ance of a system (equilibrium), but as soon as a new equilibrium is reached, new interests evolve, new parties evolve and a renewed disequilibrium also evolves. In this Dahrendorf is correct. Change brings about conflict, and conflict brings about change in a never-ending spiral. If conflict comes forth out of different interests, the equilibrium is disturbed, but as soon as the equilibrium is restored again, the next disequilibrium 'waits' to come to the surface like eggs in the ovary of a chicken. The outcome of one conflict is at the same time the possible basis for another struggle. This is what we may call 'the spiral of conflict' (see figure 4 below).

3.4.2 The model in terms of categories

Deduced from the chapter above, I present a few categories which serve as the model with which I eventually wish to analyze the text of Matthew 8 and 9. Category one (1) I deduced from the section on the causes of conflict. Cat-egories two and three (2-3) I deduced from the sections on the causes and units of conflict. Category four and five (4-5) were deduced from the sections on the functions and the spiral of conflict.

These categories are:

(1) What *interests* are involved (as prime causes of conflict)? Closely related to interests, as causes of conflict, are the categories of goals, values and expectations, but, as we have seen, they are all subordinate to the concept of interests.

(2) The interests of the different groups involved are interpreted in terms of *survival*, and

(3) especially in terms of their relationship to *power and authority.*

(4) We have seen that the prime function of conflict is to bring about *change.*

(5) The last category is that in any society conflict is *always potentially present*, even though the present conflict has been resolved. In fact, conflict of interests is *open-ended* in that conflict is an ever-ongoing, never-ending spiral.

The following spiral (taken from Kriesberg 1973:274) clearly illustrates this last point:
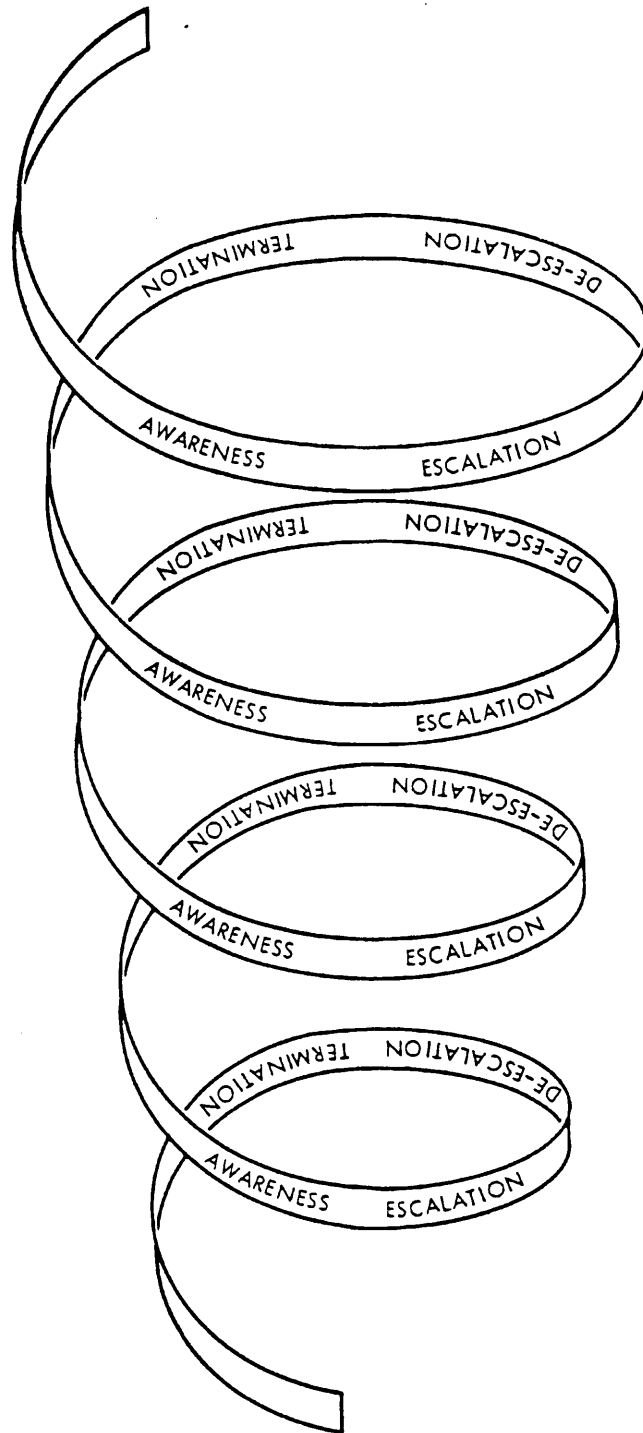
Figure 4: The spiral of conflict

ENDNOTES

1. Note that Boskoff (1972:80) views it the other way round: Conflict is not the creative force of change, but conflict is seen as the consequence of change. We, however, content ourselves with the theory of Dahrendorf. Furthermore, conflict always prevails as a spiral: once there is conflict, there is change, when there is change, there is again conflict because of the new changes.

2. Conflict proceeds in phases: The phases of conflict are summarized as follows by Turner (1978:194):

1. System of interrelated units.
2. Objective inequality in the system of resource distribution.
3. Withdrawal by being deprived of legitimacy from system, under conditions of:
   a. Superimposition of rewards and deprivations
   b. Blocked channels of upwards mobility
   c. Few effective channels for redressing grievances.
4. Initial awareness of objective interests in altering systems of distribution.
5. Emotional arousal of deprived, under conditions of:
   a. 'Ineffective' social control mechanism
   b. 'Ineffective' agencies of socialization
6. High probability of collective outbursts of dissatisfaction.
7. Increase in intensity of involvement of deprived to pursue conflict.
8. Attempts at organization of conflict groups among deprived, under conditions of:
   a. Technical organization
   b. Political organization
   c. Social organization
9. Open conflict of varying levels of violence between deprived and privileged.

3. Coser (1956:162, n.16) says that the distinction between *attitude* and *behaviour* is similar to that between prejudice and discrimination in the sociological study of racial and ethnic relationships.

4. Persuasion means that one or both parties try to convince the other side that it should accede to the goals it desires not out of fear or in return for some reward, but because of its own interests. By reward is meant that the one side (or both) offers the other a positively desired inducement in exchange for a concession towards its goal (cf Kriesberg (1973:17-18).

5. The notion of 'scarcity of goods' is certainly implied by these four concepts. We however deal with 'scarcity of goods' as part of the *causes* of conflict. Therefore it is not taken up explicitly in a definition of conflict. In the next section we will in more detail go into these four concepts.

6. A short remark has to be made on what *social* conflict is. Dahrendorf (1965:202) defines 'social conflict' as: 'Sozial soll ein Konflikt dann heißen, wenn er sich aus der Struktur Einheiten ableiten läßt, also über-individuell ist.' He gives an example: a conflict between a doctor as medical practitioner and the expectations of his patient is 'social conflict' because it exists independently from the person of the practitioner and the patient. But a quarrel between two individuals cannot be called 'social conflict', because it has no direct structural relevance. 'Einmal gibt es in sehr kleinen sozialen Einheiten (Rollen, Gruppen) häufiger Gegensätze, die keinerlei strukturelle Relevanz haben, (und) für...eine Theorie des sozialen Konfliktes night gibt' (Dahrendorf 1965:202-203). 'Social' conflict is 'conflict' in above-mentioned terms, but it has to have broader than individual social consequences to be 'social conflict'.

7. Compare this with the first and major source of conflict between groups as Fisher (1990:103) sees it, namely real conflict of interests, values, needs, or power causes intergroup conflict.

8. Lenski mentions two further postulates, but does not build a proceeding theory on it. In his 1985-text, taken up in the editorial work of Collins (1985b), these postulates are not even mentioned. For the record we will just mention them here: The fourth postulate is that '...*men are unequally endowed by nature with the attributes necessary to carry on these struggles*' (Lenski 1966:32; his emphasis). What he tries to say is that the source of social inequality lies in the nature of human being, a view that is shared by Dahrendorf (1968c:178). The final postulate is '...*that man tends to be a creature of habit and powerfully influenced by the social counterpart of habit, namely custom* (Lenski 1966:32; his emphasis).

9. It is interesting to note that the need for achievement, competence and mastery, as well as motives for recognition, prestige and status, are needs that are fairly high up in the hierarchy of needs as Maslow sees it (see Fisher 1990:91 for a discussion of these needs). This means that these needs are perceived as not of the most important and first to be satisfied. First to be satisfied is the 'basic need' of food and shelter. This certainly differs from Lenski's (1966:38) view.

10. Another basic goal (Lenski calls interests 'goals'; see above), although it does not compare with survival, health and status, is *creature comfort*. But the difference between people's concern for status and for comfort is difficult, to ascertain with the result that comfort is easily overestimated (cf Lenski 1966:38). Lenski (1966:38) indeed is very scant on this issue. Comfort is not to be seen as a major driving force to human behaviour, although it can contribute to conflict.

Salvation in the next world (Lenski's own terms) and *affection* in this world are two other widely shared goals. Salvation is available, like the air we breathe, to all who seek it. It is to be found in most of the major religions of the world. Affection, however, is not so readily available (cf Lenski 1966:38). It, however, really is disappointing that Lenski (1966:38-39) does not give us more information on the aspect of salvation and affection, and more specifically the relationship between the two.

There are a few *instrumental* values. They *facilitate* the attainment of the goals already mentioned (cf Lenski 1966:39). The classic example is *money* as a medium of exchange. As medium of exchange it can serve equally well for men with very different goals.

> It (money - EJV) is as useful to the man who puts status ahead of comfort as to the man who reverses the order. Hence the struggle for money (and also other goals of instrumental value) is at least as intense as the struggle for status, survival, comfort, and other basic goals.
>
> (Lenski 1966:39; see also Van Aarde 1993b:527)

A few other interests are mentioned by Lenski (1966:39-40) for their instrumental value: *other forms of wealth, organizational office and other institutional roles* (for example occupying a major, responsible position), *education and training.*

To attain these goals, says Lenski (1966:40):

> ...individuals are obliged to utilize, as best they can, the various resources with which they are endowed by nature and society. These include possessions and such personal attributes as energy, intelligence, beauty, and physical coordination. Each individual uses these in an effort to achieve those things he values most.

11. Here indeed lies a problem. Lenski (1966:35) at first criticizes the 'conservative' view which wants to take the group's interests to be the individual's interests, with the remark : 'the *most* that is possible is that the interests of society are consistent with the interests of *some* of its members' (my emphasis). He then, however, contradicts himself by *choosing* the conservative view in describing the interests of some *as if* they are the interests of the society as a whole. He admits that this is the reason why individuals clash with society, but fails to say that it is a clash with *some* in society. What was '*the most possible*', became '*the only defensible*' one (Lenski 1966:41). The problem is whether we really can speak of the interests of the dominant group as *the* social interests. Should we not, as Marx, and Dahrendorf did, rather speak of 'class interests', or for that matter, since 'class interests' is also a limited term for an industrial society, of 'group interests'? With this we acknowledge more than Lenski does, namely the possibility that other groups exists in

society which do not comply with the dominant group and yet pursue their own interests and thus clash with the other group. Lenski admits individuals could clash with social interests, but fails to explicate the possibility of other groups clashing with the dominant group. Thus his term 'social interests' is viewed too wide to suit his definition thereof. The notion of social interests, to me, is of academic interest only, for the 'social interests' are in any case determined by the dominant class(es), especially in agrarian societies.

12. Van Gennep (1989:393) responds to the definitions of power by Van Doorn and Weber as representing a very negative view. He cites Van Doorn as: 'Macht is de mogenlijkheid om in overeenstemming met de doeleinden van een persoon of groep, de gedragsalternatieven van andere personen of groepen te beperken.' Weber's definition is also cited by Van Gennep (1989:383, 532 n.75): '(power is) the possibility of imposing one's own will upon the behaviour of other people,...' According to Van Gennep (1989:393), these two definitions are quite clear. Their disadvantage is that they only state the negative side of power. He says:

> Macht is immers ook de mogenlijkheid om iets in overeenstemming met de gestelde doeleinden tot stand te brengen, om orde te scheppen en veranderingen mogenlijk te maken ten gunste van degenen, die onder de macht zijn gesteld. Macht beperkt vrijheid, maar maakt ook vrijheid mogenlijk en is zelfs voorwaarde voor vrijheid, omdat chaos en anarchie op korte termijn extreme onvrijheid veroorzaken.
>
> (Van Gennep 1989:393)

13. Basic (human) needs have two important sides (apart from the fact that we are talking of *human* needs). The first is that one aspect of 'need' is the concept of *necessity*. We have an image of what is necessary to be human. *Basic* refers to the aspect that the needs to some extent have to be satisfied in order to function as a human being. 'When a basic need is not satisfied, some kind of fundamental disintegration will take place' (Galtung 1990:303-304).

14. This indeed corresponds with the two most basic needs as Maslow, cited by Fisher (1990:91) has given, namely *physiological needs* (i.e. basic internal deficit conditions that must be satisfied to maintain bodily processes) and *safety needs* (i.e. needs that must be met to protect the individual from danger). Galtung (1990:309) also gives a list of basic needs. The first two of his list could correspond with those of Maslow. They are: *security needs* (survival needs) - to avoid violence, and *welfare needs* (sufficiency needs) - to avoid misery.

15. This could correspond with the 'higher up' needs of *Esteem* (i.e. the need to achieve, compete and mastery as well as motives for recognition, prestige and status), and *Self-actualization* (i.e. the ultimate motivation, involving the need to fulfil one's unique potential; cf Fisher 1990:91). The two (as I see it) 'higher' needs Galtung (1990:309) identified are: *Identity needs* (needs for closeness) - to avoid alienation, and *freedom needs* (freedom to choice, option) - to avoid repression.

16. Under a sense of grievance, Kriesberg (1973:68, 70) also distinguishes deprivation and rank disequilibrium as follows: (1) The more *deprived* people are, the worse they feel. People tend to compare their situation with others: 'The important corollary of the idea is that the people who are low ranking in several dimensions are more deprived, and feel that they are persons who are high in some ways even if they are low in others' (Kriesberg 1973:68). And, says Kriesberg (1973:69): 'The more deprived people are, the more likely are they to have general feelings of frustration.' We could expect that the lower ranking persons will more likely be dissatisfied, and feel it more intensely than higher ranking persons. (2) A further source of grievance is *rank disequilibrium,* status inconsistency or rank incongruence. According to Kriesberg (1973:70):

> The idea is that persons who are high in some rank dimensions and low in others will be particularly dissatisfied. There are several alleged reasons for this. First, it is argued that there is a tendency within social systems for people to have approximately equivalent ranks in ranking systems; therefore, a person who is high on some ranks and low on others is odd, is treated odd, and feels so himself. Social

interaction is uncomfortable and this discomfort is communicated to the persons with inconsistent ranks. Consequently, rank disequilibrium is experienced as a source of strain.

Furthermore, people in lower ranks tend to relate to people in disequilibrium in terms of their own low ranks, and persons in disequilibrium themselves try to relate to others in terms of their high ranks, and this causes strain: 'This might be seen in a male worker "putting down" a woman supervisor as just a woman and the supervisor treating the worker as just that' (Kriesberg 1973:70).

People in lower ranks feel that their low rank is particularly objectionable, especially if the high rank is used as reference or comparison level. 'The low rank is particularly grievous...because the high rank provides a claim for an equal level on the other ranks' (Kriesberg 1973:70).

17.   Van Doorn (1966; cited by Druckman & Zechmeister 1973:452) distinguishes between ideological differences as primary source of conflict in 'sect-type' organizations and difference in interests as primary source of conflict in 'business-type' organizations. The point is, however, that no matter what the kind of organization, all conflicts can be viewed as caused by a difference in interests. In 'business-type' organizations, to make a general statement, the difference in interests can quite obviously be recognized as underlying the English saying: 'Business is business!' In 'sect-type' organizations, to stay with the term of Van Doorn, difference in interests are not that obviously seen. But, even in these types of organizations, with a strong emphasis on leadership, a strong sense of 'we-ness' and with a strong value system (or ideology) that defines them as 'superior' in their own terms against their rivals (cf Blau & Schwartz 1984:175), own interests still lay at the bottom of their actions and conflicts. For the consciousness of 'we-ness' is often just the members' understanding of their common interests or goals (cf Benkin 1981:156). Out of insecurity for their own ongoing existence and survival (interpreted as their own interests), they sustain the value of group superiority. Furthermore, even (and especially) in strong 'sect-like' groups, the values are created and maintained by a small elite group of rulers and intellectuals. As long as they have enough resources to remain in power, their values will be sustained. But, as soon as their existence or survival is at stake, they either can stick to their previous interests and values, and, depending on their available force or power, go under, or change their particular values in order to survive. The political rivals of the Nationalist Party within the South-African political world accused them of exactly this. They often asked the Nationalist Party whether they really changed their values from *apartheid* to more democratic values because they valued these 'new' values highly out of their own conviction? Or were they, in order to survive in the political arena of the future (thus in their own interest), *forced* to change their political interest-group (to a more inclusive party), and there-after changed their values accordingly? Consistent to conflict theory, the latter might be the case. This, of course, is not to say that this should be valued negatively.

18.   On the issue of values, Kriesberg (1973:28-41) distinguishes two kinds of circumstances that underlie social conflict: consensus and descensus. Consensus means that parties agree about what they want, but in situations such that if one side obtain more of what it wants, the other receives less, and this could lead to conflict. Consensus, says Kriesberg (1973:36), is a basis for both cooperation and conflict. What he (Kriesberg) regards as 'values', Coser (1956), Dahrendorf (1959) and Lenski (1966), as we have already seen, regard as 'interests'. When parties agree upon certain values (or interests), but rank them differently (cf Lenski 1966:16; see also De Jager & Mok 1983:70), or experience grievance over the availability of these resources, conflict is likely to emerge. Kriesberg (1973:36) calls this 'consensual conflict': The parties value the same as high, but because of the scarcity or availability of these valued resources, and because of the out of own interest involvement at these resources, conflict emerges. Furthermore, the fact that Coser (1968:233) and Nader & Todd (1978:19) rank values under 'non-material resources', indicates that values can be ranked as interests as well.

On the so called 'descensual conflict', Kriesberg (1973:28) says:

> Descensual conflict exists when the parties want different things
> but the requirements of coordination make those differences incom-
> patible or one side wants the other to accept the values, beliefs, or

way of life it professes and thus makes unacceptable claims upon
the other side.

Examples we find for instance when peoples who adhere to different religions, try to convince each other to their own. But even 'descensual conflict', with the emphasis on a difference in values and beliefs can be interpreted in terms of conflict in interests. For, what are the 'things' Kriesberg talks about? Can they be power, prestige or status? And, why should one side want the other to accept its beliefs and values and make claims on the other, other than out of a desire for control or power over the other. Even interpreted in religious terms: to pursue someone else to ones own beliefs, can be experienced as a means of satisfying the godhead and in reciprocity receive (in ones own interests) some gratitude from the godhead.

19. Although the maximizing of own interests are the determining factor for conflict to emerge, and although the laws of distribution (to Lenski) determine that there is a constant struggle for power, privilege and prestige in order to control the scarce resources as well as the surplus resources, we must, however, not forget the first postulate of Lenski on the nature of humankind, namely that humankind is a social being. For the drive to maximizing one's own interests must not be confused with individualism, egoism or as Huber & Tödt (1988:109-110) call it: 'Antropologie des verantwortunglosen Individuums'. This indeed can easily happen if the first postulate is not kept in mind. If someone acts out of own interests to such an extent that he/she forgets that he/she is a social being as well, and that he/she sometimes has to cooperate with others to survive, he/she falls into egoism or individualism and this is viewed as counter-productive, or contra-own interests.

20. Note that Saldarini (1988a:313, 1988b:200) places the so-called *merchants* under the upper classes. However, as Saldarini (1988a:42) himself has stated, they are difficult to place for they do not really fit into either the ruling or the lower classes. But, although they easily escaped any control of the governing classes, and supplied them with luxuries and essentials (cf Saldarini 1988a:42-43), I would rather place them under the lower classes because of the fact that they generally speaking had low prestige, had no direct power and were recruited from the landless (see also Lenski 1966:248-256).

21. Coser (1956:49, 1968:233) distinguishes between realistic and nonrealistic conflict. The difference lies in the differentiation between conflict as a means or/and conflict as an end in itself. Realistic conflict arises when men clash in pursuit of claims based on frustration of demands and expectancies of gains. Conflict then is a means towards the achievement of specific goals (cf Coser 1956:54, 1968:233).
    Nonrealistic conflict arises from aggressive impulses. It seeks expression, no matter what the object. It allows no other alternative than violence (cf Coser 1956:49, 54, 1968:233).

22. There are a few more functions of conflict with limited relevance for this study. They are:
    (1) Conflict has an *impact and function in group structures*.

    Conflict may serve to remove dissociating elements in a relationship and to re-estab-
    lish unity. In sofar as conflict is the resolution of tension between antagonists it
    has stabilizing functions and becomes an integrating component of the relationship.

    (Coser 1956:80)

On this remark there is critique from both Dahrendorf (1959:207) and Turner (1978:185). Conflict *can and may* lead to unity, stabilization or integration of a society, but it by no means necessarily has to do it. The complete opposite is also true and possible.
    (2) *Conflict with out-groups sometimes may increase internal cohesion*. Conflict with other out-groups could lead to the mobilization of the energies of group members and hence to increased cohesion of the group (cf Coser 1956:95). This, however, depends on the characteristics of the groups involved, so that it not necessarily is the case. Coser (1956:94) uses the example of the

British people who increasingly were united by the Nazi-German attacks during World War II, whereas the French on the other hand fell apart.

(3) *Conflict with another groups may define group structures and may have consequent influence to internal conflict.* 'Groups engaged in continued struggle with the outside tend to be intolerant within' (Coser 1956:103). They are unlikely to tolerate more than the limited departures from the group unity. They have a sect-like character. Members are selected and the group lay claim to the total personality involvement of the members. There is a constant 'heresy-hunting'. Its members are often obliged to participate in the selection and reselection of those who are 'worthy', that is 'Those who do not question or dissent, precisely because its very existence is based on the "purity" of its membership. Such groups must continuously engage in self-purification drives, and so they must constantly breed heresy and schisms' (Coser 1956:100-101).

However, groups of the 'church-type' (i.e. an elastic organization tolerant to divergent tendencies), not involved in continuous struggles with the outside, tend to make no special claim to total involvement for they set no rigid criteria for membership and are more likely to be large. 'Such groups are able to resist outside pressures successfully by exhibiting elasticity of structure and allowing an area of "tolerated conflict" within' (Coser 1956:104). I do not know why Coser (1956:99) chooses 'churches' as example to be more elastic and tolerant than sects, for 'the church', as I have come to know it, can be as intolerant as a sect can be. I suppose it has to do with the fact that Coser sees a church as a contemplated mass organization, probably referring to the larger Roman Catholic Church.

23. Turner (1978:189-190) views two related stages, which coincides with Kriesberg's insights. To Turner, there first has to be some initial *withdrawal of legitimacy* by those units not receiving a proportionate share of the resources. Such withdrawal is likely, says Turner (1978:190), when:

> (a) channels of upwards mobility are insufficient to accommodate people's aspirations, thus creating a sense of blockage among derived segments of the population (and in an agrarian society this is likely to be the case - EJV); (b) channels for redressing grievances against the system of inequality are insufficient relative to the demand for expressing grievances; and (c) rewards and deprivations are superimposed on each other - that is, having (or not having) access to one resource is highly correlated with access (or lack of access) to other scarce resources.

Related to withdrawal, is the *initial awareness of objective interests* in an altering system of resource distribution. This awareness is influenced by the technical (leaders and ideology), political (creation of opposition organizations), and social (opportunities to communicate, to recruit members) conditions (cf Turner 1978:190-191; he took over the view of Dahrendorf). The more these conditions are met, the more the deprived become aware of their objective interests in altering the present system of resource distribution.

As another phase, Turner (1978:191) mentions the *emotional arousal* of the deprived, an aspect Kriesberg touches upon in the fourth stage of his model, that of the intensity of conflict. Nevertheless, it seems more at its place at an early stage of conflict, since withdrawal of legitimacy and awareness of harm done inevitably leads to emotional arousal and to passions which, under other conditions, drive actors to pursue conflict.

24. As far as the *expansion of the issue* is concerned: 'Once a struggle has begun about a particular issue in contention, it often brings more general issues into awareness. Often more fundamental disputes are discovered' (Kriesberg 1973:159-160). It is a movement from specific to general issues, whenever the cleavages of values and interests are deep. For example, a controversy over the kind of books for a school's library could expand to a generalized issue about the whole educational philosophy of that school.

The deterioration of relations between groups in conflict is self-escalating because as they deteriorate, contentious issues which had previously been ignored, are brought out. Furthermore, additional issues also arise. For example, as blacks in the USA seek better jobs and more income equality, the strive towards the integrated housing and schools become additional issues. As sanctions are imposed on others, those sanctions often become the issue as well. Finally, if parties

are threatened by coercion, they tend to respond with hostility and aggression towards others. Furthermore, under-reaction by one party may lead to a feeling of superiority by the aggressive party, which allows conflict to expand.

As a conflict emerges, the adversaries tend to become increasingly isolated and *polarized* from each other. Says Kriesberg (1973:161):

> Polarization also takes the form of reducing the neutrals and potential mediators. Parties to a conflict generally try to induce others to join them. Insofar as a party feels morally superior and confident that most of the audience are likely to be allies, it will urge everyone to choose side.

This could be explained as a sort of 'If you are not for us, you are against us'- attitude. Because of polarization, the opportunities to communicate become less. As the magnitude of conflict behaviour increases, communication barriers increase in the sense that fear and hostility cause suspicion and hence it is difficult to signal any de-escalation efforts. As coercion increases, the other side is more and more degraded and brutalized and regarded as subhuman.

Intervention of a third party can lead to the escalation of conflict in that the scope of conflict increases. The more people involved, the more intense conflict becomes. Nevertheless, a third party can cause de-escalation as well, but we will leave it at that.

25. Another way to de-escalate conflict is by fractioning the issue at stake. General issues may be broken up into specific ones and dealt with one by one (cf Kriesberg 1973:168).

A third party can or cannot *intervene*. If a third party does not become involved in conflict as participant, it in itself limits the expansion of the conflict. They can act as enforcers of possible breeches of understandings. They can act as neutral norm-enforcers upon both the conflicting parties. Furthermore, the third party can act as mediator. They help in reaching a settlement, but may also help to reach an understanding about the means used in conflict. Kriesberg (1973:169-170) says:

> A mediator can be particularly helpful when both sides are fearful of further escalation. A mediator can convey the mutual interest in limiting escalation which neither party would be willing to openly and unilaterally communicate to the other. A mediator can also help devise formulas which permit both sides to continue a conflict at a lower level and presumably without changing the relative position of the two sides.

26. The notion of control of scarce resources as one of the causes of conflict, is seen as part of the maximization of own interests.

CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL LOCATION OF THE MATTHEAN COMMUNITY [1]

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We have seen from the previous chapter, generally speaking, that *conflicting interests* normally form the basis of most conflicts. This statement is based on a rather lengthy discussion on the causes of conflict. This discussion was to establish a model/theory in terms of which we want to interpret Matthew 8 and 9. But this discussion functioned at a very high level of abstraction, or at a so-called 'macrosociological-level'. Matthew 8 and 9 will function at a 'microsociological-level', as a case study to which our theory will be applied. The following chapter will function as a link between these two levels, in other words, to link our conflict theory (the macrosociological-level) to the text of Matthew 8 and 9 (the micro-sociological-level). This chapter will function on a level that I want to call a 'meso-sociological' or 'in between-level'. This chapter refers to the social location of the Matthean community. Along with Rohrbaugh (1993b:394, n.1) we by the term 'location' simply mean a position in a social system shared by a group of people. 'Location' is an inclusive term. It deals with the social stratification and the consequent relations (and conflict) within and between different groups. The aim of this chapter will be to locate the community of the Gospel of Matthew in terms of its 'social stratification'. This is needed to understand the background of the different conflicting interests between the Pharisees and the Matthean community. We furthermore wish to place the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9 in the broader debate of the conflict in Matthew as a whole in terms of whether Matthew writes his Gospel in a so-called *intra muros* or *extra muros* situation (cf Carson 1982:161-

163; Van Aarde 1989:223-225; Dunn 1991:141,156; Stanton 1992a:113-145, 1992b:382, 390). Furthermore we wish to establish the social location of the community and its conflict in terms of the debate of the so-called formative Judaism (cf Overman 1990; Stanton 1992a; 1992b:380). This is regarded as necessary in order to further explicate the *conflict of interests* in the broader context of the Gospel and in particular Matthew 8 and 9. For the basic outline of this chapter, I wish to acknowledge the work of Richard L Rohrbaugh (1993b, 1993c), who did a similar study on the Gospel of Mark.

4.2 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Before we enter into a discussion on the social stratification in the Gospel of Matthew, we have to define the concept briefly. 'Social stratification', as a rule of thumb is 'The division of a society into a number of strata, hierarchically arranged groupings' (Bryant 1983:366). Lenski (1966:x; see also Hoult 1969:304) defines social stratification as follows: 'I equate social stratification *with the distribution process in human societies - the process by which scarce values are distributed*' (emphasis by Lenski). Social stratification has to do with the basic question of '*Who gets what and why?*' (Lenski 1966:3).

4.2.1 The urban elite

We have to view the social stratification in the Gospel of Matthew in terms of the stratification in advanced agrarian societies (see the section on *The units of conflict* in chapter 3 for a discussion on the concept 'advanced agrarian society'; see also Duling 1992:101; Van Aarde 1993b:528; Van Eck 1993:226-230). Saldarini (1988a:35) says that Jews in Palestine during the Hellenistic and Roman periods lived in an agrarian society which itself was part of a large agrarian, bureaucratic and partly commercialized aristocratic empire. Lenski (1966:189-242) regularly uses the Roman empire as a test case to illustrate the features of advanced agrarian societies.

The top layer of agrarian society, according to Rohrbaugh (1993b:383), is the so-called *urban elite*. It seems, however, that he does not differentiate between the two different classes namely the so-called *ruler* and *governing classes*

as Lenski (1966:219, 243; see also Saldarini 1988a:40-41) does. Furthermore it seems that Rohrbaugh (1993b:383) also includes the so-called *priestly class*, which Lenski (1966:256) regards as separate, in this group.[2] As Rohrbaugh (1993b:383) indicates, the upper level of the urban elites included the high ranking military officers, ranking priestly families, the Herodians and other ranking aristo-cratic families (see also Saldarini 1988a:40, 1988b:200; Van Aarde 1993b:529, 532). The reason why Rohrbaugh (1993b:383) group them all together seems to be that they '...lived in the heavily fortified central areas of the cities, usually enclosed in separate walls, hence they were physically and socially isolated from the rest of the society'.

The rulers were the heads of empires or centralized states. They regarded themselves as the owners of all the land. They had far reaching powers. They controlled all the classes by means of taxation, harsh measures such as con-fiscation and, with regard to the governing classes, by the granting of land and political rights (cf Saldarini 1988a:40). However, kings and emperors never ruled alone. A very small minority (rarely more than 2% of the population; cf Lenski 1966:219; see also Saldarini 1988a:40, 1988b:200; Rohrbaugh 1993b:383; Van Aarde 1993b:532) shared the responsibilities of government with them. 'To be part of the *governing class* was to possess the right, acknowledged and supported by the supreme power in the land, to share in the economic surplus produced by the peasant masses and urban artisans' (Lenski 1966:220). This was in reward for their upholding and enforcement of the authority of the regime and ruler. This reward entailed vast amounts of wealth and money so that, as Lenski (1966:228) remarks: '...it appears *that the governing classes of agrarian societies received at least a quarter of the national income..., and that the governing class and rulers together usually received not less than half.*' The control of the economic and political systems was often legitimized by the religious and educational bureaucracy (cf Rohrbaugh 1993c:12). This role was often fulfilled by the *priestly class* (see footnote 2; see also the role of the intellectuals as we explained it in the previous chapter).

Land and office were the main economic resources in agrarian societies, therefore there was an almost continuous struggle between the ruler and the

governing class to gain control of these resources and to maximize their own rights and prerogatives.[3] In these countless struggles between the ruler and the governing class, the ruler often had to turn to the common people for support. The common people, however, hardly ever gained anything by this. Says Lenski (1966:241):

> It is no great exaggeration to say that *the outcomes of all the countless struggles between rulers and their governing classes had almost no effect on the living conditions of the common people, except as these struggles sometimes led to violence and destroyed their very livelihood* (his emphasis).

With regard to offices, Saldarini (1988b:200) says that the members of the governing class had the right of self-aggrandizement through grants from the ruler and 'honest graft' in conduct of office. As Saldarini (1988b:200) continues:

> Offices were often sold and the incumbent was expected to make his fortune from his position. Land ownership, the major form of wealth, was secondary to political power because political power was used to acquire land and wealth, and the lack of political power could result in the loss of land and wealth through taxation and confiscation.

We can identify the members of the urban elite in Matthew by means of the following list (see also Duling 1992:103):

Urban elite mentioned in Matthew[4]

Caesar 22:17,21 Rulers of the gentiles 20:25 High officials 20:25 Herod 2:1 Magi 2:1ff The rulers of Judah 2:6 Herod the tetrarch 14:1,3 Archelaus 2:22 The ruler 9:18ff[5] King (often used as part of Jesus' parables) 10:18; 11:8; 18:23ff; 22:2ff; 25:34ff Philip 14:3 Antipas 14:1,9 Man going on a journey 25:14ff The high priest Caiaphas 26:3,57, 62ff The chief priests 2:4; 16:21; 20:18; 21:15,23,45; 26:3,14,47,51,59; 27:1ff; 28:11	The chief priests and the elders 21:23; 26:3,47; 27:1,3,12,20; 28:11-12 Elders 15:2; 16:21; 21:23; 26:3, 47,57; 27:1,3,12,20,41; 28:12 The chief priests and the teachers of the law (scribes) 2:4; 20:18; 21:15 The elders, chief priests, and the teachers of the law (scribes) 16:21; 27:41 The chief priest and the whole San- hedrin 26:59 The chief priests and the Pharisees 21:45; 27:62 Pontius Pilate 27:2,13ff Governor 27:11,14; 28:14 Owner/Landowner 13:27; 20:1, 11; 21:33 Physician 9:12 Wealthy/rich young man 19:16, 22; 27:57

We have to make a remark concerning *teachers of the law (scribes)* in the phrases 'the chief priests and the teachers of the law' and 'the elders, chief priests and the teachers of the law'. Contrary to Rohrbaugh (1993b:384), who places the scribes (in the Gospel of Mark) among the urban elite, we wish to place them (as far as Matthew is concerned) under the retainer class (see below). This is supported by Saldarini (1988a:161,172). In the passion predictions, the scribes are mentioned as Jesus' enemies in Jerusalem along with the 'elders, chief priests' (16:21), and along with the chief priests (20:18). In this they have a more political function (cf Saldarini 1988a:161). The scribes also appear twice in the passion narratives as part of the *complete leadership* of Judaism (26:57, 59; 27:41). All these cases symbolize the complete leadership of Jerusalem condemning and rejecting Jesus. Therefore, strictly speaking, the scribes as pictured by the Gospel of Matthew are not really part of the urban elite. They here have to be seen in relation with the other groups mentioned in these phrases.

The Pharisees are mentioned in close relation with the chief priests (see table above). Van Tilborg (1972:5) says that seen in the larger context of the Gospel, the expression 'the chief priests and the Pharisees' have to be identified with 'the chief priests and the elders of the people' (21:45/21:23) and the 'chief priests that met with the elders' (27:62/28:11-12). Therefore, the Pharisees mentioned in the table above, are strictly speaking, not part of the urban elite for the same reasons that the scribes are not. The retainers should rather be regarded as serving the interests of the rulers, as part of their political function.

4.2.2 Retainers

Besides the ruler and the governing classes, agrarian societies had a largely stratified system of other classes. The rulers and the governing class normally employed or maintained a small army of officers and professional soldiers. Furthermore, officials and bureaucrats such as clerks and bailiffs, scholars, religious leaders, legal experts, lower lay aristocracy, household servants and personal retainers, all served in specialized capacities. They were the so-called *retainer class*. Their specific function, despite specializing fields, was the same: service to the political elite. They normally were not more than 5% of the society. They were taken from the common people, but were kept separate, some even shared in the economic surplus (cf Lenski 1966:243; Saldarini 1988a:41, 1988b:201, 1988c:70; Rohrbaugh 1993b:385; Van Aarde 1993b:532).

Retainers mentioned in Matthew

Pharisees 3:7; 9:11,14,34; 12:2,14, 24,38; 15:1,12; 16:1ff; 19:3; 22:15,34,41; 23:2,13ff	Tax collector(s) 5;46; 9:9,10,11; 10:3; 11:19; 17:24; 18:17; 21:31, 32[6]
Sadducees 3:7; 16:1ff; 22:23,34	Teachers/scholars 23:24
Teachers of the law (scribes) 2:4; 5:20; 7:29; 8:19; 9:3; 12:38; 13:52; 15:1; 17:10; 23:2ff	Attendants of Herod 14:2
	Herodians 22:16
Centurion 8:5,8,13; 27:54	Disciples of the Pharisees 22:16
One of the rulers 9:18	Those who arrested Jesus 26:57
Officer 5:25	Soldiers 27:27; 28:12
Foreman 20:8	Guards 26:58; 28:4,11

We wish to make a few remarks regarding the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes. Concerning the Pharisees in Mark, Rohrbaugh (1993b:16) says that they were not the dominant group in the conflict with Jesus. This is, however, not the case in Matthew. Matthew tends to expand the role of the Pharisees as the opponents of Jesus. They are the most constant opposition to Jesus (cf Saldarini 1988a:167).

Matthew groups the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes together as the leaders of the Jewish people. As Van Tilborg (1972:6) says: 'It seems evident that Mt did not wish to create any distinction between the various groups' (see also Hummel 1966:15; Kingsbury 1987:58-59, 1988a:17-24, 115-118; see also the section on *The calling of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13* in chapter 5). To Hummel (1966:18), the scribes were qualified by the Pharisees in Matthew. Saldarini (1988c:70) views these groups in coalition with each other, all competing for power and influence in Jewish society.[7] To Matthew, the Pharisees and scribes were learned groups *par excellence*. Their specific agendas do not differ sharply (cf Saldarini 1988a:171). It is possible that some of the members of these parties could have belonged to the upper ruling classes, but in general, they fit into the retainer class who served the interests of the governing classes. They shared in the life of the elite, but not in its direct power (cf Saldarini 1988a:42). They do not have any independent wealth or power but are not entirely without power (cf Saldarini 1988a:172, 1988b:203, 1988c:70). Therefore we could say that they had indirect political power. Furthermore, to Lenski (1966:246), the retainers had an important function to support the ruling classes in their effort to *maintain* their essentially exploitive position in society. To a great extent (especially) the Pharisees acted as an important middle group between the people and the '...upper echelons of society' (Saldarini 1988c:71; see also Lenski 1966:246). Saldarini (1988b:201; taken over from Lenski 1966:243-248) states that this group (retainers and therefore it is also possible for the Pharisees - EJV) often gained their political power when the governing classes ceased to be effective rulers and left matters in their hands. This opens up the possibility that the Pharisees gained strong political influence within Judaism in the post-70 AD period. This opens the possibility that the retainers, i.e. the Pharisees and scribes in Matthew, strived for the influence of the people, which could have intensified their conflict with the

Matthean community. Add to this that although collectively the members of the retainer class were terribly important to their superiors, individually most of them were expendable (cf Lenski 1966:246). They constantly sought to maximize their rights and privileges (cf Lenski 1966:247). This intensified the competition among the members of this class, but also meant that any challenge to their position from whatever side, caused a threat to their position.

4.2.3 The urban non-elite

We now have to view the underprivileged classes of advanced agrarian societies. We have already seen that they comprise the merchants,[8] the peasants, the artisans, the degraded, unclean and expendables. With regard to the *urban non-elite*, Rohrbaugh (1993b:386) includes the merchants, artisans, day labourers[9] and service workers of various kinds into this group. As a whole the urban non-elite comprised approximately 8% of the society. The *merchants* were in many respects more successful than the rulers and the governing class in attaining a share in the economic surplus. However, they had no power of their own. Their activities were difficult to control, for they were almost always out buying and selling. They had a mobile character, supplying the privileged classes with merchandise. Their basic resources were wit and cunning against the means of violence of the political elite (cf Lenski 1966:248-256; see also Saldarini 1988a:42; Van Aarde 1993b:533).

The *artisan classes* were never large. There was always considerable overlap between the artisans and the peasantry. They were normally recruited from the peasantry. Although they had some skills with which they could bargain, they lived in the cities in often worse conditions than the peasantry; they were poor and underprivileged, their living conditions were depressing and they often suffered bad health. They did not have any influence or power in their societies (cf Lenski 1966:278-279; see also Saldarini 1988a:43 n.26; Rohrbaugh 1993b:386-387; Van Aarde 1993b:533). They were often grouped in guilds which provided some organization among these aggregates (cf Lenski 1966:279).

Joseph 1:18 (see 13:55 where there is reference to Jesus as 'the carpenter's son')[10] Mary 1:18; 27:56 Jesus' mother and brothers (and sisters) 12:46; 13:55 Jesus (as Joseph's son) The city-dwellers 8:34; 11:20 Merchant 13:45 Money changers 21:12 Simon Peter and Andrew (as fishermen) 4:18 Peter (on his own) 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 17:1 James, son of Zebedee and his brother John 4:21 The mother of Zebedee's sons 20:20 The fishermen 13:48 Mary, the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of Zebedee's sons 27:56

4.2.4 The degraded, unclean and expendable classes

The degraded, unclean and expendable classes of any agrarian society lived outside the city walls (see the work of Rohrbaugh 1991 on the living conditions in the ancient city; see also Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:85). They were '...beggars, low-status prostitutes, the poorest day labourers, tanners (forced to live outside the cities because of their odor) and even some merchants' (Rohrbaugh 1993b:387; see also Van Aarde 1993b:533). They were forced outside the cities at night. As for the so-called *unclean and degraded classes* (cf Lenski 1966:280-281), they were regarded as being even lower and more inferior than the common people. The tendency of the 'decent' people was to avoid the members of this class. 'Sometimes the degraded status of these groups reflected *inferior ethnic origins-* ,...at other times the status *reflected obnoxious or offensive characteristics of the occupation of the group'* (Lenski 1966:280; my emphasis). This explains why the centurion in 8:5-13, as part of another ethnic group, was regarded as unclean by the Jews, although he was, in fact, part of the retainer class in his own ethnic group. The same is true of the tax collector in 9:9-13: although part of the retainer class, his collaboration with the foreign rulers (which was viewed as offensive), made him a part of the unclean class as far as the Jews were concerned (see our discussion on these two pericopes below).

The so-called *expendables* were at the bottom of the class system of agrarian society. This was a small group. They comprised about 5-10% of society, although their numbers grew after great national disasters (cf Lenski 1966:281-283; Saldarini 1988a:44; Van Aarde 1993b:534). There was no place nor need for them in society. As Lenski (1966:281) says: 'These (the expendables - EJV) included a variety of types, ranging from petty criminals and outlaws to beggars and underemployed itinerant workers, and numbered all those forced to live solely by their wits or by charity'. The existence of the class was inevitable in agrarian societies for the population growth often outnumbered the demand for labour. There thus were more people than the dominant classes found profitable to employ (cf Lenski 1966:281-282). The best hope of those in this class was occasional work at planting and harvest time, and charity in between. Otherwise, illegal activity was the best they could hope for (cf Lenski 1966:282-283).

Unclean, degraded and expendables mentioned in Matthew[11]

The man with leprosy 8:2; 10:8; 11:5; 26:6	Dumb man 9:32; 15:30,31
Peter's mother-in-law (in as far as she was a sick woman) 8:14	The deaf 11:5
A woman who had been subject to bleeding 9:20-22	The Canaanite woman 15:22
Demon-possessed 4:24; 8:16; 8:28-34; 12:22; 15:21-28	The man with the withered hand 12:10
Paralytic 4:24; 8:6; 9:2,6	The sick 4:23,24; 8:16; 9:12; 9:35; 10:8; 14:14,35
Lame/crippled 11:5; 15:30-31; 18:8; 21:14	The demon-possessed daughter of the Canaanite woman 15:22
Crippled 15:30,31	The (abandoned) children 19:13[12]
The epileptic(s) 4:24; 17:15	'The tax collectors and the prostitutes' 21:31,32
'Sinners' 9:10,11; 26:45	The eunuch 19:12
The blind men 9:27,28; 11:5; 12:22; 15:14,30,31; 20:30; 21:14	The poor 5:3; 11:5; 19:21; 26:9,11
	Barabbas 27:16,21
	Robbers/bandits 21:13; 27: 38,44

4.2.5 The rural peasants

The burden of supporting the state and the privileged classes fell on the shoulders of the common people, the peasant farmers, who constituted the majority (approximately 90%) of the population (cf Lenski 1966:266; Rohrbaugh 1993b:388; Van Aarde 1993b:533). They were called the *peasant class*. They lived in the villages and rural areas. They were engaged in 'primitive' industries like farming and extracting raw material (cf Rohrbaugh 1993b:388). They comprised the freeholders, tenants, day labourers and slaves. They were responsible for the *tax-income* of the privileged, they often presented the *corveé* or forced labour, they were often regarded as mere property of the rulers (Lenski 1966:268). Anything between 30-70% of their crops were due to the rulers (cf Lenski 1966:267; Saldarini 1988a:43, 1988b:201). They hardly ever had more than the bare necessities of life and lived under extremely primitive living conditions (cf Lenski 1966:270-271). Under extreme conditions their condition was so oppressive that they had to flee their land. To compound the misery of their economic situation, the peasants were often subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment by their superiors, and this was most often even regarded as quite 'natural' from the viewpoint of the political elite. At best the peasants were often referred to as 'without heart', or 'without understanding'. Because there was very little contact between the rulers and the peasants, the governing classes were hardly ever concerned about the harsh conditions the peasants were forced to live in.

The peasants were highly ambivalent about their social status. On the one hand they accepted their position and the explanation provided by the dominant ideology, but on the other hand, their physical condition created an intense desire for survival, and when survival was assured, a desire for a better life evolved. Says Lenski (1966:273): 'In other words, like their superiors, they were motivated to maximize their rewards, in asfar as their situation permitted it. Thus, struggles inevitably developed between the peasantry and their masters'.

Peasants mentioned in Matthew[13]

Jesus (the protagonist of the Gospel story)[14] The disciples of John 9:14; 11:2,7; 14:12 People 3:5; 8:27; 22:10 The crowd/s 5:1; 7:28-29; 8:1,18; 9:8,33,36; 12:46; 13:2,36; 14:13-19; 15:10, 30ff; 17:14; 19:2; 20:29,31; 21:8-11,46; 22:33; 23:1[15] Many (πολλοί) 12:15 The disciples of Jesus 8: 21ff; 9:37; 10:1; 12:1,49; 13:10,36; 14:15ff; 15:2, 12,23,32,33,37; 16:5,13,20, 24; 17:6,10,14,19ff; 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 Slaves/servants 8:9; 10:24;	13:27; 18:23ff; 20:27; 21:34,36; 22:3ff; 24:45ff; 25:14ff Slaves/son 8:6,8; 12:18; 14:2; 21:15 Tenants 21:35ff Peter's mother-in-law 8:14 The 'twelve' apostles 10:2-4 Fishermen 13:48 Those who were in the boat 14:33 Day labourers 9:37,38; 10:10; 20:1, 8,9 The servants of the highpriest 26:51 Simon, man from Cyrene 27:32[16] The bystanders at the cross 27:39, 47 Mary Magdalene (and the other Mary)[17] 27:56; 28:1

By this we have not at all given a complete picture of agrarian societies. Because the possibility of upward mobility in these societies was slim (it did of course happen, especially when the individuals' wealth in some way or another improved) and downward mobility was more likely because of great population growth and very little positions of privilege available, social stratification was very apparent and therefore conflict was an ever present possibility. This makes Dahrendorf's model also applicable to agrarian societies as far as stratification is concerned.

4.3 SOCIAL LOCATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF MATTHEW

The social location of the community of Matthew stands in close relationship with the concept of stratification. This discussion of the stratification gave us important background information in terms of the interest groups involved in the investigated conflict. What we here intend to do is to view Matthew in its social and historical setting (cf White 1991:211). We wish to place the emphasis on more specific aspects like the place of origin and the likely social conflicts in and around the community of Matthew.

4.3.1 An urban environment?

4.3.1.1 The environment

The question posed here is whether Matthew has as its setting an urban environment. If so, which city/ies is/are involved? What are the implications of this (geographical) setting in relation to the above-mentioned stratification systems in agrarian societies?

A widely accepted consensus was that Antioch in Syria was the place of origin of the Gospel of Matthew (cf Luz 1985:73-74 for a literature list and arguments to substantiate this view; see also Stambauch & Balch 1986:145; Meeks 1987:38; Kingsbury 1988a:155; Duling & Perrin 1994:333). Part of this view is that Matthew addressed a congregation/community that existed in Antioch. Meier (1982:22-27) argues that because Antioch was predominantly Greek speaking, it provides a 'natural site' for a Gospel written in Greek. This was the setting for the circumcision-free mission. There also was a large Jewish population which could explain the Jewish tone of the Gospel. As Meier (1982:23) says: 'As a whole...Matthew's Gospel reflects a meeting place and melting pot of Jewish and Gentile influences. Antioch is a perfect location for this encounter and clash'.

In a relatively recent article Rodney Stark (1991:189-210; see also Duling & Perrin 1994:333) also assumes Antioch to be the place of origin of the Gospel of Matthew. He argues that the community of Matthew was an urban community (cf Stark 1991:189). He was particularly interested in describing the physical realities of daily living in Antioch as a typical ancient city. In great detail Stark (1991:191-198) describes the daily life (in particular the lives of the non-elite - EJV). They lived in chronic misery, overpopulation, filth, full of diseases and pests. As Stark (1991:198) sums up:

> Any accurate portait of Antioch in New Testament times must despite a city filled with misery, danger, fear, despair, and hatred. Antioch was a city where the average family lived a squalid life in filth and cramped quarters, where at least half of the children died at birth or during infancy, and where most of the children who lived lost at least

one parent before reaching maturity. The city was filled with hatred and fear rooted in intense ethnic antagonisms and exacerbated by a constant stream of strangers.

In this setting, Christianity arose as a revitalization movement (cf Stark 1991:189, 198-205). This movement greatly mitigated the chronic misery and disorder in the cities. The phrase *'For God so loved the world'* came as a puzzling new and even revolutionary idea. Even more revolutionary was the principle that the Christian love and charity (and mercy) extended beyond the boundaries of family and tribe (cf Stark 1991:199).

However, neither the arguments of Meier (1982) nor Stark (1991) are all that conclusive. Could all this (the above arguments in favour of Antioch) not be said about almost any ancient city with both a Hellenistic and a Jewish population? Why should it particularly be Antioch? Kingsbury (1991:261) correctly criticizes Stark saying: 'Indeed, Stark simply presupposes, without demonstrating on the basis of an analysis of the Matthean text, that Matthew's Gospel originated in an urban area in general and in Antioch in particular'. Luz (1985:73-74) accepts the possibility of a Syrian environment (*Raum*) and accepts Antioch as 'not the worst hypothesis' (*nicht die schlechteste Hypothese*), but it is no more than a hypothesis. Says Luz (1985:75): 'Das Matthäusevangelium gibt seinen Entstehungsort nicht preis. Sicher war er eine größere syrische Stadt, deren lingua franca Griechisch war'.

There is a trend to challenge this previous consensus that Antioch was the place of origin of the Gospel (cf Overman 1990:158-159; Segal 1991:19, 26-29; Kingsbury 1991:263-264;[18] Saldarini 1992:661; Stanton 1992a:86, 1992b:380; Garland 1993:3).

Overman (1990:158) accepts as place of origin a Galilean city, for if one takes the struggle with formative Judaism seriously, then a Palestinian provenance is virtually assured. 'Both formative Judaism and its successor, rabbinic Judaism, were Palestinian in origin and provenance. Within Palestine, Galilee is attractive because of the central role it played in early rabbinic Judaism' (Overman 1990:158). Overman indeed realizes that this alone is not sufficient to locate

Matthew in Galilee. He adds to his argument Matthew's '...unusual concentration on Galilee' (Overman 1990:159). The Pharisees who were Jesus' opponents were limited to Galilee. Therefore a Galilean city, either Tiberius or Sepphoris, is suggested by Overman (1990:159) as the most plausible location of the Matthean community.

Critique against the view of Overman (1990) comes from Alan Segal (1991:27). Segal (1991:26; see also Harrington 1991:10) wants to argue that both Galilee *and* Syria should be considered as a single geographical area. This should not be considered from every perspective but '...at least from the point of view of the development of Jewish and Christian hostility'. In this relation Segal (1991:26) continues:

> In the history of earliest Jewish Christianity, the relationship between Galilee and Syria is quite obvious. The Jewish Christian heartland, settled by Jewish Christian refugees from Jerusalem, *was an arc of settlement that included both the Galilee, Jesus' home, and Pella, the destination of the Jerusalem refugees, and then arched into Syria through Antioch and Edessa* (my emphasis).

Segal (1991:27) calls Overman's claims that Galilee should be the location of the Matthean community 'extremely cogent'. However, he continues, '...we cannot exclude the idea that Pharisees wandered further than Galilee proper'. Segal uses Paul as an example of a Pharisee (according to the Christian tradition) who moved beyond Galilee. To further substantiate his view, Segal (1991:27) says:

> Josephus records that Queen Helena and Prince Izates were convinced by a stricter Jew (from Galilee) to undergo circumcision in far-flung Adiabene. The position of this stricter Jew is consistent with Pharisaism, though to be sure it could be called uniquely Pharisaic. *So the religious spectrum of lands outside of Judea can be more mixed than the scholars usually admit* (my emphasis).

Furthermore Segal (1991:27) says: 'The itinerant nature of the disciples that Jesus commissioned in Matthew 10 and 28 *makes unnecessary a strict choice between Galilee or Syria*. These disciples were constantly travelling and were used to being refugees' (my emphasis). Thus both those in support of Antioch and those in support of Galilee as location of the community of Matthew, are in a sense correct. 'Galilee and Antioch were merely two fixed points in a rather loosely confederated group of congregations, united by missionaries who were more or less constantly on the move at first' (Segal 1991:27). The conclusion Segal (1991:29) eventually comes to is:

> Thus, the Matthean community lived in precisely the area that Jesus, while preaching in Capernaum, had called the land of promise. Clearly, this enlarged Galilee, from which Syrian cities like Antioch and Edessa can be considered proselytized satellites, was the centre of Matthew's attention.
>
> Because of the way in which Christian apostles travelled, the Matthean community could have considered Galilee to include virtually everything from the present-day Galilee through to Antioch.

We can accept the widely acclaimed consensus that Matthew originated in an urban environment, although, as we have seen, there is a difference in viewpoint as to which city or cities (cf Luz 1985:74; Edwards 1988:171; Overman 1990:159; Stark 1991:189; White 1991:240; Kingsbury 1991:264; Saldarini 1992:661; Stanton 1992a:50). This could also mean that Matthew addressed a predominantly urban community, comprising predominantly urban non-elite. We do not suspect that there were many members belonging to the community that were part of the governing and retainer classes, although this could not be ruled out entirely (see below for a suggestion on how these groups could have participated in the community). As Stanton (1992b:382) notes, the conflict of Jesus and his followers (as transparency of the Matthean community; cf Luz 1971:152-154; see also 1985:67; Van Aarde 1994b:83) with the Jewish leaders is a central theme of Matthew's Gospel.

4.3.1.2 The composition of the community

Although a predominantly urban environment, the enlarged geographical location suggested by Segal (1991:26-29; see above), opens up the possibility that the community could also comprise other non-elite classes like the rural peasants, the unclean and the expendables. In this regard White (1991:241) says that the Matthean community clearly looks to the Galilean ministry of Jesus for its roots, but Lower Galilee represents a distant place. 'It would appear, then, that the Matthean community looked to the mixed environment - mixed both as Jew-Gentile population and *village-urban society* - of the Syro-Phoenician region as a symbol of its own situation' (White 1991:241; my emphasis). Furthermore there always existed a strong reciprocity between urban and rural environments in ancient societies (cf Edwards 1988:169, 171, 176). The so-called 'spatial organization' of ancient cities may support the suggestion that the Matthean community could have comprised both rural peasants and urban non-elites. Says Rohrbaugh (1991:72): 'The elite...lived at the centre near the temple and the palace, while the poor lived on the periphery. Outcasts lived outside the city along with others whose presence in the city during the day was necessary or tolerated (tanners, prostitutes, beggars, traders), but who were unneeded and unwelcome at night'. We thus conclude that Matthew not only wished to *revitalize* the ancient urban inhabitants, as Stark (1991:190) wishes to argue, but also other under-privi-leged classes. We regard it as possible that the community of Matthew comprised members in and around the city including urban non-elite and the rural peasantry. Thus the Matthean community was consisting of predominantly non-elite. We have to take note of the remark of White (1991:240): 'While none of the major free cities of Lower Galilee are ever mentioned, an urban location for the Matthean community in the outline regions is not precluded. *What is more at issue in Matthew is the growing tension felt by the community over the intrusion of Pharisaic authority into their region so that they were being marginalized'* (my emphasis; see below for a definition of marginality). This community was standing in opposition to the Jewish leaders. The leaders were consisting predominantly of the (ruling) and retainer classes.

The suggestion that the Matthean community consisted of predominantly the urban non-elite and rural peasants, must not be taken up too rigidly as if to

mean that no members of the upper classes could have been part of that community. The mere fact that Matthew eventually became a written document which was to be read (in public), indicates that, at least in as far as the author himself was concerned, he should have been from the retainer class. He probably was a scribe, being able to write (unless he was an educated slave - of which there is no evidence at all). This is confirmed by Duling (1993:662). Thus Matthew himself should have identified himself with the fate and interests of this community and therefore he dedicated his Gospel to them. Matthew is concerned about those from the lower strata (cf Duling 1993:663). We furthermore would imagine that there should also have been some members from the upper classes who were part of the community, identifying with it. In what number and in what relation or capacity they stood towards the community, is difficult to estimate. At least it should have been a few that would have been able to read the Gospel aloud in and to the congregation. It is known that ancient communication, including reading, was an oral, collective activity and not the private, silent experi-ence that we consider it to be. Reading silently was unusual, reading in solitude even more so (cf Botha 1992:207). It is regarded as a fact that the majority of the ancient population were illiterate. This in particular was true of the lower levels of the people. At the level of artisans and farmers, the majority of the males were illiterate. At this social level literate women were also quite unusual (cf Harris 1989:10, 13, 231; Botha 1992:201). Literacy was attached to education and education was the mere privilege of the more wealthy upper classes whose children (and slaves in as much as they needed this education on behalf of their masters) were given the opportunity to be educated (cf Botha 1992:203). How could the community ever understand the Gospel if there were not at least a few members from the upper or retainer classes present, being able to read the Gospel to the congregation?

4.3.1.2 (a) Involuntary marginality

It is likely that the majority of the community could have been members of the lower classes (or, as Duling 1993:644 calls these lower classes: the *involuntary marginalized*; see below). However, there could have been members of the upper classes as well. In fact, Matthew should have been from the retainer class himself

(see above). But, how can these points be joined together? The article of Duling (1993), *Matthew and marginality*, gives us valuable information in this regard.

The work of Gino Germani (1980) called *Marginality*, served as the basis of Duling's (1993) theory. Along with Germani (1980), Duling (1993:664) states that at a descriptive level, '...one can observe certain phenomena typical of urban ecological environments: segregated shantytowns, squatter settlements, poor working conditions, low standard of living, *and the exclusion of such groups from the decision making process* that affects their lives' (my emphasis).[19] Germani's (1980:49) definition of marginality, is cited by Duling (1993:645) as: '...we may define marginality as the lack of participation [exercise of roles] of individuals and groups in those spheres in which, according to determined criteria, they might be expected to participate'. By 'lack of participation' is meant the inability of persons to conform to expected social roles with respect to sex, age, civil life, occupation, and social life in relation to levels of status in a social system. 'These statuses are based on social norms, values, and expectations rooted in law and legitimated by custom' (Duling 1993:645). The marginal person no longer participates in the 'normative scheme', i.e. '...the set of values and norms which define the categories (status), the legitimate, expected, or tolerated areas of participation and the assignment mechanisms of individuals to each category' (Germani 1980:50, cited by Duling 1993:645). Usual 'objective resources', both material and non-material - education, jobs, purchasing power, housing - are not unavailable to marginal persons. But, the 'personal conditions' needed to exercise their social roles are not present (cf Duling 1993:645). This is all in particular true of the unclean, the degraded and the expendables in an advanced agrarian society. Duling calls this *involuntary marginality*. In short this means:

> ...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 centre of society, and thus who experience themselves as personally alienated.*
>
> (Duling 1993:648; my emphasis)

4.3.1.2 (b) Voluntary marginality

Voluntary marginality, we can summarize as follows (cf Duling 1993:646-948, which he derives from the work of Victor Turner 1969):

separation ---▸   liminality/marginality ---▸   reaggregation

In this approach, marginality is seen as part of ritual. There is a common pattern in ritual (cf Duling 1993:646). 'Separation' removes individuals or groups from their accepted statuses or role in a social system - from the centre to the margin. In the transitional ('liminal') phase, the individuals or groups are in limbo. They are 'neither here nor there'. In the third phase, the initiate re-enters the social system as neophyte, often with higher status. The second, or marginal, liminal phase is characterized by *communitas*, a status-less, role-less phase marked by spontaneity, concreteness, intense comradeship, and egalitarianism (cf Duling 1993:646). The principle of *communitas* is further developed. There are three kinds of communitas, as Duling (1993:647) cites Turner (1969:132):

> (1) *existential* or *spontaneous* communitas... (2) *normative* communitas, where, under the influence of time, the need to mobilize and organize resources, and the necessity for social control among the members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existential communitas is organized into a perduring social system; and (3) *ideological* communitas, which is a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies based on existential communitas.

Spontaneous communitas stands apart from social structure. Normative communitas represents an emergent microsocial group *within* a macrosocial system. Ideological communitas presents communitas as *derived* vision. Christian history knows this as the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. Normative communitas is on the way to structure. Ideological communitas is voluntary 'outsiderhood'. It is not socially imposed marginality, but *voluntarily chosen* marginality (cf Duling 1993:647). Thus, as Duling (1993:648) summarizes:

voluntary marginality: individuals or 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. *Though freely chosen, they will eventually share in some of the same conditions as involuntary marginals* (my emphasis).

The lower classes (strata) or involuntary marginals are seen as the interest group of the community of Matthew. Thus we regard the majority of the community as involuntary marginalized. But those in the community that could have been from the higher strata (or classes) of society, whose direct interests does not really lie in the community of the involuntary marginalized, could still identify with the community as *voluntary marginalized*, and through this share the identity of the community with the other marginalized. In this way it is also possible for the author of Matthew, as a 'marginal man', to identify with the community (cf Duling 1993:662). The *marginal man* is defined as '...individuals and groups who, because of birth, migration, conquest, and the like are "doomed" to live in two different, antagonistic cultures without fully belonging to either' (Duling 1993:64-8). The author identifies with the marginalized, and thus, as a member of the retainers, he stands between the two cultures.

This suggestion about the composition of the Matthean community also has implications regarding the identity of the community. To this we now wish to attend.

4.3.2 Early 'Christian'-Jewish relationships

In this section we aim to take the developing conflicting relationship between the early 'Christian'-Matthean community and the Jewish community and leadership into consideration. The aim will be to lay a link between the concepts 'conflict of interests', stratification because of the composition of the Matthean community, and the debate on the Jewish-Christian relation (conflict) of the first century.[20] This information is needed in order to understand our eventual analysis of our test case: the text of Matthew 8 and 9.

4.3.2.1 Matthew in terms of the debate: *intra muros* or *extra muros*

Was the community of Matthew still within or did they stand outside the first century Judaism? The works of Carson (1982:161-163), Van Aarde (1989:223-225) and Stanton (1992a:113-142) give us meaningful access to these issues. Carson (1982:161) argues that (at the time of his article in 1982) there has been a gradual consensus on two points as to the *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's Gospel. Firstly, that the Gospel was written about 85 AD. Secondly, that Matthew's Church is in some kind of dramatic tension with Judaism and synagogue worship. However, '...the precise nature of that tension is *hotly disputed*' (Carson 1982:161; my emphasis). No consensus has yet been reached on the issue of the nature of the tension between Matthew's community and Judaism since Carson's article in 1982, as the work of Stanton (1992a) indicates almost a decade later. Stanton (1992a) is much more comprehensive in dealing with this issue.

Stanton (1992a:114-118) discusses a first group of scholars, representing what he calls *'the traditional view'*. According to this view, Matthew was the most 'Judaic' of all the four canonical Gospels. Matthew was, as Stanton (1992a:114) sums up this view, '...the first Gospel to be written; the evangelist was a disciple of Jesus who wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic for a Palestinian Jewish Christian community.' But, once the Marcan priority is accepted, the main arguments of this view collapse. Furthermore, this view does not really account for the Gentile mission or the numerous passages in the Gospel which reflect tension amongst the Jews (cf Stanton 1992a:116-117).

There are the scholars who see the Gospel of Matthew as representative of some sort of congregation that sees itself as still *within* the context of Judaism: the struggle with Judaism took place *intra muros* (cf Carson 1982:161; Stanton 1992a:118-124). The Gospel of Matthew came into being in an essentially Jewish-Christian community, where the edification of the church independent from Judaism was in progress. Matthew's community had not yet broken its links with Judaism, they were still attached to the Jews (cf Stanton's 1992a:120 summary of the views of Kilpatrick, Bornkamm, Hummel and Davies; see also Van Aarde 1989:223). Of significant importance is the view of Davies (1966:290, 332), which Stanton (1992a:121) reflects, that a reconstruction of Judaism took place at Jamnia following the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The so-called Jamnian period,

70-100 AD, is to be seen as a many sided response to the need for unity and adaptation to changed conditions (cf Stanton 1992a:121). Jamnian Judaism was confronting Christianity, and as a response, Matthew, and in particular Matthew 5-7, may be seen as the Christian answer to Jamnia. Stanton (1992a:122), together with Stendahl, questions whether the Christian answer to Jamnia was as direct as Davies suggested. Therefore Stanton (1992a:122) says that many scholars accept that Matthew should be linked in some way to the Judaism of the Jamnian period, but rejects the notion that the struggle of Matthew's community was with 'the synagogue across the street', thus *intra muros*. The conclusion Stanton (1992a:123-124) comes to in rejecting the *intra muros* view, moving towards an *extra muros* point of view, is:

> This second view rightly stresses that in many ways Matthew's Gospel is thoroughly Jewish, and it rightly accepts that many of the changes which Matthew has made to Mark are related to the circumstances in which Matthew was written. But this approach fails to do justice to some of the most important features of Matthew's Gospel. In particular it ignores or underplays numerous passages (in most of which the evangelist's own hand is evident) which suggest that the Christian communities to whom Matthew is writing are defining themselves over against Judaism and are being encouraged to accept Gentiles freely.

This brings us to a group of scholars who judge Matthew's Gospel to be representative of a form of Jewish-Christianity that has broken away from Judaism, but are still defining themselves over against Judaism. The struggle is therefore *extra muros* (cf Carson 1982:161-162; Stanton 1992a:124-131). Stanton (1992a:124) himself prefers a 'mediating position' between the *intra muros* view, and the view that Matthew himself should have been a Gentile: his community has no link with 'the synagogue across the street'. Both views are seen as too implausible. As Stanton (1992a:124) says:

I am convinced that Matthew's community has parted company with Judaism and that some Gentiles have been accepted. Nearly every pericope of the Gospel reflects rivalry between 'church' and 'synagogue'. Matthew's communities are *extra muros*, but they are still responding in various ways to local synagogues and they still hope ̄ that even if Israel has been rejected by God, individual Jews will be converted.

This view that the separation of Matthew's community from Judaism was completed and that they had already totally withdrawn themselves from the Jewish assembly, is confirmed by a number of scholars, apart from Moule, Stendahl and E Schweizer whom Stanton (1992a:125-126) mentions (see also Doyle 1986:18; Kingsbury 1988a:155; Saldarini 1991:41). Five arguments are presented in support of the *extra muros* view:

(1) The Jewish religious leaders and groups - in particular the scribes and the Pharisees - are consistently placed in a negative light. They are always at odds with Jesus and his disciples, so a 'ruler of the synagogue' cannot be a 'man of faith', and a scribe cannot be a true disciple (cf Stanton 1992a: 128).

(2) Matthew explicitly associates scribes and Pharisees with synagogues. There is a wedge between Jesus and his disciples on the one hand, and the synagogue on the other hand (cf Stanton 1992a:128-129).

(3) 'Over against συναγωγή stands the ἐκκλησία, founded by Jesus himself and promised divine protection (16.18)' (Stanton 1992a:129; see also Duling & Perrin 1994:337). The structures of Matthew's communities are developing quite independently from the synagogue. As he proceeds: 'The ἐκκλησία founded by Jesus continues to have a firm commitment to torah, but it has accepted Gentiles and developed its own patterns of worship and of community life. Its self-understanding is quite distinct from that of the synagogue' (Stanton 1992a:130-131).

(4) There are passages which speak about the 'transference' of the kingdom to a new people who will include the Gentiles. Says Stanton (1992a:131):

'At 8.5-13 Matthew links two Q traditions (Luke 7.1-10 and 13.28-9) in order to state starkly that those born to the kingdom will be replaced by Gentiles (including the Roman centurion whose faith is commended) who sit with the faithful (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven.'[21]

(5) 'At the climax of his story at 28:15 the evangelist addresses his readers directly and refers explicitly to the relationship between synagogue and church in his own day' (Stanton 1992a:131).

With these arguments, summarized above, Stanton (1992a) substantiates the *extra muros* view. To a great extent they are convincing. But, there remains a question as to why the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees really was so intense, if they in any case had no contact anymore? I will return to this later on, as I wish to present my own point of view.

A fourth group of scholars wish to argue that Matthew was not Jewish at all. According to this view, Matthew was intended *for Gentiles not in dispute with the Jews*. In their summaries of this view, Carson (1982:162) and Stanton (1992a:131-139) state that the community was totally separated from Judaism and was neither attacking nor defending itself against any strand of Judaism in the Jamnian period, 70-100 AD. However, and I agree with Stanton (1992a:135), this last view is not really convincing. He presents a whole series of counter arguments, but his last question is the most appealing (in his criticism of Van Tilborg 1972:171):

> Is Matthew's anti-Jewish polemic so strong that we are forced to conclude that the evangelist himself cannot have been a Jew? The strength of Matthew's anti-Pharisaism was one of the reasons why Clark concluded that Matthew was a Gentile. S. van Tilborg has also claimed that the simplest explanation of the strong anti-Jewish currents in the Gospel is that he himself was not a Jew.[22]
>
> (Stanton 1992a:138)

Stanton (1992a:138) is to my mind correct in his comment that ferocious conflict is often a hallmark of a close 'family-like' relationship. On this I wish to elaborate below.

What the summary of Stanton (1992a) above indicates, is that there is no consensus as to what the nature of the tension between Jesus (or the community of Matthew) and the Jews really was. Some of the scholars who 'dare' an own view, run the risk of contradicting themselves. This seems to be true of both Dunn (1991:141, 156) and Stanton (1992a:169). Dunn (1991:141) at first chooses an *extra muros* view: 'And although most agree that Matthew was a *Jewish* Christian, the view is strongly maintained that so far as he was concerned the final breach between church and synagogue had *already* happened.' With a citation of Stanton (1984:278), Dunn (1991:141) substantiates his point of view: 'Matthew sees himself and his community as *extra muros*, outside the walls of Jerusalem: "Matthew's community has recently parted company with Judaism after a period of prolonged hostility." ' However, a few pages further on, Dunn (1991:156) states something totally different:

> In the debate as to whether Matthew is writing *intra muros* or *extra muros*, therefore, the evidence on the whole seems to favour *the former* (thus *intra muros*, and therefore contrary to his previous view - EJV). No doubt Matthew's opponents and the opponents of Matthew's community (the Pharisees and 'their scribes') regard them as 'outsiders', meaning outside the walls of (early rabbinic) Judaism. But Matthew still speaks as an 'insider' and is attempting to portray a Jesus who would be attractive to others who also considered themselves 'insiders'. In other words, once again we seem to find ourselves confronted with the situation where the narrowing channels of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity respectively were still in competition for the head waters flowing from the broad channels of second temple Judaism.

Even Stanton (1992a), although clearly choosing the *extra muros* notion, seems to confuse some terms, which might contradict (or then at least confuse) his own

view. He argued quite in detail that the Gospel was written to a cluster of Christian communities '...which have recently *parted* (thus completed - EJV) company painfully with Judaism' (Stanton 1992a:169; my emphasis). But then in the next rule he states: 'Many of the Gospel's most distinct features are related to the "*parting* (thus still continuing *process* of parting, it seems not yet completed - EJV) of the ways:"... ' (Stanton 1992a:169; my emphasis). In fact, at another place Stanton (1992a:139) explicitly states: 'Matthew's anti-Jewish polemic...*is part of the process* by which Matthew distances himself and his communities from his Pharisaic rivals: the tensions are real, *not a matter of past history*' (my emphasis). Therefore, it seems that a clear picture does not exist, and it remains difficult to really choose between either an *intra* or *extra muros* view. There is little to be said in favour of either the first or the fourth view. However, a decision between the second and third views is more difficult (cf Stanton 1992a:139). My own view is therefore that I doubt that the separation between the community of Matthew and Judaism was yet completed when Matthew wrote his Gospel. We should see the tension as representing something in between an *intra* and *extra muros* situation. The community is still within Judaism and yet they are out as well, or at least *on their way out*.

The community of Matthew was still *very close* to Pharisaic Judaism, a fact which can be confirmed by our conflict theory (see in chapter 3 above: *The functions of social conflict*). This could account for the intenseness of the conflict. As we have seen, the closer the relationship, the more likely it is that the conflict becomes very intense and passionate (cf Coser 1956:69-71).[23]

However, although still within Judaism and in furious conflict with the leaders, the community at the same time was on its way out. I see this as part of a process not yet completed. They are *intra muros*, but on their way to become *extra muros*. They are in the *process of developing* an own identity, which could explain the numerous anti-Jewish passages in the Gospel. Matthew especially developed an own interpretation of the law which was opposite to the Pharisaic interpretation (cf Segal 1991:31). As Segal (1991:32) says: 'Rather the Matthean rejection of Pharisaic Judaism reflects a *growing* social rift between them and the waxing rabbinic leadership' (my emphasis). Therefore, I can go along with Stanton's (1992a:157)[24] proposal for the setting of the community of Matthew.

I, however, want to rephrase his view slightly in favour of my own. As explanation for the intensified anti-Jewish polemics, Stanton (1992a:156) states that the community had recently parted company with Judaism. I would rather say that because they are still *parting* from the Jews, the polemic is real indeed. The evangelist is indeed coming to terms with the trauma of the painful, still ongoing process of separation from Judaism, and with the continuing threat of hostility and even persecution. Matthew's anti-Jewish polemic could be seen as part of the self-definition of the Christian group which is acutely aware of the possible rejection and hostility of its 'mother', Judaism (this is my rephrasing of Stanton's 1992a:157 view). Rather than to say that the Matthean community was alienated from Judaism (cf Stanton 1992a:166), I would suggest that they (the community) are still *alienating* (as a process) themselves from Judaism. This could even to my mind be supported by evidence from developments within the text of Matthew's Gospel itself. Matthew at first depicts Jesus as sending his disciples not to the Gentiles but to the 'lost sheep of Israel' (cf Mt 10:5-6). He still has strong ties with the Jews and still wishes to remain part of them. However, gradually the Gospel develops to end with an explicit sending out to 'make disciples of all nations' (cf Mt 28:19). At first the community was not really ready for an 'open society', opened up towards the Gentiles. But because of the conflict with their own people, the Jews (or rather their leaders), they developed a new more 'open' identity and they gradually turned to the Gentiles for support. But this does not necessarily mean that they had broken ties with the Jews. Does the expression 'all nations' exclude the Jews? Certainly not (cf Stanton 1992a:136-137; see also Van Aarde 1994:81). In this regard White (1991:224-225, n.48) distinguishes between the *nation* (or 'people', τὸ ἔθνος) and *the nations* (i.e. 'Gentiles', τὰ ἔθνη). The final legitimation of the gentile mission is framed in Jewish terms of making disciples of 'all nations' (τὰ ἔθνη). Thus, says White (1991:225): 'It is not as yet a self definition of the church as a "third race." At the very least, then, Matt 21:43 and 28:18-20 seem to reflect a sense of the church as grounded in the identity of *the nation* of Israel, though made up of a mixed population that also included disciples drawn from among the gentile *nations*' (see also Van Aarde 1994b:81 on the universal implications of the concept τὰ ἔθνη).

4.3.2.2 The Matthean community in relationship to *formative Judaism*

Because I see the developing tension between Matthew's community and the Jews as a *process* rather than as a completed separation, we surely have to take note of the debate with regard to the so-called *formative Judaism* (see the work of Neusner 1982, who coined this term). It is especially the work of Overman (1990) that explicitly relates the community of Matthew to *formative Judaism*. Overman (1990:2) views the so-called formative Judaism as one of the most profound influences in the development of Matthew's community. This group was, like the community of Matthew, involved in a process of social construction and definition. They were, like the Matthean community, in the process of *becoming*. Formative Judaism was one of several movements struggling to gain more influence and control in the period 70 AD. Both were emerging movements, involved in a process of self-definition. They had much in common. In fact, they overlap and appear to be similar. 'This is because formative and Matthean Judaism share the same social setting and context' (Overman 1990:3-4).

There were four basic reasons for the attempt of consolidation and legitimation in formative Judaism. These reasons are presented as the features of the society in which the Matthean community developed. We will not go into each feature in depth. The first is the highly sectarian nature of Judaism in the first century. A 'sect' can, as a rule of thumb, be seen as a 'minority' group that split off from what they perceived as the 'parent body' (cf Overman 1990:8; see also Cohen 1984:29; Elliott 1990b:1-2; Stanton 1992a:90). The second is the hostility towards the Jewish leadership (cf Overman 1990:19). Much of the hostility and highly charged rhetoric coming from these sectarian communities was directed towards the Jewish leadership. This is seen as quite normal and widespread, and it is a view shared by Matthew (cf Overman 1990:23, 151). A third feature is the central role the Law takes (cf Overman 1990:23). 'The law as interpreted within these groups emerged in this period as the means by which the sectarian communities legitimated their position and asserted their status as God's true people, in contrast to their opponents' (Overman 1990:29). Fourthly, these sectarian communities saw themselves quite exclusively as the only true covenant people of God (cf Overman 1990:30). Because of these features, a need for consolidation emerged. As Overman (1990:35) says: 'A new religio-cultural

synthesis was now required if Judaism was to survive. This synthesis and the process of its construction and emergence in the post-70 period are referred to as *formative Judaism*.' It was a period and process of reconstruction, re-definition, re-organization, consolidating and obtaining a structure to ensure the ongoing existence of Judaism. It was a process in which Judaism after 70 AD became more and more 'normative' (cf Wild 1985:123; Kee 1990:15), although they still were not 'normative'. It was a long process that took several hundred years (cf Overman 1990:37). This process was in all probability set in motion by the so-called council of Yavneh (Jamnia). It was a process in which the Pharisees, as main opponents of Matthew's Gospel, played a quite significant role.

4.3.2.3 Yavneh and its symbolic role

The so-called council of Yavneh is viewed by Overman (1990:38) as the most significant event in the institutional development of Judaism in the period after 70 AD. He says: 'Yavneh has been viewed as a watershed in the history of Judaism in that it established the rabbis as the authoritative body and marked the emergence of rabbinic Judaism as the normative form of Judaism' (Overman 1990:38; see also Duling & Perrin 1994:336, who see the conflict between Jesus and the leaders as a conflict with 'Yavneh-inspired Pharisaism'). The reason might be that there was devastation after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, and that some sort of consolidation among the Jews was needed. As Cohen (1984:45) indicates, the temple lost its prime focal point of Jewish sectarianism after its destruction. 'For most Jews...sectarian self-definition ceased to make sense after 70. The holiness of the Jerusalem temple, the legitimacy of its priesthood, and the propriety of its rituals were no longer relevant issues' (Cohen 1984:45). The temple and its priesthood and institutions, to most of the sectarian movements no longer existed as the 'parent body' against which they protested. 'A sect needs an evil reality against which to protest, rail and define itself' (Cohen 1984:46). Therefore, Yavneh had as its aim the forging of some unified coalition within Judaism (see also Harrington 1991:14-15). To Cohen (1984:28) it was an attempt to end Jewish sectarianism. Whether this attempt was successful, remains debatable. The mere existence of, for example, the community of Matthew, makes us doubt this. Furthermore, what the *real* effect of Jamnia was,

remains an open case. That it had a strong symbolic meaning as legendary symbol of the *beginning* of the task of social reconstruction in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem is probable (cf Overman 1990:41). I agree with Overman (1990:43):

> For now the most we can say about Yavneh is that it symbolizes the beginning of the end of sectarianism, and the initial efforts at forging a new coalition to perpetuate and reshape Judaism in the wake of the tragedy of 70. At the level of myth the symbolic import of Yavneh, as retold by successive rabbis, confirms them as the carriers of authority and legitimates them as the institution which would provide for learning and atonement henceforth.

It is likely that Matthew and his community knew of this symbolic meaning attached to Jamnia, but that they challenged its legitimacy, and that this amongst everything else was at the base of the conflict with the Pharisees. They challenged the interests of this group (still from within the Jewish ranks - see above) that tried to establish some unity among the Jews. Although there are no direct indications as to whether there was a link between the Jamnian rabbis and the Pharisees, it is likely to have been the case. The only reason Cohen (1984:36, 38) sees as to why the rabbis did not regard themselves as Pharisees or as their descendants, was because they were not interested in publicizing this fact, since they (the rabbis) had a low interest in the post-biblical history. This, however is not really convincing. The assumption of Segal (1991:36) is more convincing and applicable:

> Matthew's hostility to the Pharisees appears to correspond to the period in which the Pharisees were becoming rabbis - that is, extending their ascribed authority more widely through Galilee and Syria. That is a rather important perception, which we cannot get from the rabbinic evidence at all. Nor do we know exactly how their respect among the people grew.[25] But it is crucial for understanding Jewish history. The synagogue adopted rabbinic authority out of respect for the rabbis' piety and power; they appear to have spurned

the Matthean version of Torah interpretation, based on Jesus' principles.

This remark of Segal (1991:36) along with Neusner's (1987) reading of Josephus' *Antiquities*, confirms the likeability of the link between Jamnia and the Pharisees (see also Harrington 1991:14-15). This also establishes our suggestion that there was a conflict of interests, even in 'political' terms between Matthew's community and the Pharisees, as prime grouping at Jamnia.

> In Palestine in the twenty years from A.D. 70 to 90, the Pharisees, who had survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 70, had established themselves as the *dominant group*. Led by Yohanan ben Zakkai, they had created a Jewish administration at the coastal town of Yavneh. This administration had assumed those powers of self-government left in Jewish hands by the Roman regime. By A.D. 90, the head of the Yavnean government, Gamaliel II, grandson of the Gamaliel mentioned as the Pharisee in the Temple council in Acts 5:34 and son of Simeon ben Gamaliel, who was alluded to in Josephus' *Life* as a leader of the Jerusalem government in A.D. 66, had negotiated with the Roman government for recognition as head of the Palestinian Jewry. *The basis for settlement was the Yavneans' agreement to oppose subversion of Roman rule in exchange for Roman support of the Yavneans' control over the Jews....The Yavnean authorities, called rabbis - whence 'rabbinic Judaism' - thus continued the Pharisaic political and foreign polities initiated at the end of Maccabean times. Now, however, the Pharisees met with no competition* (my emphasis).
>
> Neusner (1987:280; see also Saldarini 1988a:114, 119; Pantle-Schieber 1989:153)

This brings me to a logical assumption, along with Overman (1990:35), namely that the Pharisees were well positioned for the events of 70 AD and thereafter, especially within formative Judaism and in the conflict with the community of

Matthew. As Overman (1990:37) says: 'There is then a strong Pharisaic element in the synthesis of post-70 formative Judaism.'

4.3.2.4 The Pharisees as part of the retainer class in the period of *formative Judaism*

In the period after 70 AD the Pharisees established themselves as a growing and rising power. As the Romans took over the destroyed country, they found the Pharisees relatively untouched by the revolt, probably because the Pharisees, in the pre-70 period withdrew from politics (cf Neusner 1973; Wild 1985:107; Segal 1991:27; Van Aarde 1993b:539-540). After 70 AD, however, their role changed remarkably. They never were enthusiastic about the revolution, and therefore managed to survive the devastation. The Pharisees were determined to take political leadership and, as Wild (1985:108) says when he cites Neusner (1973:146-147): '...to strike an agreement with the Romans: "The Pharisaic party would keep the country peaceful, and the Romans would leave internal matters in the hands of the party".' The Pharisees were the ideal candidates to take over the role of the retainers of the Roman Empire (the ruler and governing classes) in Galilee and beyond to Syria (cf Segal 1991:27; see the theory of Segal 1991:19, as described above, on the arc of territory as setting for the community of Matthew). The role of the Pharisees as retainers is confirmed by Saldarini (1988a:39-40, 1988b:200; see also White 1991:221) as he says: 'The Pharisees fit best into the retainer class as a religious group and a *political force which inter-acted with the governing class,* often influenced society and sometimes gained power' (my emphasis). As such, they did not have direct political power, but nevertheless acted as a political interest group protecting the interests of the rulers, and by influencing people, they gained importance (cf Saldarini 1988a:106; 1988b:203). A citation of Saldarini (1988b:204) is again applicable here: 'Whatever influence they achieved, they usually achieved with the help of a powerful patron, and they entered into coalition with other groups among the upper classes in order to gain influence and move those who had power.'

In short, we hold the assumption that the Pharisees emerged as the most dominant and leading faction within first century Judaism, *acting as retainers of*

the Roman Empire. This view is confirmed by Josephus (cf Rivkin 1978:31-75; Saldarini 1988a:133; Dunn 1988:269; Overman 1990:14).

There indeed exists great doubt as to whether the Pharisees really were the dominant group in formative Judaism, acting as the retainers of the Roman Empire. Neusner (1987:290) dismisses the claim that the Pharisees were politically active in pre-70 AD Palestinian Judaism. He views the presumed political activity of the pre-70 AD Pharisees as mere post-70 propaganda. But this still leaves open the possibility that they could have been politically active as retainers *after* 70 AD, although this can also be viewed as mere Josephian propaganda, and thus unreliable according to Neusner (1982:73-74; see also Schwartz 1983:170). Even if this view could have been confirmed with evidence from the Gospels, Culbertson (1982:549) dismisses this evidence as 'subjective, incomplete and caricatured'. Even so, although I would agree that the evidence is slim and subjective, and presents itself as propaganda (and built on secondary sources), some element of truth could be present. It certainly matches the historical setting as White (1991:236-237, 241) describes it. White (1991:236) says that during the revolt, much of Galilee, especially the larger cities, capitulated very quickly, and the entire region was pacified by the end of 67 AD. When the war ended in 70 AD, the provincial status of Judea was upgraded and it was placed under its own Roman *legatus*. In the north, much of the territory of Agrippa II was returned to him with the additional territories in Syria as a reward for his loyalty. As White (1991:236) continues:

> On the death of Agrippa II (ca. 92-93) his domain reverted to the Province of Syria, thus producing the peculiar boundaries that existed down to the time of the Second Revolt....It also appears that a portion of the northern expansion of Galilee achieved under Agrippa I was ceded once again to Phoenicia (Syria). With this new provincial status, the political boundaries for the Jewish population of Galilee, the Transjordan and the Syro-Phoenician cities were once again subject to administrative change, while culturally there was a lively exchange.

It is in this era of administrative reorganization that one should look for keys to the crisis behind Matthew's Gospel, since the issues of taxation and political boundaries were changed sharply.

White (1991:237) is convinced that the breakup of the kingdom of Agrippa II was a time of massive administrative changes. 'The loss of a "Jewish" monarch in these regions meant there was now a greater vacuum for those Jewish (and Christian) communities living outside the borders of the homeland. It is also possible to see it as occasion for the expansion of new lines of religious (and political - EJV) authority associated with the consolidation of the rabbinic academy in the Yavnean period (from ca. 90-120 C.E.)' (White 1991:237). The administrative vacuum created by the decline of the Jewish monarch, could to my mind have easily been filled by the Pharisees as retainers. What the criticism above makes us aware of is not to generalize too much on the role of the Pharisees overall, for as Dunn (1988:269) makes us aware of, the Pharisees were among themselves divided. Therefore I agree with White (1991:241) that the conflict between Matthew's community and the Pharisees was very much a local issue, rather than a conflict in general terms between the Jews and the Christians.

Whereas it remains difficult to find much detail on the role of the Pharisees overall as retainers, and thus on their administrative and political functions, as far as *Matthew is concerned,* these functions were perceived as acute in the local environment. Although it might be argued that the Pharisees overall may have had a minor political and administrative function, Matthew seem to have experienced these roles as major. This is the bottom line of the argument of Overman (1990:156). The Pharisees, as part of the Jewish leadership, were constituted by formative Judaism, as they were the most powerful body in Matthew's world. Each of the synoptic gospels, the Gospel of John and Acts, contains incidents, conversations and confrontations involving the Pharisees. Matthew contains the most data in this regard and is at the same time the most hostile (cf Rivkin 1978:79). Pharisaic Judaism was the dominant form of Judaism at the time of the First Gospel (cf Pantle-Schieber 1989:153; see also Donaldson 1990:30). This rests on an assumption, very generally agreed upon, that the Gospel received its final form in the years following the destruction of Jerusalem, and probably around

85-90, the period of Jamnia and the effective assumption or imposition of Pharisaic Judaism as the norm (cf Doyle 1986:18). The story of Matthew reflects the experience of Matthew's community, who increasingly experienced this hostility (cf White 1991:238). This assumption can find support in the text of Matthew itself (apart of course from our own effort to find support in the chapter below on Matthew 8 & 9). The Pharisees, as part of the leadership, were held responsible for the arrest, trial, execution and death of Jesus. A deliberate attempt is made by Matthew to blame the leadership. The blame is removed from Pilate by means of the stories of his wife's dream warning him to have no part in this trial (27:18-19) and his symbolic washing of hands in public (27:62-66) and by the story of the guards being bribed to report that Jesus' body had been stolen (28:11-15).[26] Matthew reports the Jewish leaders to be deliberately accepting responsibility for Jesus' death (cf Kee 1990:22). This confirms the emerging antagonism between the community and the Pharisees (Jewish leadership), accepted by Matthew as the dominant authoritative group. They were the most constant opposition. They were active in the Jerusalem leadership as they challenged Jesus' authority as a religious and social leader by assaulting its sources (9:32-34; 12:22-30) and arguing with Jesus about divorce (19:3-9). They are attacked by Jesus in a series of parables in chapters 21-22; they plot against Jesus in 21:45-46. It is a lawyer of the Pharisees who asks the last hostile question at the trial (22:34-35) and they join forces with the chief priest in asking for a guard for Jesus' tomb (27:62-65; cf Saldarini 1988a:167-168).

Furthermore, Matthew's Pharisees were in dispute with Jesus about the importance of food rules (9:6-13; 9:14-17). They also were concerned with the source of Jesus' power in the two miracle stories of the healing of a dumb demoniac (9:32-34; 12:22-30). The closer Jesus gets to his trial and crucifixion, the more hostile the Pharisees become, and the 'closer' the relation with the alliances they made, indicating the increasing political and retaining role the Pharisees of Matthew are taking on them as the retainers of the ruling classes. This role is thus sharpened by Matthew. As Saldarini (1988a:169) says:

> But, as Jesus enters Judea (ch.19), the Pharisees explicitly test Jesus
> and *take a more aggressive stance towards him by plotting and*

making alliances with others....The increased hostility of the chief priests (as part of the ruling classes - EJV) and the Pharisees is met, in chs. 21 and 22, with a series of parables attacking them for not believing in Jesus....While Jesus is in Jerusalem, the chief priests are the constant centre of political opposition to Jesus and the other groups of leaders are *allied* with them at different times (my emphasis).

It thus seems possible that the Pharisees filled the political and administrative (retaining) vacuum left by the revolt of 66-70 AD. They never (or seldom) had direct political power, but acted in and on behalf of the rulers and governing classes, and thus served the interests of the rulers. Their function could have been to keep the country peaceful. As a consequence, put in terms of our previous developed conflict theory, because they served the interests of the rulers, they thus functioned to retain the *status quo*. We have already seen that the prime function of the retainers, and thus of the Pharisees, was service to the rulers. Their interests and identity was taken up in the upper layers of society. Thus, any form of perceived challenge to their function as retainers, and any form of perceived opposition to change their ideology, as well as any perceived opposition to the *status quo*, could have led to serious conflict. Whether the opposition against them and their function was religious or political, it was a source of conflict. Matthew indeed challenged the Pharisees, and thus awoke their hostility. He served, as 'marginalized man', the interests of the involuntary marginalized as himself voluntary marginalized. Through this, he and the community thus challenged the interests of the Pharisees (as being part of the upper classes), and challenged them to change their ideologies too (see below). But Matthew also served another interest group, with another growing identity, which furthermore heightened the emerging conflict. To this we now turn.

4.3.3 Group boundaries and self-definition[27]

4.3.3.1 The conflict from the side of the Jewish leaders

This section cannot be seen in isolation from the previous. In the previous section we primarily dealt with the possible reasons why the Pharisees could have perceived the community of Matthew as a threat. The leaders of the Matthean community, while identifying themselves with Jesus who had done the same as they (presumably) did, turned to the quasi-group, i.e. the lowest classes (with suppressed interests) of society (see above in chapter 3 on *What are the units of conflict*, for a discussion of these concepts). In doing this, whether they had the intention to group them into an interest group or not, it was likely that they (or the Jesus of Matthew as transparency of their community) would have got into confrontation with the religious leaders, who were seeking authority and privilege from the Roman occupants of the time. This gesture threatened their position to gain influence from Rome and to receive support from the common people. Their support came from the same quasi-group as the Matthean community. The Jewish leaders sought support in their efforts to gain power. The Matthean community, in following Jesus, supported the interests of the weak and the underprivileged, who were in an extremely bad situation in a typical agrarian society. Both were part of the Jewish community, but the Jewish 'establishment' tried to maintain their position of authority (both religiously and politically) and advance their position with the Roman authorities. The leaders of the Matthean community (and Jesus) took the interests of the weak and gained influence under the weak and the poor, being able to strengthen their own position after all as well. They had to survive as interest group of 'Jesus-believers' who supported the interests on behalf of the weak.

The Matthean community seems to be the interest group that supported the interests of the 'Jesus-believers' and because Jesus set an example of turning to the marginalized, they probably were at the same time the interest group supporting the quasi-group: the lowest classes of the society. In fact, one could say, the community of Matthew seems to have been the interest group of the lower classes in society. This is how they could have seen their own identity.

There thus was, among everything else, a struggle for authority over the common people, the peasantry (see also Saldarini 1991:45). This involved that the conflict was further intensified, for they wished to gain control and support of the peasantry. The ruling classes, in their internal struggles, as Lenski (1966:241) says, often had to turn to the lower classes (the common people) '...as a counterforce with a well-entrenched and united nobility.' Lenski (1966:241 n.201) uses examples from Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's *The Republic* to illustrate the tendency of certain rulers, to ally themselves with the common people in opposition to the governing classes. Similarly the Roman emperors often allied themselves with the urban masses in their struggle with the senatorial class. In the interest of the Roman Empire, it could have been to the benefit of the rulers if the Pharisees, as they served the rulers as their retainers, did the same. The Pharisees (the dominant group among the Jewish leaders in Matthew's view) had to recruit new members (or at least new supporters) to survive (see also Saldarini 1991:54), because they had no sufficient power as retainers to remain in power without the support of both the rulers (upwards) and the peasantry (downwards). The community of Matthew also had to recruit new members, and this intensified the conflict with the Pharisees who did the same.

On the issue of the recruiting of new members (or supporters), we have to make a few remarks. Stark (1986:314) says that the Jews themselves did not convert (others) in substantial numbers. However, I do not want to rule out this possibility. We have already argued that both the Pharisaic Judaism and the Matthean community were to be seen as *formative* groups. I could only imagine that new groups in the process of formation need new members (or at least support). Says Duling (1992:106): 'Thus, like the Pharisees, the Matthew group is not simply a group, but moving towards a corporation.' A corporate group is defined by Malina (1988a:29; see also Duling 1992:104-105) as '...a collection of people forming a corporate body with permanent existence, *recruited* on recognized principles' (my emphasis). We therefore may assume that an element of recruiting was present, and that the two groups were likely to have 'shot among each other's doves'. The Jews, as far as Stark (1986:314,320) is concerned, were, despite the Gentile mission, still the major source of Christian converts until as late as the fourth century. We, however, have to realize that recruiting never

.was the *source* (or cause) of conflict. It could have merely *intensified* the existing conflict.

But, 'it takes two to tango'. We also have to view the conflict from the side of the community of Matthew.

4.3.3.2 The conflict from the side of the Matthean community

In the process the Jewish leadership emerged as the controlling body in Matthew's setting. Their (the Matthean community's) experience and perception as a minority group, being the 'underdogs', grew. They felt persecuted and constituted the minority in their competition with formative Judaism. As Overman (1990:147, see also 154, 160) says: 'The strong emotions and the sweeping manner in which the Jewish leadership is attacked and rejected by Matthew suggest a current and hotly contested struggle which the Matthean community seems losing. Matthew's accusatory language and name-calling indicate the position of power the Jewish leadership holds as well as the status of the Matthean community as *minority or underdogs* in this struggle' (my emphasis). This view is confirmed by Saldarini (1991:49-50); White (1991:241) and Stanton (1992a:167, 1992b:386). Matthew describes the threat of and competition they had with this dominant group in real and threatening terms in the whole Gospel, beginning in chapters 8 and 9 (9:34), but in chapter 23 in particular. These terms are the response of a community struggling to survive, and is an answer to the competition and the conflict they are experiencing. It is in response to a threat that the community faced, namely, formative Judaism which was developing and gaining the upper hand in the Matthean setting (see also White 1991:241). The conflict between the community of Matthew and formative Judaism, forced the community to redefine there own identity. 'In their competition with one another they were forced to develop and change' (Overman 1990:161). This new emerging (changing from the parent body) identity is confirmed by a previously taken view that social conflict always causes change on a wide variety of levels, especially on an ideological level. The conflict caused the community to accept newly ascribed values and ideologies.

Because the community experienced themselves to be 'marginalized', they could easily identify themselves with the truly 'marginalized'. They through this

could have given themselves the identity of a group taking up the interests of the underprivileged in order to grow and survive. They still identified with the Jewish values, in fact, as argued earlier, they still regarded themselves as Jews (and they were Jews). However, they developed their own newly interpreted values, because in their community there still (as in any other community) remained an urge to legitimize their own position (see below). I agree with Saldarini (1991:57) that because of the conflict and the resultant differentiation, the members of Matthew's community find their core identity and their 'master status' in being believers-in-Jesus.[28] 'All other aspects of their Jewish life and world view are filtered through this central commitment which has alienated them from many fellow Jews and coloured all their activities and relationships' (Saldarini 1991:57). All symbols became subordinate to the central symbol of faith: the Christ. The supreme norm for the life well-pleasing to God, no longer was the Torah, but Jesus (cf Hare 1967:5).[29] However, because of a previously taken stance that the community still was within Judaism, developing a new identity and in the process of departing, I do not entirely agree with Saldarini (1991:57) as he says: 'In the next generation this "master status" would crystallize in a Christian identity and lead them to drop their Jewish identity. Thus Matthew's Gospel entered the mainstream of non-Jewish, second-century Christian church.' This might be true of a generation after Matthew, but not yet of Matthew. They were indeed at the beginning of the process of separation, but certainly not in the 'non-Jewish church' yet. Saldarini (1991), however, seems to rectify this view in the same article, which comes closer to the view I have myself. He says that the late first-century Matthean community had such close relations with the Jewish community that it had probably been a reformist movement that became a sect in response to the rejection of its programme for the reform of Judaism (cf Saldarini 1991:59; see also Stanton 1992a:93, 94, 96, 166). Matthew is developing a new community, and moving towards a new community organization which Saldarini (1991:59-60) describes as:
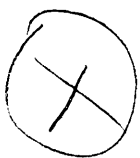
> First, it is still residually reformist and millenarian/revolutionist. Second, it has de-emphasized the thaumaturgical. The final commission to the disciples is to preach, teach, and baptize (28:19-20), not

exorcise and heal (contrast 10:7-8).[30] Third, Matthew's emphasis on bringing non-Jews into the community (28:19) and on the integrity of his own community...suggests that the community is *moving* towards a conversionist orientation that seeks to bring a mixed group of people into the community (21:43). For the author, that new community is still Jewish and will still adhere to the bulk of Jewish law and custom. The author still has a waning hope that the other Jews will join him....(The community - EJV) is *beginning* to create a new community withdrawn from Judaism and the empire as well (my emphasis).

In their search for a new identity, they developed their own new set of values and ideologies to serve their own interests.[31] Every community has the urge to legitimize its own existence by an own set of values and ideologies (cf Overman 1990:62-63; also see above in chapter 3 on *Goals*).[32] One way of legitimizing a movement's existence is by what Overman (1990:62) calls the 'traditionalising' of a new movement. Being traditional makes a movement accepted and legitimate. The movement must be identified with a greater, more established and traditional authority (cf Overman 1990:63). Overman (1990:74-78) is correct in his view that the so-called fulfilment citations (Mt 1:22; 2:5,15,17,23; 3:3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9) are an attempt by Matthew to traditionalize his movement/community. More than half of the fulfilment citations are related to the narratives of the birth of Jesus, by this giving credibility to the birth of Jesus and to the community as well. As Overman (1990:78) says: 'The life of the Matthean community is in continuity with the Scripture, promises, and traditions of the history of Israel.'

Another way to legitimize a movement, which was particularly important in the post 70 AD period, was to present the community and its leaders as the true interpreters of the law (cf Overman 1990:68-71). In this regard Overman says (1990:79): 'What is most characteristic about the Matthean conflict stories is that these stories portray Jesus as an accurate and true interpreter of the law....Matthew, through his reworking of these traditions, justifies his community's interpretation and application of the law over against the accusations offered by

the opponents.' Overman (1990:79-89) focuses on three conflict stories to support his view: (1) the Sabbath controversy (Mt 12:1-8); (2) Matthew 15:1-20 on the issue of ritual purity, and (3) the debate about the so-called love command (Mt 22:34-40). Since I will in the next chapter concentrate on the conflict in the miracle stories, I am not going into this issue any deeper (see also Saldarini 1991:41,48,49 on the issue of Matthew as 'true' interpreter of the law). Matthew emphasizes the importance of the law and Jewish traditions, but rearranged and reweighed them. For example, on the issue of tithing, he affirms this practice, but puts the emphasis on 'the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith' (Mt 23:23; see also Mt 9:13; cf Overman 1990:93, 95; Saldarini 1991:49, 52). New emphasis is also given to forgiveness (Mt 9:2, 6; see our discussion below on *Mt 9:2-8*).

A last short remark must be made regarding the boundaries of the community. The boundaries are more open and the membership requirements have been modified. This is confirmed by Matthew 9:10 (see below). I agree with Saldarini (1991:51) that though the community of Matthew is very Jewish in tradition, thought and practice, it has in principle opened its boundaries to non-Jews. I differ on this one remark from him when he says: 'He (Matthew - EJV) does not declare himself a new or true, *nor does he give his community a new name over against Israel*. That will be left to the next generation' (Saldarini 1991:51; my emphasis). What about the reference to the community as ἐκκλησία, referring to a more inclusive community, against the term συναγωγή, which referred to the more exclusive Jewish community (cf Van Aarde 1990:262; see also Duling & Perrin 1994:337)? Could this not be a new 'name'? In the least it is a new concept referring to the Matthean community.

Nevertheless, Saldarini (1991:51) continues: 'Rather, prompted by the inclusion of Gentiles and marginal groups such as poor, sick, and outcasts, and influences by biblical passages that are inclusive of these groups, Matthew constantly defends the Gentiles' right to faith in and salvation from Jesus.' The Gospel of Matthew, by the conflict it was involved in, changed its values and ideologies so as to include the non-Jews and marginalized. Through this he created a new identity: that of a community continually taking up the interests of

the outcasts, to the example of Jesus as their 'master status' (see the discussion of the text of Mt 8 & 9).

4.4 SUMMARY CONCLUSION

We now have to tie the knots. In a highly stratified society such as an advanced agrarian society (which the community of Matthew is part of), it is likely that there would exist different interest groups. As part of the upper classes we find the urban elite (the rulers and the governing classes). They possessed and ruled over most of the surplus and scarce resources (including authority). The retainers, also regarded as upper class, functioned in a retaining and supportive role in relation to the rulers. Downwards, the lower classes (or involuntary marginalized according to Duling 1993:644) comprised the urban non-elite, the degraded, unclean and degraded class and the rural peasantry. They had little or none of the surplus or scarce resources, least of all: authority. This section gave us important background information in order to identify the different conflicting interest groups in agrarian societies.

The implications of the geographical setting in relationship to the social stratification in advanced agrarian societies, have been investigated. The widely acclaimed consensus that Antioch was the place of origin of Matthew's Gospel was challenged. The alternative to claim Galilee as the (sole) place of origin, was also challenged. Following Segal (1991:26), we rather see Galilee *and* Syria as the area of its origin. It is seen as an arc of settlements that include both Galilee and Syria. It is an area from Galilee that arched through Antioch and Edessa into Syria.

It is widely acclaimed that Matthew originated in a predominantly urban environment, directed to a community of predominantly urban non-elite. But the enlarged geographical location suggested by Segal (1991:26), opens up the possibility that the community could also have comprised other (enlarged) non-elite classes. This is confirmed by the concept of *involuntary marginality* of Duling (1993:644). We suggest that the community was a mixed community of not only Jews and Gentiles, but also of urban non-elite *and* rural peasantry (including also the unclean, degraded and the expendables). In the words of Stark (1991:109), Matthew did not only by his Gospel 'revitalize' the urban non-elite in their miserable conditions, but also the other marginalized. But, as we have seen there

could have been a few members from the upper classes present in the community as well (such as the author himself), without having their direct (class) interests reflected in the community. They are identified as *voluntary marginalized*. They could identify with the involuntary marginalized because of the phenomenon of voluntary marginality. The implications of this phenomenon are that the leaders of the community (who in their own right could be seen as retainers) are encouraged by the author to also opt for voluntary marginality.

There is wide consensus that there was tension between the Matthean church and the synagogue. The nature of this tension is disputed. A choice had to be made between the traditional view, an *intra muros*, or *extra muros* stance, or the community as a totally Gentile one. We preferred a view somewhere in between the *intra* and *extra muros* position of the community. The community was still part of Judaism, but they were on their way out. They retained their close ties with Judaism, but were in the process of going out. They were in the process of being alienated from the Jews. This explains the intense and passion-ate conflict.

The major opponents depicted in the Gospel of Matthew were the Pharisees. They emerged as the most dominant group in the post 70 AD period. Whether this was historically the case can be challenged, but as far as Matthew is concerned, there is no doubt about this. They were well established after the war and filled the administrative and political vacuum left by the war. They gained the power and authority, if not in the whole of Palestine, then at least in Galilee and Syro-Phoenicia, the area in which the Gospel of Matthew probably originated and 'operated' as well. The Pharisees were likely to be the dominant group within formative Judaism that emerged at Jamnia. This *formative Judaism* had a most profound influence on the development of the community of Matthew. There was an deliberate attempt to reconcile and unify the different Jewish sects, which was set in motion by Jamnia and of which Jamnia was the symbol. Matthew should have known this, but he (or at least his community) challenged the legitimacy of Jamnia. Not that the community did not want to be part of the Jews any more. They regarded themselves as still being part of Judaism. But because of their own marginalized position, they found a new 'master status', i.e. believing in Jesus

(who became the symbol of their position). They thus inevitably differed from the 'parent body'.

From the side of the Jamnian academy and the Pharisees as prime adversaries in Matthew 8 and 9, this could be viewed as a challenge to traditional values. Any challenge to the attempted unification could have raised conflict, as we suggest happened in the society in which Matthew originated. In continuation of Jamnia, the Pharisees emerged as the retainers of the ruling Roman Empire. The Pharisees, in the role of retainers, had to maintain the *status quo* in favour of the Roman rulers. No form of perceived opposition to them could be tolerated and would be met with serious counter opposition and accusations. They could have been threatened in their role as the retainers by the community of Matthew, because the latter challenged the authority they had. Evidence of this is to be found in the whole Gospel, and Matthew 8 and 9 in particular.

In order to survive, both the Synagogue and the community of Matthew had to recruit new members to support their positions. This could have further intensified the conflict. We have to realize that the recruiting of members or support was not a cause of conflict. It merely *intensified* the existing conflict. Some research still has to be done on this issue. The last word has not been spoken.

In a predominantly urban environment, Matthew's community was likely to recruit new members from the urban non-elite and the peasantry. In fact, it seems likely that his community acted on behalf of the 'marginalized', they took on the interests of the 'underdogs' and acted as interest group for the lower classes of the society. This is likely because they themselves in their conflict with the Jewish leadership experienced themselves to be the 'underdogs'. They seemed to have lost ground among the leaders and consequently to the Jews in the era of formative Judaism as well. Thus they were forced to rethink and rearrange their values and ideologies to suit the new changing situation. They still very strongly identified with traditional values, but reinterpreted them to lay more emphasis on justice, mercy and forgiveness. Because these were also the values of the Pharisees, as we will later see, they challenged the leaders for not 'putting their money where their mouths were'. In this process of rearranging and rethinking they were, in fact, in a process of departing from Judaism. Because they were in the *process*

of departing, the conflict between them and the Jewish leaders was very intense and the accusations extremely crude.

Thus, we can explicate the conflict of interests as follows: the Pharisees represented the interest group which bargained to retain the *status quo* in their own and in the interests of the ruler and governing classes with which they were in coalition. They had the authority, and it was to remain that way. The community of Matthew represented the interests of the lower classes, in constant threat of the Jewish leaders. They bargained for *change* in terms of values, norms and for control themselves. This was a cause for apparent and inevitable conflict. The Pharisees represented the upper, and the Matthean community the lower classes. They had no authority, but claimed that they had. This is how their interests clashed.

This is but a suggestion. It, in fact, still has to be tested. The critique of Kingsbury (1991:268) seems to be that the different suggestions as to what the community of Matthew should look like, has a slim textual base. He says: 'A final matter to which biblical social historians will want to attend as they advance their reconstructions of Matthew's community has to do with *reading the text of Matthew's Gospel itself*' (Kingsbury 1991:268; my emphasis). This is what I will attempt to do in the following chapter. Matthew 8 and 9 will be carefully read as a test case for the above developed suggestion of the conflict between the Jewish leaders and Matthew's community.

ENDNOTES

1. We take note of the distinction Stanton (1992a:50-51, 1992b:379) makes between the *'community'* and the *'communities'* of Matthew. Stanton (1992a:51) asks (suggesting that there is more than one Matthean community): 'Is it not much more likely that Matthew, like Luke, envisaged that his Gospel would circulate widely? If so, then it is no surprise to find that his criticism of his readers are severe but imprecise'. We do take this as a likely possibility, especially because of the enlarged geographical location as suggested by Segal (1991:26-29). We accept that there might have been more than one community or congregation to whom Matthew had written his Gospel. This could explain the often different (even conflicting) themes present in the Gospel (cf Stanton 1992a:46). However, for the purposes of this study, we will refer to the community of Matthew in the singular, accepting the possibility that it could as well be more than one.

2. Part of the privileged elements in agrarian societies were the leaders of the organized religions, the *priestly classes*. This was a variable class (cf Lenski 1966:256). Depending on the specific society, they had the support of the governing classes in return for some spiritual gratitude. Since only the political elite was capable of bestowing land and other forms of wealth, it was in their own interest to have some political involvement. In exchange the governing class could use their services as

administrators, officials such as diplomats, educators and even military leaders and sometimes, in the pacification, civilization and subjugation of the primitive people (cf Lenski 1966:260). The support of the political elite was valuable in another sense as well: Few members of the priestly class did not seek to honour God with splendid temples, statues and works of art. But these were costly and in this the political elite were able to supply (cf Lenski 1966:261).

This is, however, not the whole story of the priestly class. Variability as being one of the characteristic features of this class, implies that they were *not always there only* for the benefit of the political elites or the privileged in society. Though they, on many occasions contributed to the stability of the system by legitimizing the ruler of the political elite, there is another, very important side of this class to be recognized very clearly:

> On many occasions, especially in the Judaic-Christian tradition, though not there alone, *the priestly class opposed tyranny and injustice and supported the needs and the interests of the weaker elements in society.* For example, though the Christian tradition provided an ideological undergirding of the *status quo*, it also provided an ideological basis for such revolutionary movements as the Peasants' Revolt of the fourteenth century in England.

> (Lenski 1966:263; my emphasis)

This phenomenon could explain the potential presence of conflict, even among the priestly class (or the religious leaders), especially between those who might serve different interests: those who serve the interests of the privileged and those who serve the interests of the weaker classes: the peasant, the artisan, the unclean and degraded, and the expendable classes.

There is no evidence from the Gospel of Matthew as to where we should place John the Baptist. If we take the evidence from Luke 1:5 that the father of John the Baptist was Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah, it could suggest that John (and his father) belonged to the priestly class, thus to the upper layer of society.

3. Lenski (1966:231-240) provides us with detailed information on the variable factors which could advance the position of the governing class at the cost of the ruler, but it will take us too long to reflect on this any further.

4. Terms used in these tables are all the translated terms taken from *The Holy Bible: New international version*, 1978, Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa.

5. The 'crowd' mentioned in 9:25 might be seen as the family of the ruler and thus in this context part of the elite.

6. Both the centurion and the tax collector(s) can also be regarded as part of the so-called unclean class in as far as the Jewish community was concerned. The gentile centurion and the tax collectors (as retainers of the Roman Empire) were both regarded as unclean (see below on our discussion of Matthew 8:5-13 and 9:9-13).

7. A coalition is defined by Malina (1988a:20) '...as a collection of people within some larger, encapsulating structure consisting of distinct parties in temporary alliances for some limited purpose.'

8. The *merchant class* is placed by Saldarini (1988a:313; 1988b:200) in the so-called *upper class*. We have argued before that we would rather regard them as part of the *lower classes*.

9. The day labourers are difficult to place for they also can be viewed as part of the peasantry as Rohrbaugh (1993b:20) also indicates later on in his article. As for myself, I would also rather place them within the peasant class.

10.   Joseph, Maria and Jesus can also be seen as part of the peasantry. In fact, Crossan (1991) devotes a whole study arguing that Jesus was a Mediterranean Jewish peasant. Thus they were part of the lowest classes of society.

11.   See also Duling (1993:653-654).

12.   See the work of Van Aarde (1994b:261-276).

13.   See also Duling (1992:103; 1993:653-654).

14.   See the work of Crossan (1991).

15.   The crowd is undifferentiated by Matthew. This could mean that all sorts of people could have been part of it, including women. Furthermore, even the bandits, eunuchs, slaves, tenant farmers, and other artisans and fishermen could have been part of this group (cf Duling 1993:654).

16.   I suggest Simon, a man from Cyrene, to be part of the peasantry.   There is no further qualifications give by the text (Mt 27:40) except that he is 'a man from Cyrene'. I could only imagine him to be one of the masses (the crowd), grabbed (forced) by the authorities to do the job (carry the cross of Jesus). Some-one with some higher stature, I could hardly imagine to be forced to do the carrying. He might have been a Jew, thus the name 'Simon', but he might have been regarded as unclean, and thus disregarded in Jewish society because he had contact with the gentiles in Cyrene (a Greek city on the north coast of Africa; cf Mellink 1962:754). However, I would agree that this is but a suggestion. The evidence really is very scant.

17.   There is, however, very little evidence in the text to exactly place them in a particular class.

18.   Against his own previous assumption (cf Kingsbury 1988a:148), (Kingsbury 1991:264) states that the Matthean community was situated in an urban environment, perhaps in Galilee or perhaps more towards the north in Syria but, in any case, *not necessarily Antioch*.

19.   Duling (1993:645) acknowledges that the theory of Germani (1980) is too Western and modern for direct application to Greco-Roman antiquity. However, I do not see this as a too severe problem, for the above description of 'urban ecological environment' corresponds with a previous description we made of agrarian rural and city life, which strengthens the argument to use the theory of marginality for the community of Matthew.

20.   As a matter of clarity, we have to view this conflict as a *first century* Jewish-Christian conflict, and more specific in relation to the community of Matthew. This must not be confused with the question about the so-called 'anti-Semitism' of the New Testament writings of Paul and Matthew (cf Patte 1990:84-85 see also Harrington 1991:20; Luz 1993:310 on the notion of 'Anti-Judaism' in Matthew's gospel). Indeed, the 'anti-Jewish' statements in the New Testament may come across as very harsh and hurtful to modern-day Jews (cf Hartin 1987:123). Along with Patte (1990:84) we reject an anti-Semitic reading as illegitimate and unwarranted. He regards such a reading as disturbing: 'Nothing in Matthew justifies pogroms and Holocaust!' (Patte 1990:84). However, says Patte (1990:85):

> The hermeneutical problem raised by the explicitly anti-Semitic interpretations of Matthew cannot be resolved by simply rejecting these interpretations (although they should be rejected). Through its numerous polemics against the Jews, Matthew seems to have the more insidious effect of conveying to its reader a latent anti-Semitism by promoting an anti-Jewish stance.

Burnett (1992:156) argues that it is impossible to accept the norms which guide the reading of Matthew and produce a reading which is not anti-Jewish. He says: 'In narrative-critical terms the thesis

stated positively is that the "implied author" of Matthew encourages readers *in every age* to read the narrative in an anti-Jewish way' (Burnett 1992:156; his emphasis). We cannot deny the anti-Jewish elements within Matthew. However, we accept the danger posed by Patte (1990:84-85; see above). In order not to fall into the pitfalls of legitimizing the Holocaust, referring to the anti-Semitic character of Matthew, we have to view the conflict in terms of the first century environment and conflict. Burnett (1992:174-178) argues for an ideological critical reading of Matthew in order to resist the manipulation of the implied author. I agree. However, I disagree with Burnett (1992:155) that it matters little whether or not the original historical situation of Matthew was part of formative Judaism. I think that the only way to distance oneself from the anti-Jewish (in terms of modern-day anti-Semitism), is to view Matthew in its first century environment and to take the social location into account. A citation of Dunn (1991:156) could support this view:

> ...*the charge of anti-semitism or anti-Judaism against Matthew has either to be dismissed or to be so redefined* within its historical context *as to lose most of its potential as justification for the anti-semitism of later centuries*' (italics by Dunn; my emphasis).

Furthermore, as we will in due course argue in more detail, the conflict must be seen as a conflict *within* first century Judaism and more specific as a conflict with the *leaders* as retainers of Judaism and not with the Jews as such.

21. I would rather not see, as Stanton (1992a:131) does, the Gentiles as *replacing* 'those born to the kingdom', i.e. Israel: the Jews, but rather as *extending* Israel to include the Gentiles (cf Van Aarde 1990:259).

22. In his study *The Sermon on the Mount as an ideological intervention*, Van Tilborg (1986:10) poses that he does not take up position in the debate on the historical background of Matthew's gospel, that is whether it is a Jewish-Christian or a pagan-Christian document. However, it seems that Van Tilborg did abandon his previous view that Matthew was a pagan document (cf 1972:171), in favour of the view that Matthew was a Jewish-Christian community (cf 1986:10).

23. I am indeed not the first to lay this link between Coser's view and the sharpness of the inner Jewish conflict. Both Dunn (1988:275) and Stanton 1992a:101) have done the same. Overman (1990:160) also refers to this phenomenon.

24. Personally I regard Stanton's (1992a) work as one of the most comprehensive recent works on the issue of the setting of the community of Matthew because it reflects well thought through ideas, taking into account a large amount of divisive viewpoints.

25. Van Aarde (1991b:59, 1994a:111) explains the growing influence of the Pharisees. To him it was due to a pre-70 AD strategy, which they continued after 70 AD, to extend the concerns of ritual purity, usually associated only with the priests and the Temple, into the day-to-day living of the ordinary Jews. The strict purity regulations pertaining to the Temple, were extended to the bed and board of every observant Jew.

26. Van Aarde (1989:230) argues that it was, among other things, the Jewish-Christians resurrection faith, which appears in Matthew's narrative of the resurrection (Mt 28:1-10), which contributed to the breach between the Yavneh Pharisaic rabbis and the Jewish-Christians during the period 70-135 AD.

27. See above in chapter 3 on *The group-binding function of conflict*.

28. Footnote 58 of Saldarini (1991:57) should by way of explanation also be taken over: 'The concept "master status" denotes a primary trait of a person to which all others are subordinate. Though we all occupy multiple social positions, statuses, and roles, one may predominate. In a racially stratified society such as the USA, being black is a master status.'

29.   Hare (1967:5) sees that the insistent emphasis upon the centrality of Jesus *excited* the intolerance between the Jewish-Christians and the other Jews. In as far as we see this as the *interests* of the community (being consistent to conflict theory), and not necessarily as a value, this is to be seen as correct. But, this 'master status' or 'central symbol' can however also be seen as an *intensifying* factor of conflict and the urge within the community to search for a new identity. The community, comprising of predominantly the marginalized, were in desperate need to survive. As group they searched for an identity. They found it in Jesus, as a marginalized himself. In this case, the interest is the remaining existence (survival) of the group as being marginalized, who find their symbol in Jesus. In this case it will not be correct to see the central symbol as exciting (causing) the conflict, merely as intensifying it.

30.   Although it seems true that Matthew de-emphasizes the thaumaturgical (at least as far as the acts of healing are concerned), I do not agree that he de-emphasized its meaning, namely to take up the interests of those in need. This is not what Saldarini (1991:59) says, but one should be careful not to deduce this from his statement.

31.   In this regard we can refer to Crossan (1991:341,344). At the heart of the original Jesus movement (and I even see it wider than just the original movement to include the community of Matthew), is a shared egalitarianism of spiritual and material resources, called 'commensality'. 'Commensality was...a strategy for building or rebuilding peasant community on radical different principles from those of honor and shame, patronage and clientage. It was based on an egalitarian sharing of spiritual and material power at the most grass-roots level' (Crossan 1991:344).

32.   See also our discussion on values and ideologies above. In conflict theory as we have indicated above, no sharp distinction is made between 'values' and 'ideologies'.

CHAPTER 5

THE PLOT IN TERMS OF TIME AND CAUSALITY: EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 8 AND 9 IN THE LIGHT OF CONFLICT THEORY

Een geschiedenis is volgens de...definitie 'een serie logisch en chronologisch aan elkaar verbonden gebeurtenissen'

(Bal 1986:27; my emphasis)

5.1 THE PLOT

The Gospel of Matthew is a narrative text. All the necessary components of a narrative text as Chatman (1978:19) describes it, namely: a story, the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), existents (characters, items or settings) and a discourse, that is the expressions, the means by which the content is communicated, are present (see also Combrink 1983:63, 66; Kingsbury 1988a:2-3; Powell 1992b:341, 345). Matthew 8 and 9, as part of the Gospel as a whole, is a narrative as well. As part of the Gospel, it is a literary product of a redactor-narrator. 'Using, among other things, transmitted tradition, editorially processed in a re-interpretative and creative manner, evangelists each communicate their own theological ideas by means of the narrative form, as story-tellers' (Van Aarde 1991a:107, see also 1994b:89; Combrink 1983:67). Whether as a literary product, or as a narrative text, we have to determine the plot of this narrative.

In our endeavour to determine the plot of the text, we will use the categories derived from the extended conflict theory we presented at the end of chapter 3.

We will furthermore attempt to explicate these categories as they unfold in the text of Matthew 8 and 9. We will also take the results of chapter 4 into consideration.

5.1.1 The plot of Matthew 8 and 9

As a short and useful definition of what a plot is, we can refer to Matera (1987:236; see also Chatman 1978:43; Van Aarde 1982:72; see also the definition of Abrams as cited by Culpepper 1983:80), who uses the following definition in analysing the plot of the Gospel as a whole:

> By way of summary, we can say that although literary critics nuance their approaches to the plot, they agree that it has something to do with *how discourse arranges events by time and causality in order to produce a particular effect or, emotional response* (my emphasis).

It is important to note that both the temporal element and the aspect of causality are taken up into a definition of the plot. Crane (1967:141) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983:18), focus mainly on the temporal aspect in relation with the characters, against Forster (1966:221), who strongly focuses on the aspect of causality as well (see below for a further discussion). The plot requires a time aspect inasmuch as it has a beginning, middle and end (cf Scholes & Kellogg 1966:211; Chatman 1978:47; Van Aarde 1982:72, 1991a:102; Combrink 1983:74; Matera 1987:23-5).

Furthermore, any plot requires change and conflict. 'All plots depend on tension and resolution' (Scholes & Kellogg 1966:212; see also Combrink 1983:74). Crane (1966:239; see also 1967:141; 1988:135) identifies three levels of change:

> There are, thus, plots of actions, plots of character, and plots of thought. In the first, the synthesizing principle is a complete change, gradual or sudden, in the situation of the protagonist, determined and effected by character and thought (thus change in action - EJV)...; in the second, the principle is a complete process of change in the moral

character of the protagonist, precipitated or moulded by action, and made manifest both in it and in thought and feeling (thus change in character - EJV)...;in the third, the principle is a completed process of change in the thought of the protagonist and consequently in his feelings, conditioned and directed by character and action (thus change in thought - EJV).

These views of Crane are useful but limited, for he limits the change in the plot only to the *protagonist* of the story. I am convinced that these changes can also be applicable to the other characters of a story, i.e. the helpers, the beneficiaries (cf Bremond 1977:190) and possibly even the antagonists. Culpepper (1983:81) takes up the concept of change as part of the plot to apply it further to the reader of the text as well:

> A plot requires a *change of some kind*, and its peculiar affective power is produced by hopes and fears, desires and expectations it imposes on the *reader* as it unfolds the change from beginning to end. By the end of the story, the reader has been led to a particular emotional or volitional response: catharsis, satisfaction, outrage, anxiety or belief.

Therefore, since change is such a vital part of the plot (cf Culpepper 1983:81), and also a vital concept in conflict theory, a link could be laid between the two. Furthermore, all plots depend on tension and resolution (Scholes & Kellogg 1966:212, 239). Since change (as far as conflict theory is concerned) is caused by conflicting interests, we dare to state that the change in the plot could, and should not only lead to a change in the values (or even actions, character and thought; cf Crane 1966:239) of the protagonist, the other characters or the readers. The plot should also lead to a *willingness by the implied reader (and hearer) to experience a change in interests* (and viewpoint), to those particular interests as represented by the point of view of the implied author.[1]

Thus, in our analysis of the plot, we wish to concentrate both on 'time' and 'causality'.

5.2 THE SEQUENCE IN TIME

A plot, as we have seen, requires the temporal aspects of a beginning, middle and end. But, the beginning, middle and end are never confined to a specified length. It could be anything from one sentence to expanded paragraphs. We will analyze these distinguished parts as *more expanded parts,* according to the examples of Matera (1987), Kingsbury (1988a, 1992) and Bauer (1988) in their analysis of Matthew as a whole, and Van Aarde (1991a) in his analysis of John 4:43-54.

Our division of Matthew 8 and 9, more or less corresponds with the overall organization of the text as Patte (1987:110-111) presents it to us. We agree with him that this passage displays a well-balanced surface organization. He says: 'It (the text - EJV) involves three groups of three miracle stories each (the third group could be viewed as having four miracle stories), the groups being separated by transition materials which serve either as conclusions or introductions (ends or beginnings - EJV) to the three major units' (Patte 1987:110). We slightly differ from Patte (1987), following Beare (1981:204) and Luz (1990:9), in that we take Matthew 8:1 as introductory sentence to the first major unit (the beginning), and we add 9:33b-35 as summary-episode to the third major unit (the end; see also Garland 1993:91). Following Scholes and Kellogg (1966:239) who say: 'Not only every episode or incident but every paragraph and every sentence has its beginning, middle, and end'; we also subdivide the distinguished units into beginning, middle and end. We will not, however, analyze the text down to the smallest units of sentences, as Scholes and Kellogg (1966:239) suggested.

A large number of commentaries agree on the fact that we have three units, each containing three miracle stories (Patte 1987:110-111; Davies & Allison 1988:69; 1991:6; Garland 1993:91-93; Hare 1993:88). Only in as far as the structure of the first set of miracle stories (Mt 8:1-17) is concerned, there is broad consensus. However, in as far as the rest of the miracle stories are concerned, there is a vast diversity of proposed structures. It seems that in this regard one has to make up one's own mind. The structure of Davies and Allison (1988:69;

1991:6) comes the closest to my own. Where I distinguish between Matthew 8:16-17 and 8:18-22, Davies and Allison combines them as a summary statement. The same is true of 9:9-17, which I divide into 9:9-13 and 14-17, while Davies and Allison keep these two pericopes together.

As overall structure, I suggest the following:

1. The beginning or first group of miracle stories: Matthew 8:1-17

Introduction: The crowd is following Jesus: Matthew 8:1

    1. The healing of the leper: Matthew 8:2-4

    2. The healing of the centurion's servant: Matthew 8:5-13

    3. The healing of the mother-in-law of Peter: Matthew 8:14-15

Conclusion: Healings and exorcisms as fulfilment of the prophecy: Matthew 8:16-17

2. The middle or second group of miracle stories: Matthew 8:18-9:13

Introduction: Responses to the would-be-disciples: Matthew 8:18-22

    1. The stilling of the storm: Matthew 8:23-27

    2. The destruction of the demons in the country of the Gadarenes: Matthew 8:28-9:1

    3. The healing of the paralytic: Matthew 9:2-8

Conclusion: The calling of Matthew and the controversy with the Pharisees: Matthew 9:9-13

3. The end or third group of miracle stories: Matthew 9:14-35

Introduction: The controversy with the disciples of John: Matthew 9:14-17

    1. The raising of a dead girl and the healing of a woman: Matthew 9:18-26

    2. The healing of the two blind men: Matthew 9:27-31

    3. The healing of the dumb man: Matthew 9:32-33a

Conclusion: The reaction of the crowd and the Pharisees, and the compassion of Jesus: Matthew 9:33b-35

5.2.1 The beginning of the plot: Matthew 8:1-17

In 8:1, a narrative-text, identified by a sequence of events, follows on the discourse-text (with only one episode: the Sermon of Jesus on the Mount). The discourse-text ends with the distinct closing formula: Καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Mt 7:28). Matthew also uses this formula to close the other discourses in 11:1; 13:53; 19:1 and 26:1. In 8:18, a new sequence of events starts off with the sentence: Ἰδὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὄχλον περὶ αὐτὸν ἐκέλευσεν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν. Therefore, 8:1-17 clearly forms one major unit. This unit comprises an introductory episode (or event) in 8:1; three healing episodes: the cleansing of the leper (8:2-14), the healing of the centurion's servant (8:5-13), the healing of the mother-in-law of Peter (8:14-15); and a summary episode (8:16-17).

At the beginning, the action is introduced and expectations are created (cf Van Aarde 1982:72, 1991a:102). The beginning creates some tension. In the beginning, anything is possible (cf Goodman, cited by Matera 1987:239). One could say that the beginning creates a sort of disequilibrium, a conflict to be resolved through the narrative. The narrative has a conflicting element, introduced or created at the beginning.

5.2.1.1 The opening scene: Matthew 8:1

Matthew 8:1: Καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί acts as the opening scene of both 8:1-17 and the whole sequence of events of 8:1-9:38. This opening scene links both the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle stories: Jesus came from the mount and a huge crowd was following him. Which crowd are we talking about? The same crowd as in 7:28, who was amazed by his teachings (ἐξεπλήσσοντο οἱ ὄχλοι ἐπὶ τῇ διδαχῇ αὐτοῦ).[2] Gundry (1982:136) correctly calls Matthew 7:28-29 the bridge from the sermon to the following narrative. In relation to 7:28-29, the opening scene (episode) in 8:1 already suggests the presence of conflict: Jesus is regarded as having *more* authority than the scribes (ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν; cf 7:29). The mere fact that the crowd accepts Jesus' authority rather than that of the scribes, places the scribes in opposition to Jesus and visa versa. And now in 8:1, this same crowd not only acknowledge Jesus' authority, but also

follow him (see Smith 1989:25). They become the primary audience in several stories to follow (Mt 8:18; 9:8; 9:23; 9:33; 9:36; cf Minear 1982:61). Whether they will follow him to the end, still remains to be seen, but they follow Jesus instead of the Jewish leaders. It is true that the leaders have not yet been mentioned in this opening scene. But, because the conflict between Jesus (and the community of Matthew) is assumed, we also assume at this early stage, that this early acknowledgement of Jesus' authority, can intensify the conflict. This undermines the authority that the Jewish leaders presumably have. This places Jesus in a conflicting situation with the leaders. The crowd consisted not only of a few people, they were described as ὄχλοι πολλοί, and being a huge crowd, it further threatens the position of the leaders, who might lose their potential support. The crowd, put in the terms of our worked out theory of conflict, remains the quasi-group, the recruiting field of both the leaders and the community of Matthew (see above in chapter 4 on *The conflict from the side of the Jewish leaders*). The role of the crowd in Matthew was that of potential followers of Jesus (cf Van Aarde 1987:264). However, they were also the potential followers of the Jewish leaders. The fact that they eventually, in the course of the Gospel choose against Jesus in the passion narratives, especially in Matthew 27:23 when they cry out that Jesus should be crucified, confirms this potentiality at this early stage of the Gospel. Therefore, any perceived threat to authority, even though it can still be not more than a potential loss of support, causes and increases conflict.

This introductory episode raises the question: 'How would the leaders, and the crowd eventually react to Jesus' actions?' Thus, right at the beginning there is conflict: the crowd, acknowledging Jesus' authority rather than that of the Jewish leaders and then following him as a huge crowd, threatens the vested interests of the leaders, who also needed the support of the same crowd. An expectation is created: some sort of outburst should come, something should happen. Right at the beginning conflicting interests are at stake; those of the leaders and those of Jesus. The crowd serves to explicate these interests, for some reason or another they also have to make a choice regarding whose interests to further (or serve). Here they have chosen Jesus' interests and this creates tension and conflict. But will it remain that way? This turned out not to be the

case as they - toward the end of the Gospel - choose the side of the Jewish leaders (cf Mt 26:47; 27:20, 22-25, 39).

The already existing tension is further heightened by the three miracle episodes. These pericopes (8:2-4; 8:5-13; 8:14-15) have a few things in common:

(1) In all these pericopes, Jesus deals with the 'social outcasts' of the Jewish community. They are all 'ritually unclean'. They were all excluded from full participation in Israel's religion. The leper because of his illness, the centurion because he is a heathen (and his slave being a slave) and the mother-in-law of Peter because she was a woman and ill (cf Minear 1982:62; Kingsbury 1988a:27; Hare 1993:90; see Malina 1981:122-152 on clean and unclean in the Jewish community).

(2) They all are cured because of Jesus' willingness to help (he just touches them or only has to speak a word).

(3) They are all re-introduced into the community, despite their social or physical background: the leper by showing himself to the priest, the centurion because of Jesus' willingness to take him into the community alongside (or instead of) the Jews (cf 8:10-12) and the woman who is able to resume her duties (viewed in Jewish terms) and serve Jesus, now as a healthy woman.

One of the most important spatial indicators of Matthew 8 and 9, is found in 8:1: Καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ <u>ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους</u> ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί (my emphasis).[3] Not only does this verse link the Sermon on the Mount to the Miracle stories, it also has a communicative function in the narrative, which is important for the understanding of the text. Matthew 8:1 is closely related to 5:1: Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη <u>εἰς</u> τὸ ὄρος· (my emphasis). Clearly, before (and for) the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus went *up to/on to*, he ascended up the mountain, on the analogy of Moses, who ascended up mount Sinai to meet God (Ex 19:3,12; 24:15,18; 34:1ff; cf Luz 1985:198, 1990:9). The mountain (or a mountain) to Matthew had an important connotation: 'Der Berg ist bei Matthäus Ort des Gebets (14,23), der Heilungen (15,28), der Offenbarung (17,1; 28,16) und der Lehre

(24,3)' (Luz 1985:197). It was a place of isolation (although the crowd were with him; cf Mt 7:28). It was a place to specifically meet God. The mountain in particular was a place of teaching and learning. But here, in Matthew 8:1, Jesus *descended from* the mountain, away from the place of isolation, prayer and teaching. The period of isolation and teaching was over (cf Maier 1983:253). But where did Jesus go? In antithesis to the mountain, as place of isolation, he went back to the scene of Matthew 4:23, to Galilee, to the people, to the world, i.e. to Capernaum and Gadara, to meet the people and 'real-life' resistance. What he taught, was due to be done and applied in the world, amongst the people. His healings and acts of mercy were to be presented to, and into the world with all that was in it, including vast conflict. The spacial indicator: ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους, in antithesis to the mountain, determined the setting of the whole narrative. It was meant to make Jesus' healings and ministry highly *concrete and real*.

In order to see how the conflict is developed, we will now turn to each miracle story.

5.2.1.2 The healing of the leper: Matthew 8:2-4

In the first healing episode, the conflict is apparent from the following elements: (1) the leprosy of the leper; (2) the leper's falling down before Jesus in paying tribute to Jesus; (3) his address of Jesus as Κύριε; (4) Jesus' touching of the leper, thus his immediate willingness to help and (5) the command Jesus gives to the leper to appear before the priest (8:4).

Leprosy was regarded as a dangerous skin disease.[4] There were harmless skin diseases as well, but we have to assume that Matthew here has in mind the illness that is referred to in Leviticus 13ff. This illness, in Rabbinic tradition, is seen as almost as difficult to cure as it was impossible to raise people from the dead (cf Strack & Billerbeck 1965:745; Luz 1990:9). Not only because of hygienic and health reasons were the lepers forced to live outside the community, but also because of ritual reasons: they were regarded as unclean. Any touching, or even being in the presence of a leper, would mean a transfer of this uncleanness (cf Strack & Billerbeck 1965:751). This forced them to live on the edge of society. We could say that in an agrarian society as such, they were forced into the class

of the expendables, or the unclean and degraded class because of their illness (cf Lenski 1966:281; see above). Nobody had any 'need' of them, in fact, according to Strack & Billerbeck (1965:745; 751) they were, along with the poor, the blind and the childless, regarded as the 'living dead'. We here have someone from the lowest stratum of society and this is also holds the potential of conflict and tension as such.

The leper falls down before Jesus in a gesture of acknowledging Jesus' authority (again above that of the Jewish leaders). Jesus is worthy of the homage paid to him. By this, the leper bypasses the prescribed way; he is abolishing the system which in any case does not recognize his needs. In his own interests (indeed) he knows to whom to call for help, he knows where to find acceptance.

In addressing Jesus as Κύριε, which Luz (1990:9)[5] calls a 'hoheitsvollen Anrede', once again the leper accepts Jesus' power to cure. Jesus responds immediately by stretching out his hand and touching the leper. He is willing to become unclean himself on the behalf of the leper, or in the interests of the leper. Without first demanding repentance (for leprosy was seen as punishment of sin and therefore repentance was required before any cure could be expected; cf Strack & Billerbeck 1965:745:750), Jesus cures the leper, once again breaking through the prescribed traditional rule/value and again creating tension and conflict with the leaders. He undermines their authority (or at least they might experience it that way) by challenging their values on behalf of the sick man.

What does Jesus communicate as he bypasses the rules and touches the leper? Jesus not only demonstrates his power over illness, he also, in the gesture of touching and his words: Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι, communicates his willingness to act on behalf of the weak. Says Waagenvoort (cited by Theißen 1974:71): 'Die Berührung hat "in erster Linie den Zweck, den körperlich oder geistig Schwacheren zu stärken." ' Jesus communicates willingness to help unconditionally. Jesus healed the leper from his illness and made him ritually acceptable as well.

Furthermore, Jesus commands the cured leper to go to the priest. Jesus does not totally abandon the Jewish/Mosaic law. In fact, again, in the interests of the cured leper, he (the leper) has to be seen by the priest in order to be taken up into the community again. But Jesus' commanding of the leper to go to the

priest, can also be viewed as a challenge to the system: It was Jesus who commanded, and *not* the leaders. Furthermore, they are challenged to recognize the weak and take them up into society again. But not only does the priest affirm the healed state of the leper and therefore take him up into society again, willingly or unwillingly the priest has to acknowledge that it was *Jesus* who cured him and it was Jesus who commanded him. Jesus has been honoured, and this further strengthens the already present latent conflict. A few questions are raised: Will the religious establishment also pay tribute to Jesus? Will they also accept Jesus' authority? Will they also abandon their own ruling position on behalf of the weak? In a way, the priest, by proclaiming the cured leper clean, already acts in the interests of this marginalized man. Will he and the other leaders accept this challenging view? Here, at the beginning of the miracle stories these questions indicate that there is conflict that still has to be resolved. These questions remain open and are to be answered later on in the text.

5.2.1.3 The healing of the centurion's servant: Matthew 8:5-13

As in the first pericope, we will indicate those elements in the episode of the healing of the centurion's servant, which contribute to the building up of the conflict. They are: (1) the position of the centurion (ἑκατόνταρχος), his own authority, his acknowledgement of Jesus' authority; (2) the position and condition of the slave (παῖς);[6] (3) the surprised reaction of Jesus, his recognizing of the faith of the centurion and his strong verbal attack on 'Israel' in 8:11-12; and (4) again Jesus' immediate response by curing the slave.

Although not a very high ranking officer in the Roman army (he was an officer over 100 men, the smallest unit in the Roman army; cf Harrington 1991:113), the centurion nevertheless was a man of authority himself (cf 8:9; see also Martin 1978:15; Hare 1993:91). He was a career soldier and in his world, he was most experienced and highly regarded (cf Newman & Stine 1988:233). Being a career soldier, he was part of the so-called retainer class (cf Lenski 1966:243; see chapter 4 on *Social stratification in the Gospel of Matthew*). Therefore, his prime function was to serve the political elite of his time, who was the Roman Emperor. His prime interest was to retain the interests of the rulers and to

maintain the *status quo*. He probably did that as well. Although there was no particular relationship (as far as the text is concerned) between the centurion and the Jewish leaders, in terms of social stratification they were on the same level.

Nevertheless, there was some peculiarity in the behaviour of the centurion: he acted in the interests of his paralysed slave. A slave in both Jewish and Roman environment was part of the lower classes (peasant class, as in agrarian societies) and was regarded as the possession of its owner. Although not necessarily always treated badly, it remained the privilege of the owner whether or not he would or would not do so. Here we have an example of an owner who cares for his slave, and acted in the interests of the slave whose condition was very weak (cf 8:6). This is clearly recognized by Jesus in his response (8:10). But, the centurion, being a Roman officer and a Gentile, has placed himself in a difficult position. He *is* not only unclean (being Gentile in a Jewish society), he *further becomes* unclean in the eyes of the Jews because of his contact with the sick slave. We can also put it differently: the centurion was marginalized because he was Gentile. He, however, chooses to become voluntary marginalized by acting in the interests of the slave. This further intensifies his own marginalized position. The centurion now becomes part of the weak, through his own action. And although he has some authority, he becomes a person on the edge of society. This same man, in his position and condition, acknowledges Jesus' authority and like the leper addresses Jesus as Κύριε (all elements, as we have seen before, which create tension; see also Sand 1986:179).

Furthermore, the centurion, on the basis of his experience of the army, knows that Jesus only has to command, and his slave will be cured. As he experienced authority in the military sphere, Jesus in the same way experienced authority in the spiritual sphere. As higher ranked officers, or the emperor could command him, so God gave Jesus authority over illnesses (cf Harrington 1991:114; Hare 1993:91). It is important to note that he acknowledges *Jesus* to be the one to command (and no one else), and this further contributes to the tension. This implies that Jesus also has subordinates. He has God-given authority which once again threatens the authority of those in power (cf Beare 1981:208).

At first glance it seems that the Gentile officer accepts the stratification system between the Jews and non-Jews by not wanting Jesus to come with him into his home, but, by putting the words in the centurion's mouth in his acknowledgement of Jesus' ability to cure over a distance (see also Sanders & Davies 1989:166), Matthew relativizes the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews, i.e. between clean and unclean. Jesus is able to command and cure beyond all borderlines. Borderlines are no limitation to Jesus to still have authority and to carry out his ministry (see also Patte 1987:114). Jesus responds as being surprised at the centurions request (cf 8:10). He is surprised at both the faith and the attitude of the centurion. But, within this context, Jesus is surprised not to find such faith in among Israel. Faith is indeed found in the Gentile centurion. The significance of the centurion, as Davies and Allison (1991:19) correctly see it, is that he foreshadows the successful evangelization of the nations (28:16-20). The centurion is a paradigm to the believer in so far as he exhibits true faith. He trusts implicitly in Jesus' power and authority. Matthew places the faith of the Gentile in contrast with the unbelief of 'the sons of the kingdom' (8:11; cf Davies & Allison 1991:25). This once again places Jesus in confrontation with the Jews and their leaders. Matthew uses this man to illustrate something that is lacking in Israel. It certainly is no good testimony for Israel (and its leaders), and therefore contributes even further to the present conflict. The faith of the centurion was something beyond anything that was encountered in Israel. His faith meant that he knew Jesus would help: as Luz (1990:15) says: 'Bei keinem einzigen in Israel hat Jesus solchen Glauben gefunden wie bei diesem Heiden! »Glaube« bedeutet das bedingungslose zutrauen Jesu *helfender Macht, daß sich nicht abweisen läßt'* (my emphasis). The centurion knew that Jesus would act on behalf of his slave, the needy and on his behalf as a Gentile as well. His faith was more than just believing in Jesus' ability to cure, it was his insight to see Jesus as one who has power to help, to act in the interests of the weak, and the insight to act in the same way as Jesus in turn.

In Israel nobody ever doubted the salvation of the Jews (see also Gundry 1982:145). Israel themselves thought they were in a privileged position as God's chosen people. Jesus challenges this belief and therefore challenges the vested

interests, or the religious interests of the Jews. To Jesus, Israel was not in an exclusive position of privilege any more: from the east to the west (8:11), thus from everywhere, all will dine with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (symbols of the Jewish history) 'in the kingdom of heaven'. Malina (1988a:9) links the phrase 'kingdom of heaven' to the sociological model of 'patron and client'. To Malina (1988a:9-10), following Aalen, the 'kingdom of heaven' means to enjoy the patronage of God, the heavenly Patron. The kingdom of heaven is seen as a new state of affairs, it is not as such a 'kingdom or reign', but rather a realm, a community or a 'house' (cf Malina 1988a:10). Thus, according to Matthew 8:11, all the people 'from the east to the west' will enter the kingdom of heaven, i.e. the new community or new 'house' of God. They will enjoy God's patronage along with 'Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', i.e. the rest of Israel. They will enjoy '...actual possession of the Patron's land; comfort and satisfaction meted out by the Patron; ready availability of the Patron to realize his part of the dyadic relationship (=mercy); acclamation by the Patron of being a favoured recipient of patronage (=called sons of God); and recompense for maintaining the patron's honour (=your reward is great in heaven)' (Malina 1988a:10). This is a metaphor saying that *all people* now are God's people. *All* people could turn to the God of Israel (cf Luz 1990:15).

Jesus did not differ from the traditional belief that Israel was God's chosen people. He did, however, challenge the exclusivistic claims derived from the phrase about the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in 8:11. With the words ἀνακλιθήσονται, Matthew already prepares the scene for 9:10ff, where Jesus physically *does* dine with others than Jews. Furthermore, the phrase in 8:11: λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἥξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ ᾿Αβραὰμ καὶ ᾿Ισαὰκ καὶ ᾿Ιακὼβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν·, serves as an ideological legitimation of the interests of Jesus to choose the interests of the Gentiles and other social outcasts. Later in the narrative he does demonstrate this interest by physically dining with those 'outcasts' or 'sinners' (see below; see also our discussion on the ideological legitimation in the section on *Personnel* in chapter 3).

Jesus not only challenges the privileged position of Israel, he heightens the conflict further by even declaring them out of God's presence because of the lack of faith in Jesus and what he stands for. The *υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας* (Israel were part of the kingdom of God), were to lose the kingdom, they were to be casted out into the darkness (*εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον*), which is an idiomatic expression denoting that they are removed from the abode of the righteous (cf Louw & Nida 1988:7). Most Jews imagined this place of perdition to be dark, despite of its fire (cf Davies & Allison 1991:30). Israel was thus excluded from the feast (cf Luz 1990:15; see also Gundry 1982:146) and this can only be unpleasant (*ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων*; cf 8:12). But *why* were they excluded? The answer seems apparent already but still remains to be answered further on in the middle part of the narrative (see below). Jesus' willingness to help is reflected in his sayings in 8:10-12, where he is prepared to take up the heathen into his community, but also in his short and immediate response in 8:13. He heals the slave immediately (*καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ*). He is willing to help without delay, immediately and unconditionally, as the case was with the leper.

Jesus addressed 'those who follow him' (*τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν*). Who were they? They still were the crowd of 8:1. As Gundry (1982:144) says: 'Matthew omits *τῷ ἀκολουθοῦντι αὐτῷ ὄχλῳ* (so Luke) and refers simply to *τοῖς* [supply *ὄχλοις* from v 1] *ἀκολουθοῦσιν*. The plural contrasts with Luke's singular and derives from v 1'. Therefore the question remains open: How would they respond to Jesus' physical deeds? They reacted positively to his teachings, but how would they respond as soon as Jesus' real interests surface through his actions?

5.2.1.4 The healing of Peter's mother-in-law: Matthew 8:14-15

At first the episode of the healing of the mother-in-law of Peter does not seem to have many elements of conflict in it. However, because a few themes are taken up again, elements of conflict remain present: (1) the woman being ill, and thus unclean, (2) Jesus' touching her and (3) her service to Jesus.

The subordinate position of the woman, which she normally had in her society, was further deepened by her being ill and thus unclean. Nevertheless, Jesus touches her and this, as in his touching of the leper, was an indication of his

willingness to act in the interests of this woman who was ill. He is not pre-occupied with her social position, nor with her physical situation. Her response to Jesus is one of service, an indication that she once again, like the previous examples, also acknowledges his authority (cf Patte 1987:116), which reinforces the element of conflict as it is developed up to this point. Because Jesus is made the subject when seeing the woman prostrate with fever, Matthew concentrates the attention on Jesus and gives him the initiative in the exercising of his authority (8:17; cf Gundry 1982:148). Anyone who takes the initiative in exercising authority, inevitably places himself in confrontation with those who presume themselves to have authority and want to maintain the *status quo,* i.e. their own privileged position.

There is no request from the woman to Jesus to cure her (like in the other two stories). This could indicate that Jesus acts in her interests, even without her asking. He knows what is best for her even before she asks it herself. He took the initiative on her behalf, in her interests. There was no dialogue around this miracle (like in the other two miracle stories). In silence Jesus acts. Nevertheless, the point is clear: without Jesus, there is no one who cares for her, with Jesus, someone cares, and someone takes her part (this is in fact what he communicated by the gesture of touching, just like that of the touching of the leper earlier).

5.2.1.5 The summary episode: Matthew 8:16-17

The first part of the narrative ends with a conclusion or a summary episode in 8:16-17. The summary in 8:16 has a threefold function, as Luz (1990:19) neatly states:

> Einerseits soll es dem Leser verdeutlichen, daß die bisher erzählten Wundergeschichten lediglich drei Beispiele von vielen Heilungen sind. Darum greift der Evangelist hier die Formulierungen von 4,23f nochmals auf. Andererseits geht es ihm darum, die absolute Vollmacht Jesu herauszustellen. Darum heilt hier Jesus, im Unter-schied zum Markustext, *alle* Kranken, und darum heilt er sie, wie

schon in v 8.13, souverän durch sein Wort.   Schließlich kann Matthäus damit das Zitat von v 17 vorbereiten (his emphasis).

The three miracle stories were just a few examples of the many instances in which Jesus acted in the interests of *all* the sick (*καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας*) and weak (cf 8:16). By this Matthew deliberately wants to avoid the implication that some might be excluded and not healed (cf Gundry 1982:149). What is important to note, as far as conflict theory leads us to this point, is that 8:17: *ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ 'Ησαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος,* **Αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν**, is the first *major* articulation (in the terms of Dahrendorf 1959:186) or codification of the interests Jesus (and Matthew) represents (see also the assumption above that values, ideologies and norms are *articulated interests)*. The citation from Isaiah 53:4 is taken out of its original context and re-installed in Matthew's story as ideology (or value) to legitimate Jesus' position. Jesus takes up all weaknesses upon himself and he carries all illnesses. But, these healings were not just a new thrill or trend he had, they were *legitimized* deeds. As Davies and Allison (1991:37) says: 'The Scripture prophesied that Jesus the Servant would heal others. His miracles are, therefore, *not simply the sensational workings of an extraordinary man but rather the fulfilment of the Scriptures and the exhibition of God's almighty will*' (my emphasis). These deeds were made into a *superindividual right*, they were made *respectable* (cf Coser 1956:112; see also above) by referring to them as fulfilment of the (legitimate) prophecies. By means of this citation, Jesus is presented as acting legitimately because it was a fulfilling of the prophecies. This heightens the legitimacy of Jesus himself, but since this is also seen as an editorial passage (cf Sanders & Davies 1989:166), coming from the implied author, this citation also heightens the legitimacy of the interests of the author and his community. Or, as Luz (1990:19) says: 'Das Zitat zeigt also, wie Jesus als Messias Israels *vollmächtig* in seinem Volke heilt. Für Matthäus ist wichtig daß dies dem vom Propheten geweissagten Plan Gottes entspricht' (my emphasis). This in itself heightens the conflict potential, for Jesus, and by implication also the community of Matthew, are 'exalted' to compete with the Jewish leaders for legitimacy and authority. Furthermore, we have already seen

in chapter 4 (see the passage on *The conflict from the side of the Matthean community*) that one way to legitimize a new movement, is to 'traditionalize' its existence. One way to traditionalize is to take over widely acclaimed and legitimate scriptures, passages or traditions. This is what happened in this summary episode and in particular the citation in 8:17. The same is true of the citation from Hosea 6:6 in Matthew 9:13.

5.2.2 The middle of the plot: Matthew 8:18-9:13

Matthew 8:18 starts a new episode in time and especially in space (as seen in the words: ἐκέλευσεν ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὸ πέραν). Therefore, the middle part starts here at 8:18. In our view this part ends at 9:13, because of the frequent use of the theme ἀκολουθεῖν, which is also taken up in 9:9 in the episode of the calling of Matthew (cf 9:9-13). Furthermore, 9:14 starts a new episode, with new characters (the disciples of John) and new issues in question (that of fasting). Thus, the middle part of the plot comprises an introductory event (8:18-22); three miracle events: the calming of the storm (8:23-27), the healing of the Gadarene Demoniacs (8:28-9:1) and the healing of the paralytic (9:2-8), and eventually a summary episode, namely the calling of Matthew (9:9-13).

The expectations created at the beginning of the plot, are developed further in the middle part. The initial action is developed (cf Van Aarde 1982:72; 1991a:102); things now become probable (cf Goodman, cited by Matera 1987:239). Moreover, the conflict is developed further as it surfaces. The conflict becomes manifest as one of the reasons why Israel was no longer part of the kingdom of God. In this section the strongest legitimization of the conflict of interests is developed (cf 9:13; see below).

5.2.2.1 The introductory episode: Matthew 8:18-22

In the section to follow, we will give attention to the following elements of conflict: (1) The *authority* of Jesus to take the initiative, (2) the evolving conflict within the *inner circle* of Jesus and (3) conflict with the Gentiles.

The middle part of the narrative, then, starts off with the introductory episode of the eager scribe and the reluctant disciple, who were to follow Jesus

to the other side, that is, to the Gentile country. The first question is: Why did Jesus want to go to the other side of the lake? Why did Jesus seemingly want to avoid the crowd? An immediate answer is not given by the text, but we can suggest an answer as we proceed.

Jesus gives a command to go to the other side, but he does not address anyone in particular. But, if his command is not addressed at anyone in particular, what then is the force of the verb 'to command' (κελεύειν)? Patte (1987:119) sees it as an open invitation to any one amongst the crowd who want to receive it (the invitation) and follow him to the other side. Thus, Patte (1987:119) takes it as both a command *and* a call to discipleship, as does Kingsbury (1988b:46-47). Jesus is both exercising his authority *and* inviting them to become his disciples. Kingsbury (1988b:47) says:

> As for the question about the recipients of Jesus' command, if κελεύειν does not connote in Matthew a calling to discipleship, it becomes impossible to construe all those who make up the crowd about Jesus as receiving his command to cross the lake (8.18).

This means that, whether we take κελεύειν as a command or open invitation (or both), Kingsbury's view on the scribe who approaches Jesus (8:19), cannot be entirely correct. He says: 'As Jesus is about to cross the sea with his disciples (8.18), a scribe approaches him who would arrogate to himself the authority to become Jesus' disciple and hence to embark with him on the upcoming journey (8:19)' (Kingsbury 1988b:51). By implication Kingsbury suggests that the scribe took the initiative and that Jesus therefore repudiated him (and we could say conflict presents itself here). But, Jesus *at first* took the initiative, the scribe responded to it. To Harrington (1991:119) the fact that Jesus commanded (8:18) is an indication that it was Jesus that took the initiative. This, to my mind, indeed heightens the image that Jesus took control. Therefore, if we want to see an element of conflict in this episode (and there is an indication of it), we have to see it somewhat differently from Kingsbury. The initiative lies with Jesus and therefore there is conflict, and not the other way around, as it appears that Kingsbury

suggests (although Kingsbury here does not primarily focus on conflict as such).

The introductory episode (8:18-22), and 8:18 in particular, acts as opening scene for the rest, especially for 8:23-27, and 8:28-9:1 (the episodes of the storm at sea and the healing of the Gadarene demoniac). In the words of Davies and Allison (1991:39): 'Why has Matthew placed 8:18-22 precisely where it is? Probably because for him the tale of the stilling of the storm is a parable, *a symbolic illustration of what it means to "follow" Jesus. In other words, a story about discipleship is prefaced by teaching on discipleship'* (my emphasis; see also Patte 1987:118). Furthermore, it opens up two new levels of latent conflict (see our discussion on manifest and latent conflict in the section on a *Charter* in chapter 3): within the inner circle of Jesus' disciples (thus the confrontation with the reluctant disciple in 8:21-22), and with the Gentiles in their own country (thus the command to go to the other side). Of course the conflict with the Jewish leaders remains apparent, as will be illustrated in Jesus' response to the 'eager scribe' (8:19), and later in a more manifest way in the closing episode (9:13).

The fact that Jesus was in a position to command the people (or disciples) to go to the other side, and the fact that he had authority already at first hand suggests that some conflict would further follow. In fact, Patte (1987:119) says that the reader should not be surprised to find Jesus giving orders: he is entitled to do so! He has authority, already acknowledged previously by the crowd and those he previously healed. We could say that the conflict already apparent in the beginning, is here developed further in terms of the question on *how* to follow Jesus. We find an indication here of what true discipleship means: as in the previous section, discipleship means 'solidarity' with Jesus and his cause, it means sharing in the fate of the 'Son of man', i.e. Jesus, who shares the interests of the weak and underprivileged (marginalized). Therefore, sharing with Jesus, also involves sharing in his 'solidarity' with the weak and thus to take upon oneself the burden or the interests of those in need. Put differently, the disciples should have been prepared to become 'voluntarily marginalized' themselves. This is off course a conflicting view, which is illustrated by the responses Jesus gives to the scribes and the disciples. How do we arrive at this view?

As we have seen, the scribe came to Jesus, willing to follow Jesus wherever he would go. But, immediately there are doubts about his intentions. He seems over-enthusiastic and he seemingly overestimated his own abilities to follow Jesus to the end (cf Gnilka 1986:311). Would he, as part of the religious privileged establishment, really abandon his vested interests as part of that group? Would he really become 'voluntarily marginalized'? He is explicitly described as 'one of the scribes' (εἷς γραμματεύς), thus still belonging to that group. The scribes were already indicated in 7:29 as Jesus' opponents (as part of the Jewish leadership). Says Gnilka (1986:310): 'Als Schriftgelehrter gehört er einer Gruppe an, die Jesus feindselig gegenübersteht'. Already in the scribe's address to Jesus, this phenomenon is illustrated, and his intentions and insights questioned. He calls upon Jesus as 'teacher' or 'rabbi' (διδάσκαλε). We agree with Gundry (1982:152), France (1985:159), Gnilka (1986:310-311), Kingsbury (1988b:51) and Harrington (1991:119) that this is a 'wrong' address for a 'true' follower of Jesus. Rather, the use of the address 'rabbi' indicates that this scribe was indeed from outside the group of disciples (cf Sand 1986:185). Consider the following statement of Kingsbury (1988b:51; see also Davies & Allison 1991:41):

> ...one can detect a basic distinction in the use made in Matthew of the vocative 'teacher' or 'rabbi' (διδάσκαλε, ῥαββί) and 'Lord' (κύριε). 'Teacher' and 'rabbi' are terms of human respect. 'Lord' is a title of majesty. Judas, opponents, and strangers never...call upon Jesus as 'κύριε', but regard him only as 'teacher' or 'rabbi' and consistently address him as such. Persons of faith and true disciples never address Jesus as 'teacher' or 'rabbi' but always call upon him as 'κύριε'....Persons of faith and true disciples call upon Jesus as 'κύριε' because they thereby are seen, not merely to pay him human respect due to a teacher, but to attribute to him *divine authority* (my emphasis).

The scribe, as part of Jesus' opponents, is portrayed by Matthew as not willing to address him correctly as κύριε and thus not willing to attribute to Jesus the

authority - consequently we once again have conflict! This becomes more apparent in Jesus' response. Jesus turns to him with a saying about the homelessness of the Son of man (8:20). Following Jesus means sharing in his condition of insecurity (cf Patte 1987:119). This is clearly a position and metaphor for being marginalized. We agree with Kingsbury (1988b:50) by taking the notion of 'homelessness' in 8:20 metaphorically: 'When so viewed, it is made to signify, variously, "hardship", "poverty", "the renunciation of security", "suffering",...' We take this to be a metaphoric expression because it can mean more than a literal lack of lodging. This can mean rejection (Gundry 1982:152; Hare 1993:95). Both these literal and metaphorical conditions are in broad terms typical of the peasant class in agrarian society. Kingsbury (1988b:50) also links 'homelessness' with 'repudiation'. Thus Kingsbury says: 'Jesus...turns the scribe away with a saying about homelessness that the reader knows alludes to the life of discipleship as essentially being one of sharing in the repudiation Jesus must endure (8.20)' (1988b:51). Discipleship means sharing repudiation and conflict because of sharing in the conditions of the underprivileged (being in solidarity with them), and this the scribe probably would not do. As Gnilka (1986:311) says:

> Führte diese (scribe - EJV) dort in die Geborgenheit des Hauses eines
> Lehrers und damit in die Sicherheit, so ist der Jünger Jesu existentiell
> in die Unsicherheit geworfen. Dem Wort eignet eine *antirabbinische*
> *Tendenz.* Darum ist es keine Zufall, wenn es sich an einen Schriftge-
> lehrten richtet (my emphasis).

Therefore, the scribe most probably would not, along with Jesus, show his 'solidarity' with the powerless. He most probably would not become voluntarily marginalized and thus would not become a true disciple.

Matthew 8:21 prepares a new level of conflict: that within the inner circle of the disciples. The mentioned disciple addresses Jesus as κύριε, in line with true disciples and persons of faith (cf Kingsbury 1988b:51). But Jesus' response indicates some lack of insight on the side of the disciple. Would he really follow Jesus? Does he really view discipleship 'correctly'? Apparently not. The answer

Jesus gives him for first wanting to bury his dead father, appears to be harsh indeed, but this answer must not be softened at all. In its harshness lies its effectiveness (cf Kingsbury 1988b:54-56). Jesus is not against family ties as such in giving this answer to the disciple in 8:22. In fact, within the context of Matthew 8 and 9, he acknowledges these family ties when he heals the mother-in-law of Peter (8:14) and the daughter of the ruler (9:18). What it does indicate however, is that discipleship does not tolerate split loyalty (see also Sand 1986:185; Davies & Allison 1991:55). One must not love one's own family *more* than Jesus (cf Luz 1990:26). Even well meant and legitimate religious laws could lead to disloyalty to Jesus and his cause. Even these well meant religious laws, prescribed and upheld by the religious leaders, can subtract from the disciple's prime task, namely following Jesus in his choice of championing the interests of the underprivileged. Even well meant, but misplaced 'compassion' (burying his own father) can divert a disciple from Jesus' cause (cf Gnilka 1986:312). True discipleship entails the harsh command to follow him and, as expressed by the following pericope, to almost immediately embark (into the boat and storm, i.e. uncertainty, trouble etc.) with him (cf Kingsbury 1988b:56). Whether the disciples realized this remains to be seen, and it thus opens up a new level of conflict: new interests are at stake and have to be brought in line with those of Jesus.

But, how far could this 'homelessness', 'family-lessness' or solidarity with the conditions of the underprivileged be stretched? In answer to this question, physical examples are presented to us by Matthew in the three following miracle stories.

5.2.2.2 The stilling of the storm: Matthew 8:23-27

The episode of the stilling of the storm is linked with the previous passage by the renewed use of ἀκολουθεῖν. What Jesus in the previous passage explained 'theoretically', becomes true in a physical sense. In the boat, at sea, in the storm, the disciples were in real need, they were really and physically without home and separated from their families. In the storm at sea they were in a most insecure situation (cf Patte 1987:121). In fact, in the storm at sea, the disciples were the needy themselves, they were subject to distress themselves. If we take the

'storm' (σεισμός), the 'sea' (θαλάσσα), the 'waves' (κύματα), metaphorically, these elements symbolize deep distress on almost all levels, including repudiation, trials, conflict and tension (like 'homelessness' in the previous passage metaphorically meant). They are symbols of death and destruction (cf Luz 1990:27; see also Davies & Allison 1991:69).

As spacial indicator, the sea connotes something else as well, which comes close to our definition of marginality (cf Duling 1993:645; see above in chapter 4, the section on *The composition of the community*). Jesus and his disciples were on their way from his own country to the foreign area: Gadara. Thus, the sea also functions as a border between two places (cf Bal 1986:54). Jesus and the disciples were on their way, they were no more in their own country and not yet in foreign country. They were somewhere 'in between somewhere and nowhere'. They were 'not here nor there'. This is typical of being marginalized. They were therefore in a very uncertain and unpredictable situation in which they were only to rely on God and on Jesus.

It now becomes clear that following Jesus was by no means a romantic trip, it was indeed costly, even dangerous (cf Klein 1984:35; Sand 1986:188), or as Gnilka (1986:318) says: 'Nachfolge ist gefährlich. Sie führt in Stürme und in die Auseinandersetzung mit vernichtenden Gewalten'.

One would suspect that the storm (as metaphor for outside forces of destruction and distress) would bring about inner and stronger cohesion within the group of disciples (as Coser sees the function of conflict; see above). But this does not happen. Instead, the disciples tremble with fear and are screaming for help. In their deepest fear and *Angst*, they failed to realize that Jesus was in control (Gnilka 1986:317). He was sleeping, not because he had no interest in them (as the disciples were accusing him in Mk 4:38), but as symbolic act that even the forces of nature were subordinate to him.[7] He had nowhere to laid down his head (8:20), but while it was storming, he lay down his head! One could say, when it is storming, he is in his element or, when people are in need, he is at his best, he then 'sleeps well'. The disciples failed to realize this, therefore they called out in deep distress: Κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα. But, again, Jesus was not unwilling to help. In fact, he again acts on behalf of those in need, this time his

own disciples. He still shares their *Angst*, and he repudiates the storm, the wind, water and sea to calm down (cf Gnilka 1986:317). But he did so not before he repudiated his disciples for their little faith (ὀλιγοπιστία) or, one could say, for their lack of insight. They were weakened by their fear. They were too paralysed to act in their distress, they were unable to endure the distress around them (cf Luz 1990:29). The fear, horror, and pain around them threatened to overpower them. Metaphorically speaking, we could say that the distress in the 'stormy' world around them, weakened their ability to face it. Instead, with Jesus in their midst, they should have stood firm in their faith, meaning as Gnilka (1986:318) says:

> Die Jünger werden getadelt, nicht weil sie Angst haben. Sie ist menschlich, jeder kennt sie. Der Tadel trifft sie, weil sie sich ängstigen, obwohl Jesus mit ihnen im Boot ist. *Der Glaube ist eine Kraft, die Angst überwindet* (my emphasis).

They should be able to overcome anxiety, with faith, and with Jesus in their midst. They should, as disciples , be able to overcome need. They should have the power and the willingness to take on the problems of their world and to make their own the interests of the anxious, needy and underprivileged, as they have seen Jesus did in their case. This episode illustrates to them how real and how existential need really is. They were the underprivileged (marginalized) themselves. They themselves were in deep distress, but they themselves also were subject to Jesus' making their interests his own. This was the case on the 'real historical-Jesus' level. But in another, later context, in the context of the Matthean community, the disciples, as the possible leaders of the community, should have realized their previous state. Therefore they could understand what it means to be in such a hopeless and distressed situation, and thus they should follow Jesus' example and do the same to others. This is the new disposition with which Jesus challenges the inner circle of disciples. They are challenged to do the same to others as Jesus did to them. This indeed gives them a new identity and a new 'family', i.e. loyalty to Jesus and his cause. This should lead to a change in inner values and should also lead to an understanding of and solidarity with the really marginalized. Put

differently, in the new context, the 'disciples', i.e. the Matthean community, have to realize that the real-life disciples of Jesus were marginalized. They now have to opt for 'voluntary marginality' in order to identify with the involuntary marginalized in their own community. But, this could also lead to more hardship and persecution as Jesus' followers. This is why the boat is metaphorically used as symbol of the community of Jesus, facing all sorts of storms at sea (cf Schweizer 1975:221).

There is, however, another element of conflict in this episode. Although not realizing that the presence of Jesus meant security in itself, the disciples still addressed him as Κύριε, and, like in the previous episode, by doing this they acknowledged Jesus' authority. They, although scared to death, turned to Jesus and to no one else. What is more, in the reaction of the people to what happened, they acknowledged Jesus' *extended authority* to include control over the forces of nature as well. This was a kind of authority the Jewish leaders did not pretend to have. But, as a result of this extended authority the people would follow him. How would they still support their traditional leaders? The people rather acknowledged the *Vollmacht* of Jesus, than those of the leaders. Put in the words of Davies and Allison (1991:76): 'The disciples are amazed because they have witnessed a previously hidden ability. Jesus can command *even* the wind and the sea. Clearly one greater than Jonah is here'.

5.2.2.3 The destruction of the demons in the country of the Gadarenes: Matthew 8:28-9:1

The episode at hand is a continuation of the previous one. It is especially linked to 8:18 as a scene taking place at the other side of the lake to which they were under way. Sand (1986:189) calls this episode 'another exorcism'. The previous one was an 'exorcism' of the storm, this is an exorcism of the demons. Therefore it has implications for the view of discipleship. This episode furthermore is one of the clearest in as far as it entails conflict. It also contains the clearest examples of conflicting *interests*: (1) The ongoing latent conflict with the Jewish leadership, (2) the manifest conflict with the demon possessed, (3) the herdsmen and (4) the city-dwellers.

The ongoing conflict with the Jewish leaders in this episode is a further development of the conflict on the issue of contact with the Gentiles (cf 8:5-13). Matthew takes up the theme of uncleanness again, this time even more explicitly. It is as Patte (1987:124; see also Gnilka 1986:321; Sanders & Davies 1989:169; Harrington 1991:120 and Hare 1993:96 on Gadara as pagan country) says:

> The theme of uncleanness (see 8:1-13) is found once again. Arriving
> in this country, Jesus is met by unclean persons (two demoniacs
> coming out of the tombs, 8:28); there is a herd of unclean animals,
> pigs (8:30). This is pagan country.

The Jesus of Matthew's Gospel, openly goes to pagan country. He on purpose makes contact with demoniacs and exorcises the demons. This contact with the utmost unclean that there is: grave-dwellers (or maniacs)[8] can certainly not be approved by the Jewish leaders; it will even be regarded as disgusting. It is this physical contact that later in the middle section will lead to manifest conflict on a more ideological level (cf 9:13; see below). Here we have (again) a demonstration of Jesus identifying himself with the interests of the unclean class (of agrarian society; cf Lenski 1966:281), and liberating them from their uncleanness in order to be reintegrated into society. Furthermore, we here again have (like in the previous episode) an example of Jesus exercising his extended authority, this time not only over nature, but also over the demons. This kind of authority the Jewish leaders cannot claim to have, and once again this contributes to the tension between them.

The conflict with the demoniacs, herdsmen and city-dwellers was much more manifest at this point of the narrative than the conflict with the Jewish leaders. Matthew mentions *two* demoniacs in order to give some importance to the happenings (see Gnilka 1986:321 on the issue of duplication in Matthew). They met Jesus (ὑπήντησαν - [ὑπαντάω]). But this verb can also indicate: 'to oppose someone in a hostile sense' (cf Arndt & Gingrich 1952:845). Thus, they opposed Jesus, because Jesus disturbed them in their domain/area. Although they were the outcasts of society themselves, living in graves and feared by people

because of their violent character, they were in *charge* of the area in which they lived. They had some interests in the *status quo* remaining as it was. They had some security in their misery. They seemed to be in control of their lives. As expendables or unclean, they probably had no other option than to be violent and fearful (cf Lenski 1966:281; see above). Jesus wanted to take them out of this miserable position, but they did not want to have anything to do with Jesus. They did not want him to take up their interests and case. The demons had supernatural knowledge (as far as Matthew was concerned): They knew Jesus' true identity without being told (cf Davies & Allison 1991:81). They recognized that Jesus was the Son of God (υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), but they did not acknowledge his authority. Note the lack of the address Κύριε, which those who do acknowledge his authority normally employ. Jesus wanted them back into society, but their own interests (in their own eyes) were to retain the *status quo*. Nevertheless, Jesus' authority was supreme over theirs and he exorcised the demons into the pigs, which ran into the sea and drowned. The conflict was resolved by Jesus' supremacy. Note that the demons (in the pigs) went under in the sea (θάλλασαν) which, as we have seen from the previous episode, was a symbol of destruction itself. Thus we can say that the demons (read: evil) went under in the sea (read: evil as well). Is this perhaps a good example of the premise that all systems, even 'evil systems', bear in themselves the impulses operating towards their own supersedence and change (even destruction), as Dahrendorf (1959:123) claims?

As far as the herdsmen are concerned, there was an economic interest at stake: they lost their livestock. Amongst the pagans (Greek and Roman), pigs were valuable animals, they were even used as sacrificial animals (cf Gnilka 1986:322; Luz 1990:32; Harrington 1991:120). Conflict with the herdsmen was quite obvious, for, in the interest of the demoniacs (and against their own), they lost their animals. Small wonder they ran to the city in panic to tell the story, and probably to look for support. To the herdsmen the disturbed *status quo* meant a loss of income!

Matthew uses the same word in 8:34, as in 8:28: ὑπάντησιν: Just as the demoniacs 'opposed' Jesus, the city-dwellers also 'came in opposition'. The reason why the city-dwellers asked Jesus to leave is nowhere given in the text (see

also Davies & Allison 1991:85). We only read that they ('the whole city' - πᾶσα ἡ πόλις) went out to meet with Jesus and to request him to leave their area. Clearly there is conflict. But why? We have to read it together with the conflict with the herdsmen. We simply cannot imagine that *all* the city's inhabitants opposed Jesus. Probably only the city's representatives or perhaps their leaders met him. The city in an agrarian community (and in the Roman Empire in particular) was the seat of authority for the specialists who maintained the order and enjoyed civil and political power. An important function of the urban centre was the collection and overseeing of revenues, taxes and tolls (cf Overman 1988:166; see also Saldarini 1988a:45-46; Rohrbaugh 1991:67-75 on the political and economical position of the ancient city; see above in chapter 4). There was a reciprocal trade relation between rural areas and urban areas (cf Edwards 1988:176-177). Since this was the case, and since the herdsmen lost their economic assets when they lost their pigs, thus also losing a source of income for the city's revenues, we suspect that there was conflict between Jesus and the city-dwellers, also because of economic reasons. The city also lost a source of income in the process. Furthermore, even pagan agrarian societies, like that of the Jews, were highly stratified (cf Lenski 1966; see above). Thus we suggest that here again we find conflict of interests: Jesus in taking the interests of the expendables (the demoniacs), threatens the vested interests of the pagan city. They experienced some security in the miserable situation of the demoniacs. This security (sense of control) Jesus threatened.

The implications of this conflict for discipleship, is apparent. Whereas moving abroad to pagan country caused conflict with the Jews in itself, because of (amongst everything else) the Jewish purity laws, the seed of an ongoing conflict already lied in this new environment (situation). In the pagan country there also were stratified systems and conflicting interest. In whatever new situation the disciples, in following Jesus, entered, they had to identify with the interests of the underprivileged anew. Jesus did well to the demoniacs (and indirectly to the pagans as well). However, moving to the Gentiles because the Jews rejected them, did not mean a 'happy-ending' (cf Gnilka 1986:323), instead an ongoing conflict could be expected because of Jesus' stand. As soon as one's own

(economic) interests are at stake, whether Jewish or Gentile, taking up the interests of the unclean or expendables, or becoming 'voluntarily marginalized', remains a challenging perspective!

5.2.2.4 The healing of the paralytic: Matthew 9:2-8

In this section we deal with: (1) authority, (2) manifest conflict and (3) conflict on an ideological level.

Although 9:1 can still be viewed as part of the previous pericope, it does prepare the setting for the new episode: Jesus moved from the pagan country towards his own city. How would he be received in his own place? This reception, as we will see, remained filled with conflict rather than warm acceptance! In fact, he was not really accepted in his own city, for the same reasons that he was rejected in the pagan country. The basic assumption is that Jesus' conflict with the Gentiles was one of conflicting interests. We hold the same assumption concerning the conflict with the Jewish leaders.

The emphasis of this story lies on the discussion (controversy) between Jesus and the scribes. The emphasis is on the question: By which authority (*Vollmacht*) may Jesus forgive sins? (cf Sand 1974:64, 1986:192). The miracle itself acts as demonstration material or, for that matter, as trigger for the discussion: 'So tritt das Wunder zugunsten des gesprochenen Wortes noch stärker zurück wie das schon by Mk der Fall ist' (Gnilka 1986:325). Because of the emphasis on the forgiveness of sin, the miracle itself is pushed into the background (see Schweizer 1975:224; France 1985:165). The same is true of the use of the concept πίστις. Although we find that Matthew takes up a previous theme ('faith' as in 8:10), the emphasis does not lie here (see also Davies & Allison 1991:88). 'Faith' (πίστις) here indicates that the paralytic had confidence in Jesus' ability to heal; he recognized Jesus' willingness and authority to help him; he was not so 'paralysed' by his condition that he was without hope (against the ὀλιγόπιστια of the disciples in the storm; cf 8:23-27). He can take courage: with Jesus the paralysed can walk away, but without him, he will remain in bed (cf Patte 1987:125). For the first time in the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9, we find that the conflict with the Jewish leaders which was latent up to this point becomes

manifest (see also Davies & Allison 1991:86). For the first time (the already present) conflict surfaces. The conflict for the first time takes the form of direct challenge from both the side of the Jewish leaders and Jesus. What is more, the conflict is much more intensified because, as we shall see, it manifests on an ideological level. What in itself is still a conflict of interests, now manifests itself as an ideological conflict (see our section on *Values* in chapter 3 for the nuance difference between a conflict of interests and an ideological conflict).

Let us at first view the conflict from the side of the Jewish leaders (some of the scribes - τινες των γραμματέων; this has to be read along with our section on *The conflict from the side of the Jewish leaders* in chapter 4). They accuse Jesus very strongly as being 'blasphemous' (cf 9:3). The scribes viewed themselves as (prime) authorities on the interpretation of the law and the tradition (cf Rivkin 1978: 105, 113-114, 159, 176, 183; see also the controversy in Mt 23:2ff). They regarded it as their privilege and duty to interpret the religious prescriptions. According to their belief, it was only God who had the prerogative to forgive sin/evil. As Gnilka (1986:326) states: 'Nach ihrer Beurteilung ist dies Gotteslästerung, die Inanspruchnahme eines göttlichen Privileges durch einen Menschen'. Put differently, in terms of the chosen conflict theory, the scribes (or Jewish leaders, to include the Pharisees in Matthean perspective; see below), to sustain their own interests and authority as religious leaders (and even probable political leaders; see chapter 4, the section on *The Pharisees as part of the retainer class in the period of* formative Judaism), were in a position of privilege themselves and able to decide who could and who could not be forgiven.

But, the scribes legitimized their own position of privilege through the value or ideology that only God is able to forgive. Their own religious position was articulated or codified by the ideology (value) that only God had the ability to forgive (see Dahrendorf 1959:186 on the codification of interests by ideologies; see above). They, hereby made their own view a 'respectable' view, one that transcended the mere level of own interests. Their position was further strengthened by the sanction laid down by the accusation of 'blasphemy', as soon as their position was challenged or threatened. They safeguarded their own position by labelling Jesus as 'blasphemous' (see Malina & Neyrey 1988 on the

labelling process). In this manner, they ruled out the necessity and possibility for themselves (and those who supported them and their view) to forgive (and thus to turn to) people, i.e. the sinners, or in this context, the small ones (or marginalized) in society.[9] It was, from their view, impossible to forgive each other, because in any case 'only God can do so'. This position Jesus seriously challenged. Through this the conflict was intensified, because it manifested itself on an ideological level. When Jesus took the interest of the leper, slave of the centurion and the sick mother-in-law of Peter (all of them were marginalized), the conflict was present but latent (as we have indicated), but as soon as Jesus challenged the ideology that was supposed to legitimize their interest, the conflict became much more intense, and Jesus himself became more vulnerable and contestable. As Patte (1987:127) says: 'Jesus could have had the power to heal the paralytic without exposing himself (that much -EJV) to the scribes as he healed the *paralysed* servant of the centurion (8:6). But by mentioning forgiveness of sins, he made himself (much more - EJV) vulnerable (cf. 8:20)'.

Furthermore, the presuppositions of the scribes towards illness, was also challenged. Illness, in this case being paralysed, was viewed as caused by sin. Put differently, illness was regarded as the punishment of (some) evil. Disease was generally traced to sin (cf France 1985:165; Gnilka 1986:326). But now, as Malina and Rohrbaugh (1992:81) see it, Jesus first addresses the condition of illness (being disvalued and casted out of his social network) and forgives the paralytic his sin, and then addresses the condition of his disease (thus heals his biomedical malfunction, namely being paralytic). By forgiving the sin of the lame man, and then curing him (9:2), Jesus countered this generally accepted view, and this could have undermined the power of the scribes. As intellectuals of society, the scribes were, amongst everything else, responsible for the creating and maintenance of values and perceptions. By challenging generally accepted ideas, he indirectly challenged the scribes' authority.

The reaction of the crowd once again, as we have previously seen (7:29), heightens this (now manifest) conflict. In response to the healing and especially Jesus' controversy with the scribes, the crowd here accepted Jesus' view, and thus rejected the authority of their religious leaders. Not only were they surprised

(like in previous responses), they were filled with respect (ἐφοβήθησαν) and praised God (ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεόν) that through Jesus, it became *possible and necessary* to forgive sin among people (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις; cf 9:8). The crowd honoured Jesus. Honour is a limited good, if one wins honour, someone else loses it (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:76). In accepting Jesus' authority, and in honouring Him, the scribes' honour was due to decline. The crowd, in accepting Jesus' view, gave the scribes all the more reason to suspect him, and label him as blasphemous.

Jesus, in this episode, for the first time in Matthew 8 and 9 directly challenges the scribes as he addresses them in 9:6. He wanted to cure the paralytic in order for *them* to see his authority (ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας). Here Jesus *himself* stands in conflict with the scribes. A contributing factor (or source of grievance) to conflict, as we have seen from Kriesberg (1973:76-77; see chapter 3, the section on *Changes in attainment and expectations*), is an inconsistency (dichotomy) between what is expected and what is attained. Jesus expects more from the Jewish leaders than what they actually attain. They do not reach the goal of real forgiveness of people on earth at all and this Jesus challenges by his demonstration of the miracle. The authority of forgiveness which they claim to be only from God and belonging to God, has to be passed on to the people on earth (to man) as well. Jesus himself had this extended authority to pass on the authority of forgiveness; he also expected it from the leaders - which they failed to do.

If we apply this as transparency to the community of Matthew, the community has to realize that the forgiveness of God has to be realized and actualized by the people (cf Greeven [1955] 1980:216; see also Luz 1971:156,161; Sand 1986:195). It is especially Davies and Allison (1991:89) who correctly apply this passage to the situation after 70 AD. They say that we know that with the temple (the centre of the sacrificial system designed to reconcile Israel with God and to assure forgiveness), in ruins, religious Jews had to think anew about atonement. At such time it might have been opportune to preach that God, in Jesus, had dealt with sin once and for all. Davies and Allison (1991:89-90) proceed:

However that may be, Matthew's most characteristic contribution to the theological idea of forgiveness is his emphasis upon its pre-conditions. ✳*Divine forgiveness cannot be appropriated unless one forgives others* (5.21-6; 6.12,14-5; 18.15-35)...God's forgiveness demands man's forgiveness. Perhaps again we may think of the situation at the end of the first century. The rabbis at Jamnia, aware of the dangers of Jewish disunity, were much concerned with unifying the factions that survived the war. Similarly Matthew, in the face of an increasingly diverse and expanding Christian movement, in which Jewish...and Gentile Christians continued to grow apart, may have given much reflection to the need for tolerance and forgiveness (my emphasis).

Jesus does not refer to the 'Son of man' as a title here, it merely indicates 'man/mankind' (or as Hahn 1974:22 calls it: *einzelne Menschen*; see also Sand 1974:66; Harrington 1991:122). In this context he is clearly referring to himself as 'man' and thus identifying with human beings and in this bringing forgiveness to humankind. The reference to *υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* in 9:6, in relation to *τοῖς ἀνθρώποις* in 9:8 indicates that forgiveness is a human affair and not restricted to heaven alone, thus also the words *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς* in 9:6 (cf Beare 1981:223; Patte 1987:126; see also Gundry 1982:164; Davies & Allison 1991:96). It is in fact by the authority of Jesus that it is expected of man, and of course of the disciples in particular (in the context of the middle section), that forgiveness is seen as a particular attitude to be articulated (cf Gnilka 1986:327-328). Small wonder that Gundry (1982:161) calls this pericope: 'Jesus' authority to forgive sins as model of the disciples' authority to forgive sins'. This the scribes seemingly refused to realize, although it was in their own interests to do so in order to attain some unity among their contemporaries (see the above citation of Davies & Allison 1991:90). Therefore Jesus sharply attacked (labelled) them as having 'evil thoughts' (cf 9:4). In the interests of the sinners, one should be able to forgive them.

5.2.2.5 The calling of Matthew: Matthew 9:9-13

The episode of the calling of Matthew (9:9-13) acts as the conclusion of the middle part. In this episode we have to do: (1) with manifest conflict, as in the episode of the healing of the paralytic (9:2-12) and (2) again with conflict on an ideological level. In the previous episode the conflict was with the scribes, this time it is between Jesus and the Pharisees. Rivkin (1978:114) remarks that Matthew (like Mark), joined these groups together to refer to them as being one and the same, namely authoritative teachers of the law. However, this is too simplistic. In following Kingsbury (1987:58-60; 1988a:17-24, 115-118; see also Van Tilborg 1972:6; Smith 1989:18; I am also referring to the section on *The retainers* in chapter 4), we will not view them as 'one and the same', but rather regard them, in a literary sense, as belonging to one of the group of narrative characters, the so-called 'antagonists', under the term 'the Jewish leaders' or the 'religious leaders'. As Kingsbury (1988a:17) says:

> The term 'leaders' is itself used in Matthew's story to refer to groups of persons who occupy positions of authority in Israel (15:14; 23:16, 24). Literary-critically, therefore, this term can also aptly be used to denote all such groups of persons. *Those who comprise the religious leaders are the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes* (my emphasis).

These various groups of leaders are presented as a unified front against Jesus, although they historically were much more diverse (cf Kingsbury 1987:58; 1988a:18; see also Van Tilborg 1972:6). But this presentation as unified front is not only literary-critically understandable (as protagonist against antagonist), it is also likely from conflict theory, as presented by Dahrendorf (1959:126; see the section on *Incompatible interests* in chapter 3). There are but two parties in any particular conflict, those who wish to sustain the *status quo* and those who press for change. Therefore, both from a literary-critical and conflict theoretical perspective, we are in this episode still dealing with the same initial conflict

between Jesus and the 'leaders', although the (antagonistic) characters have seemingly changed from the scribes to the Pharisees.[10]

As the closing episode of the middle part, a few 'old' themes are taken up again and concluded or intensified. The theme of following Jesus (ἀκολουθέω) is finally concluded and interpreted in terms of the interests of Jesus. The verb ἀκολουθέω is used again in 9:19 and 9:27, but not as a theme as such. Again the ongoing conflict is intensified to an ideological level. In fact, the calling of Matthew, the tax collector, was: (1) an extreme demonstration and (2) a legitimization of Jesus' interests, for in terms of the Pharisaic view and purity laws, a tax collector was almost the most extreme example of a sinner.

On the level of demonstration, it is quite common knowledge that the tax collectors were of the most unfavourable and undesirable types in society, as of course in almost all societies (cf Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:82). As such, and in relation to the theme of fellowship, this episode demonstrates two aspects, which have been dealt with in previous episodes of the middle section as well: (1) the *immediate* following and loyal response of a called disciple, here in the person of the tax collector (see also 8:18-22 on how a would-be-follower should react, with the practical examples and consequences in 8:23-27 and 8:28-9:1), and (2) the *practical consequence of forgiveness of sin* (cf 9:2-8) in the calling of a sinner and the physical dining with the sinners.

The tax collector immediately responded when Jesus called him. But what is more significant is that he exchanged his own vested economic interests for those of Jesus. He left aside his daily occupation in order to follow Jesus. Whether this tax collector was wealthy, is hard to say. Malina and Rohrbaugh (1992:82) say that only some tax collectors became rich, but that many clearly did not.

More emphasis should be given to the aspect of the practical consequences of forgiveness of sin, in relation to the previous episode. The table fellowship of Jesus in this episode clearly indicates that Jesus' word about forgiveness in 9:2 was more than mere words (cf Davies & Allison 1991:100-101). We have already seen that the ideological legitimization that only God may forgive sin, had the danger that it could mean that forgiveness on earth, among people, was

unnecessary and impossible. Here, with him being a tax collector, we have a case in which it was regarded as impossible to be forgiven, even by God. The Pharisees had the opinion that the tax collectors were not able to repent because they could not know how much people they had deceived (cf Lohse 1977:56). And because they could not repent, they could not be forgiven, because repentance was a precondition for forgiveness. The tax collectors within Jewish society were an especially degraded and despised group of people because they sold their services to the foreign oppressor to the detriment of their own people. They were literally engaged in robbery, for some of them were helping their principals to mulct the public, and no doubt, part of what they collected, stuck to their own fingers. They were regarded as robbers and frequently classified with prostitutes and sinners (cf Bamberger 1962:522; Gnilka 1986:331).[11] Small wonder that the Pharisees granted them no forgiveness.

Nevertheless Jesus calls the tax collector without the precondition of repentance to become his disciple. He chooses him, an utmost sinner, and thus this episode is an illustration of to what extremes forgiveness, articulated in the previous episode, could be taken. This calling was a merciful act, similar to healing. It denotes removing of sinfulness and uncleanness (cf Patte 1987:129). But, not only does Jesus forgive and call an utmost sinner, he even dines with him. He physically comes very close to the sinners (tax collectors, thus the outcasts). To share a meal was a sign of closeness and intimacy. This opens the need for me to mention something on the household, for the meal took place within a house (cf Mt 9:10).

The household is an important setting, especially in relation to the conflict with the Jewish leaders. One of the confrontations between Jesus and the Pharisees was because of Jesus' table-fellowship (which should have taken place in the setting of the household) with the tax collectors and sinners (9:10). The fact that Jesus went into the household of Peter (8:14) and that he dined with sinners, indicated his willingness to enter into the close (but not closed) and private (yet not exclusive) spheres of the sinners. The characteristic features of domestic life was rooted in the institution of kinship: solidarity, loyalty, trust, mutuality of obligations, generosity, sharing and the like (cf Elliott 1991a:103). The household

indicated hospitality, fellowship and mutual support. It was a place par excellence of an inclusive fellowship and reciprocal service. It was the place (setting) for showing mercy and performing merciful acts of loving kindness (cf Elliott 1991a:106). Says Elliott (1991a:115; see also 1991b:390).

> The private space of the house and home was the scene where
> hospitality, generosity, friendship, deeds of mercy, acts of mutual aid
> and comfort, familial love and fraternal support, unmeasured and
> unlimited, welded bonds of intimacy and solidarity.

The same is true of food and meal codes. They also symbolize social identity, commitment and loyalty. As Elliott (1991b:391) says: 'Dining scenes like domestic scenes, or dining events within domestic settings, describe the social engagements of Jesus and his followers, *the inclusive scope of their association with the margined and the outsiders and their practice of material aid and social support*' (my emphasis). This stands against the social setting of the temple, to which the Jewish leaders were attached. As Elliott (1991a:101) states: 'Temple function-aries and other agencies of the Temple apparatus appear guided by their own self-interests in presenting an exploitive regime in which the mighty remain in their seats *and nothing but disdain and neglect is shown to those of low degree*' (my emphasis). The temple was seen rather as a place of oppression of the poor and powerless, redistribution of resources according to interests of the wielders of power, of *exclusive space* and society according to purity (cf Elliott 1991a:108-109), which indeed stands in sharp contrast to the household setting. That is why these household settings (as spacial indicators) also contributed to and indicated strong conflict of interests between Jesus and the Jewish leaders: the household (and dining with sinners) indicated an inclusive community against the Jewish leaders' temple as an exclusive space.

Jesus thus was willing to notoriously identify himself with the undesirables (cf France 1985:167). It cannot be said better than in Patte's (1987:128) words:

Calling sinners is presented as a merciful act which is opposed to calling righteous people and offering sacrifices or partaking in sacrifices. This opposition expresses that calling sinners involve more than saying a word to them: *it also involves being associated with sinners, indeed, eating with them, and consequently breaking the priestly laws of purity* according to which any meal is like a sacrificial meal, since sinners by definition do not follow these laws....*Mercy - calling sinners - demands from Jesus association with sinners, and thus sharing their uncleanness* (my emphasis).

But, this calling (and thus the forgiving) of sinners and even more so the dining (and thus the associating) with the sinners, was a great cause for conflict of interests: *Jesus here openly chooses the side of the disgraced*, and he legitimizes his position by the analogy of the physician (9:12) and the ideological challenge to the Pharisees (9:13).[12]

Jesus' strongest ideological legitimization of his position, lies in his repudiation of the Pharisees: πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστιν, Ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· (9:13). Jesus here directly challenged the Pharisees in the second person plural (μάθετε), as he did with the scribes in the previous episode. What Jesus regarded as a merciful act: healing, forgiving, calling and dining with outcasts, the Pharisees regarded as disgraceful and unclean in itself. The Pharisees were careful not to be spotted in the company of sinners because it would jeopardize their position of privilege (cf Beare 1981:227). But it was precisely here that Jesus challenged them most intensely. Jesus 'caught' them out on their own value system. The value of acting mercifully, which Jesus in fact did, was also a precept of the Pharisees, especially after the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD, for the Pharisees then emphasised a 'change of heart' (see the citation of Neusner below). We assume that Matthew (the Gospel) was written approximately 80 AD (cf Luz 1985:76). Thus it was probable and likely that Matthew (the author) knew the core value that was widely propagated by one of the leading Pharisees of that time, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, who was the founder of the assembly at Yavneh, and the leader of the Jewish reconstruction after 70 AD.[13] To Matthew the

Pharisees were the dominant group in the period of *formative Judaism* (see above in chapter 4). Therefore he knew and shared their values.

In an attempt to rebuild Judaism, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, because the temple was destroyed, wanted to lay more emphasis on a change of heart rather than sacrificial duties. As Neusner (1973:98) states when he cites Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai:

> The surviving Pharisees of Jerusalem, assembled at Yavneh by Yohanan ben Zakkai, offered another viewpoint: The old order endures. The Lord still is served, sin is expiated, and reconciliation is achieved through the new sacrifice, which is deeds of loving-kindness:
>
> > For we have another atonement, which is like sacrifice,
> > and what is it? Deeds of lovingkindness, as it is said,
> > *For I desire mercy and not sacrifice* (Hos. 6:6).

What was needed after the destruction of the temple was a re-emphasis on mercy, an act of compassion and loving-kindness (cf Neusner 1982a:168-169; Luz 1990:44, n.38). Neusner (1982a:170) says: 'Yohanan thought that through *hesed* the Jews might make atonement, and that the sacrifices now demanded of them were love and mercy'.

In following the theory of Luz (1985:66-67, 70, 1987:158), namely that the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders was a transparent of the conflict between Matthew and the leaders after 70 AD, we assume that the author tranparented the above- mentioned AD 70-core value of the Pharisees back to the contemporary Pharisees of Jesus. This view can also be supported by Neusner (1973:1-4). He argues that since we do not know much of the pre-70 AD Pharisees, since there are no sources left from that period, all the information we have of the Pharisees of that period, comes from sources after 70 AD. He says: 'All of the several sources concerning the pre-70 Pharisaic Judaism were shaped

in response to the crisis of 70 AD' (Neusner 1973:3). This includes the Gospels of the New Testament as sources.

In terms of the so-called *formative Judaism* (see chapter 4 above), the community of Matthew and the Pharisees had the same kind of organization. The community, as we have argued before was still part of Judaism. Therefore it is likely that they still shared some of the same values of Judaism. *Thus Jesus and the Pharisees shared the same ideological basis.*[14] This made the position of the Pharisees extremely vulnerable (see Lenski 1966:181 on the vulnerability that ideologies can create; see chapter 3), for Matthew (the author) assumed that they *did not meet with their own core values*, which Jesus, however, rightly did. Matthew (the author) thus incorporated the core value of the Yavnean Academy, which was widely accepted, and a citation from the Scriptures, into his story of the calling of Matthew (the tax collector) as an illustration of the full and real consequences of this widely accepted principle. *Through this he articulated the position of Jesus, for by this repudiatory challenge to the Pharisees on their own accepted values, Jesus (and the author) legitimized their own chosen interests, namely the interests of the disgraced.* Jesus here both sharply challenges the Jewish leaders for not seeing the full consequences of their own ideological system, *and* at the same time reinforces his own position ideologically.

A short remark has to be made on the disciples in 9:11. The Pharisees directed their question to the disciples, and not to Jesus himself. Through this the disciples are willingly or unwillingly involved in the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. They are, as followers of Jesus, in this way forced to choose, they are also forced to make a choice of interests. The narrative, however, does not give an indication of what their choice eventually was. It only indicates, and this is sufficient here, that they in principle had to do it. Thus this was another challenge to their loyalty, which was a previous theme in the context of the middle section of the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9.

5.2.3 The end of the plot: Matthew 9:14-35
Luz (1990:34-49; see also Beare 1981:224; Davies & Allison 1991:107) takes the controversy between Jesus and the disciples of John as part of a whole of three

controversy-scenes (9:2-17; the controversies with the scribes, Pharisees and the disciples of John). Nevertheless, we will rather follow Patte (1987:130) in that at 9:14, the third group of miracles starts, with the controversy with the disciples of John as the introductory episode. Thus we remain with a quite symmetrical structure, as in the other two major sections. This episode, however, still acts as a link between the two main sections, indeed as the third opposition against Jesus. The last section ends at 9:35, again following the symmetrical pattern of the other two main sections, because in Matthew 9:35 we find the third major ideological legitimization of Jesus' position, in fact, it is the clearest of the three (see 8:17; 9:12-13 - they all form part of the concluding episodes of the major sections). Clearly 9:36 starts with a new discourse between Jesus and the disciples. This end section thus comprises an introduction (9:14-17); three (four?) miracle stories: the episode of the ruler's daughter and the woman who touched Jesus' garment (9:18-26), the healing of the blind men (9:27-31), and the healing of the dumb man (9:32-33a); and a quite extended conclusive episode (9:33b-35).

According to Van Aarde (1982:72; 1991a:102), an unravelling of the plot is worked out in the conclusion of the plot. At the end everything worked out in the beginning and developed in the middle, becomes necessary (cf Goodman cited by Matera 1987:239). Thus, the developing conflict necessarily has to come to an outburst and it does in 9:34. Indeed, as Luz (1990:49-50) says in regard to the concluding part:

> Alle Themen und manche Motive der vorangehenden Abschnitte tauchen in diesem Schlußabschnitt nochmals auf. Das Thema des Glaubens (9,22.28f) nimmt 8,10.13 auf. Die Nachfolge der Blinden (9,27, vgl. 19) erinnert an 8,18-27; 9,9. Die Szenerie dieser Geschichte (9,27) nimmt diejenige von 9,9f auf. Das »Schlafen« und »Auferwecktwerden« des Mädchens (9,24f) enspricht dem Verhalten Jesu im Boot (8,25f). Der Christustitel *κύριος* 9,28 nimmt den christologischen Grundtenor von 8,2-25 auf. Die Anwesenheit der Jünger (9,19) erinnert daran, daß es 8,18-27; 9,8-15 um die Gemeinde ging. Die Volksmassen sprechen 9,33 nochmals aus, daß der

Evangelist Wunder Jesu in Israel erzählte (vgl. bes. 8,1-17). Die ablehnende Reaktion der Pharisäer 9,34 hält fest, daß es in 9,2-17 um Jesu willen in Israel zur Spaltung kam. So ist der Titel »Abschlie-ßende Wunder« (9:18-34 - EJV) nicht Verlegenheitsausdruck. Vielmehr will der Evangelist nochmals alle »Stränge« seines »Zopfes« zeigen und bündeln. Das abschließende Nein der Pharisäer zu Jesus (9,34) ist ein für die Fortsetzung (vgl. 12,24!) folgenreicher »Ertrag« dieses Teils der Erzählung.

5.2.3.1 Introduction: The controversy with the disciples of John: Matthew 9:14-17

In this episode, we find the appearance of a new group in confrontation with Jesus: the disciples of John. But although it is a new group, the issues of the conflict remain the same. In fact, the disciples of John here (as against their position in Mt 3:7-10) rather seems to be part of the Jewish leaders. They *seemingly* join the interests and (old) values of the Pharisees rather than those of Jesus (cf France 1985:168; Luz 1990:47). Gundry (1982:169) says that Matthew wants a progression from the scribes (9:1-8) to the Pharisees (9:9-13) to John's disciples (9:14-17). As an introductory episode, it prepares the scene for 9:34, the outburst of the conflict. But as part of the end-section of the narrative, it links back to the previous episode in that both 9:11 and 9:14, broadly speaking, refer to ritual prescriptions. Furthermore, the three analogies (that of the wedding guests [9:15], of the unshrunken patch on the old garment [9:16], and of the wine skins [9:17]), more or less wrap up what was said in the previous episodes. This pericope stresses two important points: the fact that the timing (and occasion) for ritual prescriptions should be appropriate, and (because Jesus held such a view about the timing of the fasting) the total foreignness of Jesus' view and mission.

Jesus in his answer to the disciples of John on the question of fasting (9:14), is not against fasting as such (cf France 1985:169; Patte 1987:130), or broader: he was not against ritual prescriptions as such (see Davies & Allison 1991:115). What his answer: 'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them?' (9:15) boils down to, is that he was against a rigorous view of 'fasting purely for fasting's sake'. Jesus reveals a quite pragmatic attitude in his

answer in the analogy of the wedding guests. To him the ritual must suit the time and the occasion and vice versa. And while he was with his disciples, the time was not suitable for mourning. He refers to himself as the bridegroom. Therefore there should be joy because of what Jesus has done. It was time for a feast. He took the interests of the sinners and the disgraced. Therefore the disciples of John and the Pharisees had to realize that they (and the sinners) were still in the presence of the bridegroom. They were still in association with Jesus who associated with tax collectors and sinners. In relation to 9:10, where he dines with sinners, here in the analogy of the wedding, there is once again an association with sinners, but this time at a wedding feast. The bridegroom brings mercy (9:13) and joy. There was no time (not at that stage) for weeping, but for mercy (cf Patte 1987:130; see also Gundry 1982:169; Sand 1986:199; Davies & Allison 1991:107, 110; Harrington 1991:129; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:83).

The two sayings (analogies) about the old and the new, indicates the total strangeness of his ministry. It is so radically new, that it does not fit with the old. Not that what he does and teaches was not known: the Jewish leaders knew of mercy and forgiveness. The newness lies in the real consequences of his teachings and deeds. He breaks through the old interpretations of what God desires. He brings forgiveness, healing and reinstallation into the community and mercy on earth (cf 9:6). His attitude is different from the old ways (cf Patte 1987:131). He sees the will of God as the manifestation of merciful acts. Old values (ideologies): ritual purity, forgiveness, mercy and fasting must suit new conditions and new interests; they are not there for their own sake (fasting for fasting's sake and mercy for mercy's sake), they must fit the interests of the underprivileged. This is how the link between the three sets of analogies is laid. Furthermore, the newness lays in the *new time*, the time of doing (cf Luz 1990:47); the time of joy and mercy. Thus there is conflict between new interests and old values. These values do not have to be replaced as such, they need to be reinterpreted, or, to state it differently, dormant norms (forgiveness and mercy) have to be reaffirmed (cf Coser 1956:124 on the reaffirmation of norms as one of the functions of conflict; see above). Matthew also emphasises in 9:17 that both old and new should be preserved. 'The emphasis is on discontinuity. But the

importance of continuity is also voiced' (Davies & Allison 1991:112). Because there is conflict with the Jewish leaders, these old values, as pursued by the Jewish leaders, need to be reinterpreted. They could not remain untouched. If there was no conflict, these values might have been forgotten by the early Matthean community as well as by the Jewish leaders. Because of the conflict, even the readers' own interests have to be re-evaluated and changed to that of Jesus'. We can say it in the words of Harrington (1991:129):

> The passage also provides an important perspective on how Matthew perceived the Christian movement with respect to Judaism. For him (Matthew - EJV) it was the way in which Judaism could be preserved (9:17). Its preservation could happen only if the program of 'mercy' was followed and not the program of '(Temple) sacrifice' (9:13).

5.2.3.2 The raising of the ruler's daughter and the healing of a woman: Matthew 9:18-26

As far as the development of the conflict is concerned, not much that is new evolves from this episode, since it has much in common with the healing of the centurion's slave in 8:5-13. Only a few issues will be dealt with: (1) the question of authority and stratification, (2) the survival of the woman, (3) the emerging of conflict with the crowd and (4) the potentially ongoing conflict.

The ruler, as one of the characters in this episode, is nowhere described further. We do not know from the Matthean version who he was or what position he occupied. He is only described as ἄρχων εἷς (one of the rulers; Mt 9:18), which is a general term for an official or important person (cf Schweizer 1975:229; see also Luz 1990:52; Davies & Allison 1991:125). It would be difficult, from the scant evidence of this pericope, to place him in a specific class. Nevertheless, he would have been an authoritative person, as the centurion in 8:5ff was, belonging to the upper stratum of his society (whether as ruler or as part of the retainer class). Furthermore, there is no doubt he would have been a Jew, for the flute players (musicians) were only employed in Jewish households as characteristic part of a Jewish mourning ritual (cf 9:23: see Schweizer 1975:229; Davies & Allison

1991:131).   It was this Jewish ruler (leader?), as part of the upper stratum, who fell down paying tribute to Jesus, and through this acknowledged Jesus' authority and expressed his faith and confidence in Jesus' power.   The fact that his daughter is described as already dead, further heightens the firm confidence this ruler has in Jesus (see the interpretation of Suhl 1980c:464 on the issue of the death of the girl in terms of Mark and Matthew; see also the section on *Redaktionsgeschichte* in chapter 1).   Through the fact that his daughter is described as dead, the faith of the ruler is magnified (see Gundry 1982:172; Davies & Allison 1991:124, 126-127; Hare 1993:105).   The bowing down in paying tribute could be seen as the exceeding of the levels of stratification (if we assume that Jesus belonged to the lower class, whether the peasant or the artisan class; cf Saldarini 1988a:44; see also the issue of stratification in chapter 4).   This exceeding of the stratification levels was done by a Jewish authoritative person.   This could only have added oil to the fire of the ongoing conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

But Jesus' authority not only extended over the lines of stratification, it also exceeded the borderline of life and death.   His authority knows no limits, not even death (see also Davies & Allison 1991:124).   His extended authority/power is even communicated by the fringe of his garment (cf 9:20; see Patte 1987:132).   What both the raising of the dead girl and the healing of the woman demonstrates (or symbolizes), is that Jesus is interested in the lives of people.   He is primarily interested in living people, no matter of what social status.   This interest in the *lives* of people demonstrates why it was not the right time to mourn (cf 9:15).   The stretching out of his hand to the dead girl (as in 8:1-4), symbolizes his helping power (*helfende Macht*; cf Luz 1990:52).   Without Jesus' help, the girl remains dead (both literally and figuratively).

The woman, in touching Jesus' garment in the hope to be cured, acts here on her own behalf.   Therefore it is not always only to be regarded as a negative attitude to pursue one's own interests.   The narrative clearly illustrates that without Jesus, she would have remained ill.   Thus, for her own good and her own survival, she had to turn to Jesus and this is even regarded positively by Jesus.   He regarded this as if she was acting out of faith (cf 9:22; see also Hutter 1984:135; Davies & Allison 1991:124).   She was in great need for so many years.

For so many years she was regarded as unclean, and had to miss out on affection and contact, so vital for survival (cf Lenski 1966:38; see above). Therefore, she revealed an unlimited trust in Jesus' power to help her (cf Gnilka 1986:341). Jesus recognized this faith. As Luz (1990:53; see also Robbins 1987:504) correctly says:

> Die Geschichte wird...zu einem Paradigma des matthäischen Glauben-verständnisses. *Glaube ist etwas Aktives, ein Wagnis unbegrenzten Vertrauens auf Jesus* (vgl. 14,28f). Auf solchen Wagnisse...antwor-tet Jesus und spricht Gottes Hilfe zu (8,10.13; 9,29; 15,28). *Von seiten des Menschen ist Glaube gewagtes Gebet*; dem zweideutigen und schwachen menschlichen Wagnis hilft Gott mit seiner Kraft auf (my emphasis).

This πίστις of the woman, stands in sharp contrast with the ὀλιγοπιστία of the disciples in 8:26. Faith meant the right insight in Jesus' power, the courage and the willingness to act and to turn to Jesus in need. To this attitude (of both the ruler and the woman) Jesus responded, and he was prepared to himself become unclean on their behalf. The woman touching Jesus, because of her *haemorrhage* (menstrual disorder) made Jesus ceremonially unclean (Lev 15:25ff), and Jesus' touching of the dead girl, also made him unclean (cf France 1985:170; see also Davies & Allison 1991:128; Harrington 1991:131; Hare 1993:106). By turning to Jesus the woman again had a chance to survive.

The crowd, from the beginning up to this episode, supported Jesus' authority and power. However, here (9:23) for the first time, there is evidence of an emerging conflict between Jesus and the crowd. They troubled Jesus (τὸν ὄχλον θορυβούμενον). Although they subjected themselves to Jesus' command (cf Davies & Allison 1991:132), they for the first time doubted Jesus' power. Thus, although they at first acknowledged his authority, this acknowledgement already bears in itself the seed of more conflict. Here this becomes apparent, and the question at the beginning whether they will remain following (acknowledging) Jesus, becomes acute. For the first time there emerges some doubt as to the

sincereness of their acknowledgement of Jesus' power. The question is not (yet) answered whether they will follow Jesus to the end, yet the seeds of rejection already lie at the surface. Even acknowledgement has in it the possibility of rejection, and thus the conflict will go on because of Jesus' choice of interests. Furthermore, because Jesus' message is told on earth ($\epsilon i\varsigma$ $\delta\lambda\eta\nu$ $\tau\grave{\eta}\nu$ $\gamma\hat{\eta}\nu$) the potential for conflict remains ever present (see also below; 9:31).

Sand (1986:202) sees this pericope as transparent of the community of Matthew. It is connected with the death and resurrection of Jesus. Death was vindicated. Salvation has broken through. It is time to live.

5.2.3.3 The healing of the two blind men: Matthew 9:27-31

Luz (1990:57; see also Davies & Allison 1991:133) calls this pericope 'sehr knapp und farblos', and we can agree with him. There is not much new at this point. Nevertheless we may concentrate on two aspects of the conflict: (1) the acknowledgement of Jesus' authority receives a new dimension with the notion of Jesus as the Son of David ($u\grave{\iota}\grave{o}\varsigma$ $\Delta\alpha u\acute{\iota}\delta$), which here features in a prominent role and prepares the way for the crowd's reaction in 9:33b; and (2) the seeds of disloyalty (and conflict) already lie in the seemingly strong acknowledgement of Jesus' power by the two blind men.

For the first time in the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9 (but also in the Gospel as a whole) Jesus is portrayed as the curing Messiah of Israel (see Duling 1978:393). It is as if Matthew first had to substantiate his view through the previous miracles and that he is here rounding it off. He first tells how Jesus heals the people and then he connects it with the title *Son of David*. With the previous miracle stories at his disposal, Matthew can now present a corrective view of the Messiah, which (the view) was present among the Jews and their leaders. There is no doubt that the *Son of David* refers to the *Messiah*. As Maier (1983:314; see also Grundmann 1972:277; Gnilka 1986:344; Sand 1986:203; Patte 1987:133; Luz 1990:58; Davies & Allison 1991:135) says:

> »Davidssohn« ist ständige Messiasbezeichnung bei Pharisäern, Sadduzäern und Zeloten, also den meisten jüdischen Parteien...(Er) ist

bei »Davidssohn« kein Zweifel mehr möglich, daß Jesus hier als Messias angesprochen wird.

The corrective view Matthew wanted to present is as Luz (1990:60) states:

Gegenüber der Hoffnung Israels auf den königlichen Messias, die Matthäus aufnimmt (Kap.1), bedeutet das eine Korrektur: *Israels Messias ist in Wahrheit der, der die Kranken seines Volkes heilt* (8,1-9,31) (my emphasis).[15]

Thus, the long expected Messiah of Israel not only was part of the lineage of King David (cf Hahn 1974:273,278; Gnilka 1986:344), but in relation to the aspect of the newness of Jesus' ministry (9:16-17; cf Patte 1987:133), the Son of David, or the Messiah also came primarily to heal. A *characteristic* of the Messiah was to act mercifully (cf Gnilka 1986:345). This acts as a further legitimization of Jesus' position in as much as he is identified as the Son of David. The blind men are made to acknowledge Jesus' legitimate position. An element of conflict lies in the fact that it was the *blind men* who were made to present this new corrective perspective of Jesus' authority, and not those who normally act in society as ideological legitimizers, i.e. the intellectuals and the leaders of a particular society. In the words of Maier (1983:314): 'Israels Arme, repräsentiert durch die beiden elenden Blinden, *wagen es also zuerst*, Jesus als Messias anzusprechen!' (my emphasis). Therefore they address Jesus as Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυίδ.

On the issue of Jesus as the Son of David, we have to make a few remarks. Matthew, in order to legitimize his position, takes up an old tradition. Not only was Jesus seen as a descent of David (thus Son of David; cf Mt 1:1), and therefore he had ascribed honour (cf Duling 1992:113; see also Van Aarde 1987:264, 1994b:64), he was also more than this: he was essentially the thera-peutic Son of David (cf Duling 1978:399, 410). Jesus heals as David's son. Davies and Allison (1991:135-136), taking it from the articles of Duling (1975:23-5) and Chilton (1982:97), say that *ben Dāwid*, is always used in the Old Testament, with reference to Solomon, who was later renowned as a mighty

healer, exorcist, and magician. Matthew knew the Jewish legends regarding Solomon's power and probably intended to present Jesus in this light. In this way Jesus not only was descended from David, he was, like Solomon, a skilled healer (cf Davies & Allison 1991:136; see also Gundry 1982:176). This furthermore legitimated Jesus', and indirectly, the position of the Matthean community.

The second aspect we want to address has to do with the question why Jesus so abruptly ordered the (healed) blind men to remain silent. Almost all the consulted commentaries regard this as a difficult question with no apparent answer (cf Grundmann 1972:278; Maier 1983:375; Gnilka 1986:345; Patte 1986:133; Luz 1990:62). This command to remain silent, as Gnilka (1986:345) says, has no Christological implications any more, like it had in Mark. But, what then? I would suggest that he (Jesus, as presented by Matthew) wanted to illustrate something. It might not be all that convincing, but at least it is an attempt to explain it in terms of our conflict theory. I here take one of the categories of the theory of conflict.

Conflict is always open-ended (even never ending); the resolution of one conflict has at the same time the seed for the next. Thus, Jesus is acknowledged for his authority by the blind men, but at the same time, even in their loyalty there lies the seeds of disloyalty and conflict. But how?

The healing of the blind men, like that of the woman of the previous miracle, is a good example of faith. The blind men had the courage to act and to call on Jesus for help. Indeed, in this Jesus recognized faith. Even the blind men very strongly expressed their faith in the words Ναί, κύριε. There is no doubt that they properly acknowledged and recognized Jesus' power and authority (like all the beneficiaries of Jesus' miracles). Indeed they had confidence in Jesus. Nevertheless, ironically, although they were able to physically see again, they remained spiritually blind (cf Maier 1983:315). Despite their strong recognition of Jesus, they disobeyed him and they did not internalize Jesus' viewpoint. Their strong expression of loyalty, Ναί, κύριε, had at the same time in it the seeds of disloyalty and disobedience. Patte (1986:134) says that Jesus also has an authority that these men did not acknowledge; therefore they disobeyed him. Therefore their report about Jesus, positive as it was, at the same time failed to present him as he truly was. As Patte (1986:134) proceeds: 'Despite their own words, *they do*

not perceive that the fundamental characteristic of his authority is that he is the manifestation of God's mercy. They do not (really - EJV) recognize the radical newness of God's manifestation in him' (my emphasis). Therefore their loyalty at the same time was possible disloyalty and blindness regarding what Jesus stood for, and therefore they also stood in confrontation with Jesus (although they were marginalized themselves). To be healed from blindness means (metaphorically speaking) more than to be able to see. It means to be able to 'see' Jesus' real purpose. Jesus opened the eyes of those who believed, but believing does not end there: it means clearly recognizing Jesus' mercy, not only for their own benefit, but also for the sake of all the other in need. I agree with Davies and Allison (1991:138) that the disobedience of the cured blind shows that first-hand observation or experience of the supernatural scarcely guarantees faithful discipleship.

Furthermore, like in the previous episode, Jesus' actions were narrated throughout all that region (*ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκείνῃ*; cf 9:31; see also 9:26). Because Jesus' message, actions, and viewpoint are narrated all over, the potential for conflict to go on beyond the episode itself, is heightened (as we have also seen from the episode on the healing of the Gadarene demoniacs in 8:28-9:1). Wherever Jesus takes the interests of the marginalized 'throughout all the earth', *conflict is likely to erupt, not only with his opponents, but also with his disciples* (8:21), *the* (at first acknowledging) *crowd* (9:23, 25) *and even the beneficiaries or marginalized* (9:31).

5.2.3.4 The healing of a dumb man: Matthew 9:32-33a

This episode is linked to the previous episode by Αὐτῶν δὲ ἐξερχομένων (9:32). In fact, blindness and dumbness are normally tied together (cf Schweizer 1975:231). Therefore, like the previous miracle, we can view both it physically and metaphorically: the dumb man, after being healed, is able to speak (about the great deeds of Jesus), but now not without sense (like possessed by a devil), since the devil was exorcised. This episode prepares the reader for the reaction of the crowd and the Pharisees. It serves to sharpen the memories, for in this small episode almost all the previous elements are present: Jesus' willingness to heal the

sick, exorcising demons and thus taking away sin (demon possessedness was a sign of evil), and it leads to understanding the reaction clearly.

5.2.3.5 The closing episode: Matthew 9:33b-35

This closing episode comprises three parts: the twofold reaction of the crowd (9:33b) and the Pharisees (9:34), and a summary remark in 9:35.

The crowd responded by being surprised (ἐθαύμασαν), they were amazed that what Jesus accomplished could be possible in Israel (i.e. amongst the Jews). What Jesus had done, had no parallel. As Maier (1983:317) says:

> Nach der prophetenlosen Zeit, die Israel zeit Maleachi, also zeit ca. 450 v.Chr. erlebte, ist Jesus auch nach dem Urteil jüdischer Historiker die erste große prophetische Gestalt in Israel. Seine Predigt und seine Machttaten sind ohne wirkliche Parallele.

Their expectations (as reflected at the beginning of the story) were met: He really has more authority than anyone else in Israel. They responded overwhelmingly positively in 9:33b.

But, despite this positive reaction, which surely must have heightened the conflict with the Pharisees further (as it did in 9:34) because they once again did not recognize the authority of their leaders but that of Jesus, there still remains some doubt with regard to the crowd. The initial question whether they will follow Jesus (see above), is still not answered. Their being amazed, is still not faith nor fellowship (discipleship), nor an open choice for the interests and position of Jesus. They are still standing on the sideline. In our discussion on the causality of the text, we will return to this aspect again (see below). Their reaction has great propaganda value for the readers (the Matthean community), but the possibility for conflict between Jesus and the crowd remains wide open. Their positive reaction is at the same time the possible seed of their (later) rejection (as we have already seen in 9:23, 25). The words of Luz (1990:63) sums it up: 'Mehr als ihre äußere Fassade wird aber den Volksmassen nicht verstehbar. *Die Tiefendimension und die*

ins eigen Leben hineinreichende Kraft der Wunder Jesu bleibt ihnen verborgen' (my emphasis).

In the reaction of the Pharisees as seen from Matthew 9:34: οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια, the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9 comes to a necessary and inevitable end.[16]

For the first time in the Gospel, the conflict, which was first latent, then manifest, comes to a clear outburst of open enmity. Instead of the Pharisees rejoicing in what Jesus had done, they openly rejected him and everything he stood for. They openly choose against Jesus because they could not reconcile their interests as leaders (upper class) with those of Jesus who associated himself with the interests of the lower classes. And in order to legitimate their own position, they labelled Jesus as himself being demon possessed.[17] Like the accusations of blasphemy in 9:3, this sanction (the accusation of demon possessedness) acted to strengthen their own position.

The whole narrative ends with 9:35 (following Beare 1981:237 and Luz 1990:64), which is at the same time an almost *verbatim* repetition of the words of 4:23. This 'inclusio', which is typical of the style of Matthew (cf Luz 1985:21-22; see also Davies & Allison:146), brings together two great intervening sections: the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle stories of Matthew 8 and 9 (cf Beare 1981:237). At the same time it wraps up what Jesus represented. It places Matthew 8 and 9 in the broader context of the Gospel as a whole, and it thus also serves to emphasize the place of the conflict of these two chapters within the Gospel. Furthermore it links the threefold nature of his ministry: teaching, preaching and healing under one heading: that of mercy and pity with those in need. By this, Jesus' whole being, as presented in the Sermon on the Mount (in his teaching and preaching) and his acts (in his healings), serves as outstanding cause for the conflict with the Jewish leaders, as also in the rest of the Gospel. This verse (9:35) serves as a last (and one of the strongest) ideological legitimizations (and re-affirmations) of Jesus' position, for by this it at the same time transcends Jesus' view into a broader context.

5.3 THE CAUSALITY OF THE TEXT

5.3.1 The model

We took up the element of causality as part of a definition of the plot. Unlike Crane (1967:141; see also 1966, 1988) and Rimmon-Kenan (1983:18), who only place emphasis on the temporal succession of the plot as a minimum requirement for a group of events to form a story, we argue that the logical succession of events also has to be addressed. We argue in line with the almost legendary statement of Forster (1966:201): 'We have defined a story as a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. "The king died and the queen died" is a story. "The king died, and then the queen died of grief" is a plot. The time-sequence is preserved, but the sense of causality overshadows it'. In a story we ask: '...and then?'; in a plot we ask 'why?' (cf Forster 1966:221; see also Powell 1990:40). We also argue along with Bremond (1977:186) who states: 'With the absence of integration within the unit of an event (*handeling*), one cannot speak of a narrative; then there is only *chronology*, the wording (*verwoording*) of a series of facts without cohesion' (my translation from the Dutch).

We have already dealt with the temporal (chronological) aspect of the plot of Matthew 8 and 9 in considerable detail (see above). We want to deal with the issue of causality on the basis of the sequential model of Bremond (1977), which quite logically links up with and explicates the last category of our conflict theory, i.e. that of the ever present potential of conflict in any society or situation (see above). Why, then, are the events arranged the way they are?

We will develop the following answer: The events (in Mt 8 & 9) are arranged in such a way that the same events create both improvement and deterioration in the relations of the characters. They create both an equilibrium ánd a disequilibrium. They are arranged in such a way that they create conflicting interests (or conflict) which go hand in hand with both improvement and deterioration. Even an improvement or equilibrium is at the same time a deterioration. Any improvement in the interests of the one group, is at the same time a deterioration of the

interests of another. And that is why there is conflict present in the text of Matthew 8 and 9.

The model Bremond (1977:183; see also Bal 1986:27-28; Rimmon-Kenan 1983:22; Brink 1987:22) constructed was indeed more logically than temporally orientated. Basic to each narrative is the *function* or *process of events* ('Basiseenheid blijft de *functie*, het narratieve atoom'; Bremond 1977:183). Each process has three elementary sequences (*elementaire reeksen*): As Bremond (1977:184) says:

a. A function that in the form of a to-be-followed proceeding (*handelwijze*), or a to-be-foreseen event, unlocks the *possibility* of the process;

b. a function that in the form of an actual proceeding or event, *translates* this virtuality into *reality*;

c. a function that in the form of an achieved result, concludes the process (my emphasis and translation).

These sequences, however, do not necessarily have to follow on each other: they virtually could, or could not be actualized, and the process of actualization does not automatically have to lead to success; it could even end up in failure. Bremond (1977:184; I will use the translated terms of Rimmon-Kenan 1983:22; see also Bal 1986:28; Brink 1987:22) schematized this structure as:

The achieved result (for example: the success of the applied methods)

Actualization (the process itself)

(for example: methods followed to achieve the result)

The missed result (for example: the failure of the methods)

Virtuality (possibility)

(for example: the to-be-achieved result)

The absence of actualization

(for example: the willlessness or obstruction to act)
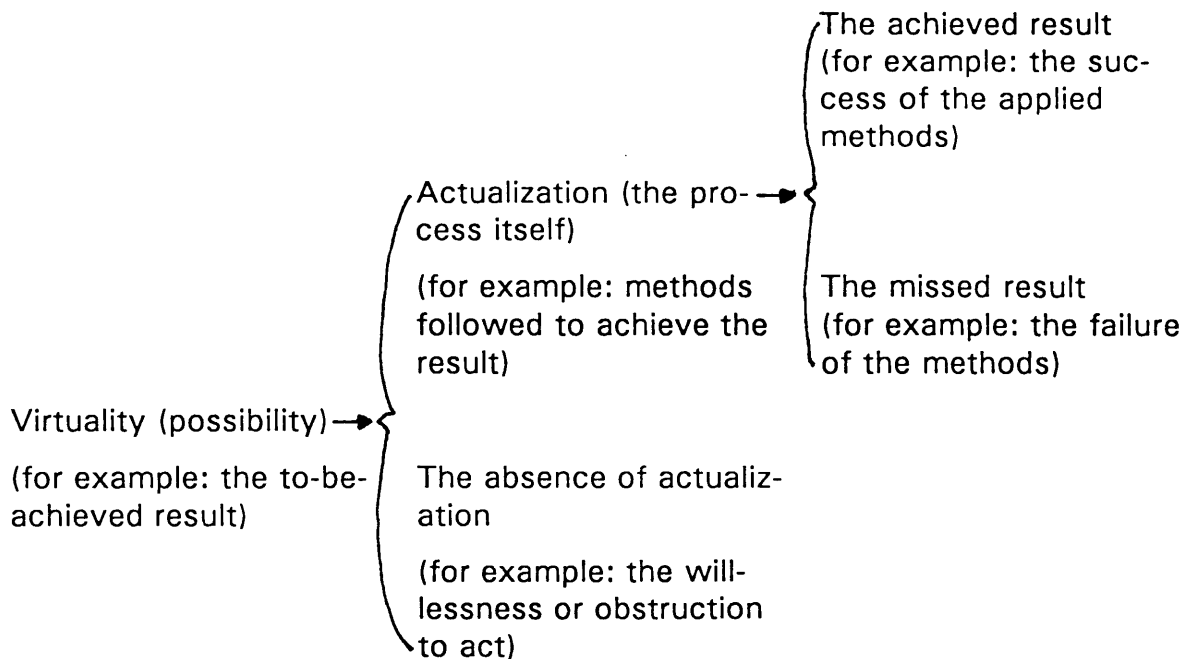
Placed in the context of Matthew 8 and 9 (next to the concepts of beginning, middle and end, as presented in the previous section), we could say that at the beginning, the expectations created and the purposes to be achieved (*virtuality*), are quite a few things: first and foremost (due to the nature of the miracle stories), the sick should be cured and reintegrated into the community; secondly, the crowd, disciples, leaders and the beneficiaries, all are to be brought in line with Jesus' point of view (the interests and ideology of Jesus) and to acknowledge his authority as the Son of David (i.e. the Messiah), and thirdly to show how the latent conflict eventually developed to manifest conflict.

This process (with all its aspects) is indeed *actualized* by a variety of means: firstly by the stories of the healings themselves, secondly by the dialogues of Jesus (Mt 8:3-4; 8:6-13; 8:18-22; 8:25-26; 8:28-32; 9:2-7; 9:14-17; 9:18-22; 9:27-30), thirdly by means of the calling and dining scene (Mt 9:9-10) and fourthly by the scenes of controversy (Mt 8:34; 9:3-7; 9:10-13; 9:14-15; 9:34) and the ideological legitimizations by the citations from the Scriptures as well as the summaries (Mt 8:17; 9:13; [9:16-17]; 9:35).

Eventually, *only half of the objectives are achieved*: the crowds acknowledge Jesus, the sick are cured, the disciples eventually do go along with Jesus, but remain in 'little faith', the beneficiaries are cured, but a few remained in doubt (9:27-31). A few endeavours even *failed*, of which the persuasion of the leaders to accept Jesus' viewpoint stands out. Thus there were results, yet also failures. This will become even more apparent as we proceed.

These elementary sequences can all be combined into more complex sequences (cf Bremond 1977:184-186; we will use the translated terms of Rimmon-Kenan 1983:23):

(1) Combination by enchainment (*plaatsing achter elkaar*): The outcome of one sequence amounts to the potential stage of the next. Or as Bremond (1977:185; see also Rimmon-Kenan 1983:23) says: '...dezelfde gebeurtenis binnen het perspectief van eenzelfde rol (vervult - EJV) tegelijk twee onderscheiden functies....'

(2) Combination by embedding (*enclave*): different sequences could be inserted into one another.

(3) Combination by joining (*plaatsing naast elkaar*): *the same sequence of events have a dialectical outcome*.

The last combination (by joining) can be schematized as follows (cf Bremond 1977:186):

To bring about harm	vs	To-be-committed crime
↓		↓
Aggression-process	vs	The committing of the crime
↓		↓
Inflicted harm	vs	The crime committed = fact asking for satisfaction (*genoeg-doening vragend feit*)
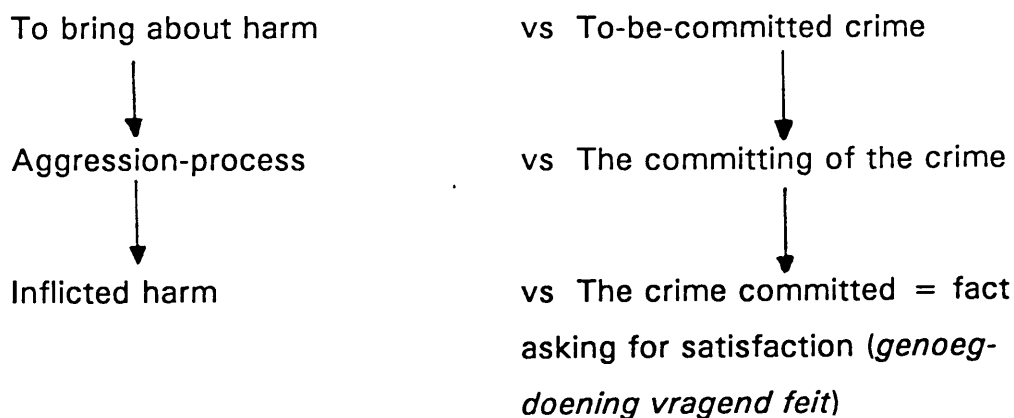
Bremond (1977:186) continues:

> The vs (versus) sign, that here combines the two series, indicates
> that one and the same event from the perspective of an actor 'A',
> fulfils a function 'a', and seen from the perspective of 'B', a function
> 'b'...The distinction comes...between the area of action (*handelings-*
> *gebied*) of an aggressor and that of a law-enforcer (*rechtshandhaver*),
> within whose perspective such aggression amounts to the committing
> of a crime (my translation from the Dutch).

But, as Bremond (1977:187) proceeds, to him all sequences in a narrative cycle (*narratieve cyclus*) could be divided into two fundamental types of sequences: *improvement and /or deterioration*. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:27) says that an improvement sequence begins with a lack or a disequilibrium and finally establishes equilibrium. This can be the end of the story, but when it is not, the equilibrium is disturbed, and a process of deterioration follows. These two important sequences can also be combined into the above-mentioned complex sequences of enchainment, embedding and joining. However, we are here only interested in the combination by *joining* the sequences of improvement and deterioration because it has useful and relevant possibilities for the analysis of the logical relation of the events, and the logical outcome of Matthew 8 and 9.

The simultaneous joining of events that both lead to improvement and deterioration is only possible if the results are simultaneously different to two different actors whose interests are opposites. As Bremond (1977:189) says:

> But this simultaneousness...possibly means that the event has
> consequences for two actors simultaneously; actors who have
> *interests that are in opposition*: the deterioration of the fate of the
> one coincides with the improvement of the fate of the other (my
> translation and emphasis; the linkage with conflict theory should be

quite obvious and apparent; see chapter 3 above on *Incompatible interests* as a cause of conflict).

This could be schematized as follows (cf Bremond 1977:189):

Possible improvement   vs   Possible deterioration

Process of improvement   vs   Process of deterioration

Achieved improvement   vs   Completed deterioration

Depending on the perspective of the particular actor, the other actors (or characters) are qualified as allies/benefactors (*bondgenoten*), opponents (*tegenstanders*) et cetera. The qualification becomes the opposite when one moves from one perspective to the other. Thus, depending on the perspective of the beneficiaries or the Jewish leaders, Jesus becomes the ally/benefactor or the opponent. These actors (characters) are not to be confused with the characters of the narrative as a whole for it does not concentrate on the perspective of the 'hero' or the perspective of the author: '...zij integreren binnen de eenheid van eenzelfde schema de veelheid van de aan de verschillende actoren eigen perspectieven' (Bremond 1977:189).[18]

Bremond's concepts of allies/benefactors and opponents comes close to the notion of characterization.

Character is a figurative motive in the story part of a narrative text which obtains its contours through *characterization*.

Characterization is the process by which the character is created through an interplay between the story, narrative text and narrative process on the one hand, and by literary conventions, language and reading processes on the other.

                                           (Johl:1992:199; my translation from the Afrikaans)

Characters are 'life-like', they plan, decide, choose, react and feel like real people (cf Culpepper 1983:101) and yet they need not be real persons (cf Bal 1986:88). They are constructs of the implied author to fulfil a particular role in the story (cf Powell 1990:51). As indicated in the above citation from Johl, and as seen from Powell (1990:52), characterization is linked to character in that characterization is the *process* through which the implied author provides the implied reader with what is necessary to reconstruct a character from the narrative.[19]

Before we turn to the application of Bremond's model, let us first ask how the characters are built up? What techniques are used to present the characters? What sources are there to get to know them? Bal (1986:96-98; see also Brink 1987:76-79; Johl 1992:201) identifies two major sources of information: *explicit* information and *implicit* information. This corresponds with what Chatman (1978:32-33; see also Abrams 1988:23; Powell 1990:52-53; Van Tilborg 1994:4) calls the technique of *telling* and *showing*. Bal's distinction between the two sources is presented more systematically by Brink (1987:76-79): *Explicit information* (or the technique of telling) is given by what an external *narrator* informs the reader about the character, by what *other* characters informs and what a character tells about *him/herself*. *Implicit* information (or the technique of showing) is information that the reader has to deduce from the characters' *actions, speech, thoughts* and *values* (cf Powell 1990:52; see also Abrams 1988:23-24). To Brink (1987:78) implicit information is deduced from the characters' *relations* to other characters and their *movements*.

5.3.2 The application

The question is: 'What progress has been made from the beginning to the end of the narrative?' or '*What has changed* in or has been changed by the sequence of events in the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9?' We limit ourselves only to the perspectives of the beneficiaries, the crowd and the disciples, and the Jewish leaders because these characters's situations and insights (as far as latent or manifest conflict is concerned) undergo the most change if we view it from the point of the narrative as a whole.[20]

5.3.2.1 The beneficiaries

To answer the question above on the progress made, we start with the most obvious: the perspective of those who were favoured and whose situation was improved by the sequence of events (which is in accordance with the model of Bremond 1977:190): the needy, those who are in need of help, whose handicaps are to be removed. They are the leper, the Gentile centurion, the slave, the women (Peter's ill mother-in-law, the bloodflowing woman and the daughter of the ruler), the paralytic, the tax collector, the two blind men and the dumb man. They all are grouped together as the beneficiaries of Jesus' ministry and healing. The narrative begins with a disequilibrium (or an obstacle) which involves that they, either because of their illness, or their background, are removed to the lowest strata of society, the expendable or the unclean classes. *Possible improvement* would be the possibility of upward mobility, at least from the unclean/expendable class to the peasant class (from which they were excluded, being religiously unclean).[21] Whether they would be able to move even further upwards on the stratification ladder remains to be seen in an agrarian society. But at least they would (inevitably in as far as conflict theory is concerned) have pursued it in order to improve their situation because of their miserable position. In this, they found Jesus (as the Messiah) as their benefactor.

The *process of improvement* starts with Jesus' mercy. The means of the process of improvement are Jesus' miracles, his calling of and dining with the sinners (we have already seen before that all these 'marginalized' can be, narratively speaking, grouped under the collective character of 'the sinners'). These are all deeds of Jesus' mercy, through which Jesus cleans them and allows them to become part of the community again. He is willing to take up their interests and by this their situation has already improved. Even the mere fact that Jesus (as the by-Matthew-presented Messiah) just took their side, was already an improvement as such for by this Jesus not only acted as ally on their behalf, but also sociologically speaking, as the 'ideological legitimizer' of their possible pursuance of a better position.

The implication that they became 'sons of Abraham' (Mt 8:11) and the phrase that 'their sins were forgiven' (Mt 9:5), can be an indication of the *achieved*

improvement in their condition. Their physical, religious and social needs have been addressed by Jesus as the Son of David (i.e. the Messiah). Due to this radical intervention of the benefactor, their position has been changed radically. They were now also able (at least to some degree) to move upwards on the stratification ladder, in that they could once again be taken up again in society and in the community of the believers.

How are they 'built up' as collective character? The fact that they acknowledged Jesus' true authority is deduced from the *explicit* fact that some of them fell down on their knees (Mt 8:2; 9:2; 9:18) and *implicitly* from their humble requests to be cured (Mt 8:2; 8:8). Furthermore, their acknowledgement of Jesus' authority is deduced *implicitly* from their movements (actions; cf Mt 8:15; 9:21; 9:27). They immediately responded to Jesus (Mt 9:9) and it is *explicitly* stated by Jesus that they believe, thus acknowledging Jesus (Mt 8:10; 9:29).

5.3.2.2 The crowds and the disciples[22]

In the situation of the crowds there seems to be a similar development, namely a process of improvement from the beginning to the end. What is to be improved, is their acknowledgement of Jesus and his authority. However their following of Jesus at first seems to be only a movement from point 'a' to 'b' (cf Minear 1974a:30; see also Carter 1993:59). The process that seems to be an improvement starts when Jesus reaches out to those in need, gives examples and names the implications of fellowship, calls his followers, and dines with the sinners. In short, the process by which Jesus improved the situation of the beneficiaries, is also the process by which the crowds have to decide whether they want to acknowledge him or not. Seemingly they do exactly that. Thus there seems to be an improvement - they praise Jesus in 9:8, and in 9:33 they react positively to his ministry. Yet this reaction remains relatively 'neutral', or even doubtable if we take Matthew 9:23-24 (they laughed at Jesus) into consideration. They were merely 'amazed', but it is not said that they 'understood' (9:33b). Carter (1993:60) calls it an openness in contrast to the Pharisees. The expectations have been met, but not overwhelmingly. This is confirmed by the further development of the crowd as collective character in the rest of the Gospel (see

Carter 1993:60-64). The crowds eventually rejected Jesus in the passion narratives (cf Mt 27:15ff). I agree with Carter (1993:58) that some ambivalence surrounds the crowds. The possibility of their positive (and negative) response to the mission is still open (cf Carter 1993:61). This also confirms the assumption that there remains a potential element of conflict between Jesus and the crowds, which was not yet resolved in Matthew 8 and 9. Carter (1993:64; see also 66-67) summarizes the role of the crowds in the story of Matthew as:

> They are recipients of Jesus' compassionate ministry, a ministry to be continued by disciples. At times the *crowds exhibit some perception that God is at work in a special way in Jesus, yet they lack both the faith and understanding* manifested by the disciples and the hostility displayed by the Jewish leaders. At the end of the story, the crowds in Jerusalem display lack of faith and understanding as they partici-pate in Jesus' death (my emphasis).

The disciples did not act much in this specific narrative, although a few deductions can be made. They acted as Jesus' helpers. They acted as exemplary characters of what fellowship means (cf 8:18-27), i.e. following Jesus wherever he went, in storms and even into pagan country. In terms of change in Matthew 8 and 9, they still remain indecisive. There is change in as far as the disciples are concerned in terms of the whole Gospel. Whereas they at first were only onlookers and *listeners* (at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount), they became Jesus' *partners* in Matthew 8 and 9 (cf Mt 8:23-27) and after Matthew 8 and 9, they were commissioned as the leaders themselves (cf Mt 10:5ff; cf Luz 1987:153-154; see also chapter 2 on the discussion of Luz' work). However, from Jesus' remark in Matthew 8:22 as a response to the disciple's delay to follow Him and the remark about their little faith (8:26), we learn that they (still yet) failed to keep their trust in Jesus, and even as partners they were still indecisive, as the crowds were. *There was a slumbering potential of ongoing conflict* (see chapter 6 below).

5.3.2.3 The Jewish leaders

The situation of the Jewish leaders changed dramatically in terms of latent and manifest conflict. The *possible deterioration* in the relation with Jesus, who from their perspective is their opponent, is already present at the beginning because of the reaction of the crowds (7:29), who may possibly exclusively acknowledge Jesus' authority and cause them to lose their (the leaders') control and support. The *process of deterioration* involves the same events as the process of improvement of the beneficiaries' position. The fact that Jesus heals, mingles with the sinners and tax collectors, and the fact that he explicates their own dormant values which they do not apply, heightens the already present conflict, as we have seen before. This process which, viewed from the perspective of the beneficiaries, is a process of improvement, is at the same time a process of deterioration, when seen through the eyes of the leaders. This process causes them to react extremely negatively as in a situation of completed deterioration in 9:34: Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια.

The mercy of Jesus led to the improvement of the situation of the sinners, to the positive but not overwhelming response of the crowd and the disciples, and simultaneously to the deterioration of the relationship between Jesus and the Pharisees (as reference to the collective character 'the Jewish leaders'; see above). Put differently, the narrative of Matthew 8 and 9 ends in an improvement *and* deterioration, in equilibrium *and* disequilibrium. The equilibrium already bears in itself the seeds of conflict (as we have also seen in the individual pericopes and events of the demoniacs in Mt 8:28-34, the reaction of the crowd in Mt 9:23 and the healing of the two blind men; see above). Thus, the equilibrium is at the same time a disequilibrium, and this is, deduced from the dimension of causality, once again a strong indication of the deep rift between Jesus and the Pharisees. Even the narrative analysis, in following the model of logical sequences of Bremond, indicates that the conflict is much deeper than just on the surface. Depending on the view of the actor(s), i.e. depending on his/their interests, we regard the sequence of events as improvement and/or deterioration. Once again, but now from a narrative point of view, this confirms our initial assumption that the underly-

ing conflict between Jesus and the leaders is based upon a difference in interests.

Clearly the Jewish leaders are the antagonists of the narrative. But, how are they built up as characters? They are *explicitly* depicted as having no authority in 7:29, which we have seen before was the 'spark' for the conflict between Jesus and themselves. Jesus is explicitly evaluated by them as being blasphemous (9:3) and being from the devil (9:34). But, this is more a reflection on the leaders themselves as being rather unreliable in their own judgement (cf Bal 1986:97; Powell 1990:53). Their being unreliable (therefore 'evil') can be *implicitly* deduced from the request of the scribe to follow Jesus in 8:18. The scribe's enthusiasm remains debatable (see above). Furthermore, the leaders seem to be afraid of directly confronting Jesus when they take on the 'small ones', the disciples, rather than Jesus himself. They could be regarded as cowards (9:11). Lastly, as we have indicated above, they are viewed as being inconsistent regarding their own values: they are not 'practising what they are preaching' (9:12-13), therefore they are false, thus 'evil'.

5.3.2.4 Jesus

5.3.2.4 (a) Characterization

Although not really part of the model of Bremond, we have to give attention to the 'protagonist' of the narrative: Jesus. And because the protagonist of a narrative acts as the 'vehicle' for the narrator's ideological perspective, (cf Van Aarde 1991:125), we will pay considerable attention to Jesus.

Jesus heals without precondition and contrary to conventions and expectations. Indeed, his dynamic attitude and actions bring him in opposition with the Jewish leaders. He convinces the reader to follow his view and interests. He is reliable and worthy of trust in his evaluation of others (cf Mt 8:10b; 8:26; 9:4; 9:22).

Jesus' character is *explicitly* built up in 7:29 as one who has authority (in contrast to the scribes; other explicit remarks about Jesus, made by other characters [Mt 9:3; 9:11; 9:34], as we have seen, are viewed as unreliable, and

regarded as on the leaders themselves). Under 'authority' we have already indicated that we mean to stand in a relational position to be able to command. He is, however, built up even more by *implicit* aspects.

We learn from Jesus' actions (stretching out his hand) and his speeches that he was willing to help where there was need. This could be deduced from the following instances: In Matthew 8:3 he repeated the words of the leper: Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι·. In 8:7 Jesus went with the centurion without any questions. He said: Ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν. In the storm at sea, Jesus, although he repudiated the disciples for their little faith, nevertheless calmed down the storm and sea (Mt 8:26). Jesus willingly forgave the paralytic and as demonstration of his forgiveness, he healed him (Mt 9:2-8). Jesus willingly went along with the ruler to raise his daughter (Mt 9:19). Furthermore, Jesus was present as one who cares and encourages, not only concretely by his healings, but also by his words. To the paralytic he said encouragingly in 9:2c: Θάρσει, τέκνον· ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. The woman who suffered from *haemorrhages* (Mt 9:20-22), he encouraged by the same expression: Θάρσει, θύγατερ· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε (Mt 9:22b). In the short story of the healing of the mother-in-law of Peter (Mt 8:14-15) and the healing of the dumb man (Mt 9:32-33a), Jesus just stretched out his hand and healed them unquestioningly. Jesus was eager and willing to help, in fact, that is why he started his ministry and why he eventually came into conflict with the leaders.

From the thoughts of Jesus (as presented to us by the implied author), we learn of Jesus' ability to look through those he met. His evaluations are to be seen as reliable and trustworthy (in fact he *was* trustworthy as being one with authority). He was able to know whether there was faith and insight or not. He acknowledged those who had faith (Mt 8:10; 9:2; 9:22; 9:28), but repudiated those who had little or no faith (Mt 8:25; 9:4).

From Jesus' values we know the following: Jesus came with a radical viewpoint: to take up the interests of the 'marginalized' people in society. His mercy knew no limitation. He was open to all. His unlimited mercy was explicated (strengthened) by his unlimited authority. He had authority (the ability to control) over illnesses, nature, demons, human-beings and even death. His mercy, like his

authority, exceeded all conventions, purity laws and social codes. Jesus, Messiah, Son of David (Mt 9:27), gave new substance and new content to the dormant value: ἔλεος. When the blind men in 9:27 begged Jesus: Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυίδ, it was already clear what the ἔλεος that was asked for, meant: a concrete reaching out to the sinners and the needy. When the blind men 'believed' in Jesus, they in fact understood this new perspective of Jesus (although they did not listen to him to remain silent).

5.3.2.4 (b) Focalization

Closely related to character and yet separable, is the matter of *focalization*.[23] Bal (1986:108; see also 1982:138) says:

> When events are reconstructed, it always happens from a particular view (*visie*). One chooses a certain point of view (*standpunt*), one sets up a particular viewpoint (*gezichtspunt*), one presents from a specific angle (*invalshoek*; my translation).

A narrative always manifests an 'idea'. Powell (1990:23) calls this the *evaluative point of view*:

> This refers to the norms, values, and general worldview that the implied author establishes as operative for the story. To put it in another way, evaluative point of view may be defined as the standards of judgement by which readers are led to evaluate the events, characters, and settings that comprise the story.

Out of all these aspects, i.e. the aspects of time, causality, character and space, which all act as vehicles of an 'idea' that comprises a fundamental principle, the narrative point of view or 'focalized object' is derived (cf Bal 1982:138, 1986:10-8).

This corresponds with the theoretical possibility, as Bal (1986:109) and Brink (1987:138) view it, that the one who narrates and the one who looks (views)

may be the same and fall together. All the characters and events are evaluated in terms of the perspective of the protagonist. Bal (1986:110; see also 1982:139) presents the same view: 'The reader always views alongside the character, and will in principle be inclined to accept the view that is presented to him via that character' (my translation from the Dutch). The reader in a way is 'manipulated' to associate and identify (or even differ) him/herself with the protagonist of the Gospel, and thus also in Matthew 8 and 9 with Jesus (cf Van Aarde 1991:126). Jesus is the subject of the focalization (the *focalizator* as Bal 1986:110 calls it). He is the point from which everything else is seen.

What, then, is or are the focalized object(s)? (cf Bal 1986:112). When we speak of the 'object', we not only have to think in visual terms. Rimmon-Kenan (1983:71), along with Genette, broadens the purely visual sense of focalization to include cognitive, emotive and (especially) ideological orientation. We therefore want to reformulate the question as 'What does Jesus focalize?' or 'What is his (ideological) point of view?' To answer these questions, we use the model of Bal (1982:145; see also 1986:112), in order to get a clear picture of the focalizator:

For a complete characterization of a character one must look at:

1. How does it focalize? With what attitude does it look?

2. What does it focalize? On what does it direct itself?

3. By whom is this character focalized and how is it done? (my translation).

Let us return to the character Jesus. Firstly then, how does Jesus focalize? With what attitude does he look? We can be very brief: Jesus is presented as someone who is really willing to reach out to the sick. This is the aim of his whole ministry. He *wanted* to help, he wished the same attitude from his followers. By this, he challenged the leaders, whose dormant values also were to help, but they did not do so (Mt 9:13).

Secondly, on what does Jesus focalize? What does he focus on? The answer is also clear: He focuses on the interests of those in need. But he also focuses on the other characters: the disciples, the crowd and the Jewish leaders.

They all have to understand what true fellowship involves, and the antagonists are challenged to change their view in accordance with that of Jesus'.

Thirdly, who focalizes him? How do the other characters see Jesus? The beneficiaries all acknowledged him as having unlimited authority and power to heal, save, forgive and even raise the dead. Even the demons (8:29) acknowledged him as the 'Son of God', thus having the authority to cast them out. He is acknowledged as 'Son of David' from whom they could receive mercy. But as we have seen before, the focalization of the Jewish leaders was seen to be unreliable. Therefore their viewing him as 'blasphemous' (9:3) and as 'from the devil' (9:34) in fact actualizes Jesus' point of view. This is also true of the disciples' little faith and when the people laugh at him on account of his remark that the dead girl of the ruler was just sleeping (9:24b). These focalizations of the other characters heighten the radicalness and foreignness (newness) of Jesus' view. Indeed, the focalization of the other characters, whether positive or negative, narratologically support the credibility and reliability of the focalization of the protagonist: Jesus.

The answer to the question: 'What does Jesus focalize?', thus is: the implied reader is supposed to be convinced to take over Jesus' attitude, be sympathetic to his viewpoint; that is being willing and eager to help those in need, regardless of their social background, religious status or stratified position. In fact, being a follower of Jesus means to act like Jesus did. It involves believing him, that is to willingly meet him and take over his perspective. It is being encouraged by his touching and caring hand. Following Jesus, could mean loneliness, homelessness and getting involved in his conflict of interests as well. It means the possibility of being rejected by own and foreign people because of the choice made for the interests of the marginalized: the peasants, the unclean and degradable, and the expendable classes. It means possible conflict because of a radically different perspective: the willingness to forgive other people on earth and above all, even becoming involved in conflict *because of being merciful*. Thus Jesus' point of view is the legitimization of the plight and the interests of the lowest classes of society. Mercy means advancing the interests of the marginalized; this is what Jesus focalized on and this is what he wishes his followers (and readers) to do also. As Gnilka (1986:333) says:

Es geht Jesus um die Befreiung von Menschen aus menschen-verachtenden Vorurteilen.

The viewpoint of Jesus also implies a new community, a new family and a new identity.

5.4 SUMMARY

We have indicated that a plot of a narrative consists of a temporal and causal element. The aspects of both chronology and the cohesion of the events have been attended to. We analyzed Matthew 8 and 9 in terms of beginning (Mt 8:1-17), middle (Mt 8:18-9:13) and end (Mt 9:14-35).

At the beginning, tension is created in that the crowd viewed Jesus to be having more authority than their leaders (Mt 7:29; 8:1). Latent conflict is present: a contrast between Israel and the Gentiles becomes apparent (Mt 8:10). The beneficiaries (marginalized) call on Jesus as *Kyrie*, acknowledging Jesus' authority, as in the rest of these miracle stories. At the beginning, we have the first example story of somebody who voluntarily becomes (even more) marginalized (Mt 8:5-13). The Gentile centurion himself was marginalized in being Gentile in a Jewish society. But, although he should have been part of the retainers, he nevertheless took on him the interests of his sick slave, and by this further voluntarily marginalized himself. In Matthew 8:1 Jesus comes down *from* the mountain, the holy place. He now enters the 'world', the profane. An expectation is created at the beginning, as to what Jesus will do on earth, i.e. in the profane place? Will he act mercifully? The first ideological legitimization of his position we find in Matthew 8:11 and again in 8:17.

In the middle section, the plot and the created expectations are developed. The attitude of Jesus to intervene on behalf of the marginalized becomes even more explicit and apparent. It is combined with paraenetic material (Mt 8:18-22; 9:2-8; 9:9-13). Jesus indeed forgives sins (9:6) and acts mercifully (in the different miracle stories), and legitimates his stance by the citation from Hosea 6:6 (cf Mt 9:13). He indeed acts mercifully in the profane place, on earth (Mt 9:6, 8). Two other areas of conflict opened up: the challenging of the *status quo* of the

demoniacs, but more in particular the conflict in economic interests between Jesus and the herdsmen and the city-dwellers (Mt 9:33, 34). Furthermore, the disciples (of the Matthean community) are challenged to have faith, as the marginalized have. On the community level they are challenged to become marginalized themselves as the real life disciples of Jesus. They have to realize that to follow Jesus can be 'dangerous' (i.e. containing the possibility of conflict) as the stilling of the storm illustrates (Mt 8:23-27). Matthew 9:2-8 illustrates that not only God is able to forgive, but that through Jesus this is also possible for people on earth. Jesus forgives and by this he addresses the *illness* of the paralysed, in that he (the paralysed) can again be taken up in the community. Jesus' forgiveness and his act of mercy challenges the dormant values of the Jewish leaders in that they do not meet their own posed expectations (and, of course, neither those of Jesus and the Matthean community). They also regarded mercy as an important value, because after 70 AD they placed the emphasis on internal piety. Jesus, and through Jesus as their model, the Matthean community challenged the Jewish leaders' own values (cf Mt 9:13). Matthew 9:13 acts as one of the most important ideological legitimizations of his own view.

At the end of the narrative, the conflict comes to a manifest outburst in the reaction of the Pharisees in Matthew 9:34. The created tension of the beginning now prevails. The Pharisees reject Jesus' authority in totality. Jesus' merciful deeds, enables the community to rejoice. It is a new time, a time likened to a wedding feast (Mt 9:15). Jesus' position and interests are again legitimized by taking up the tradition of Jesus as the healing (therapeutic) Son of David, and through the repetition of the same words as in Matthew 4:23 in 9:35. This part of the 'inclusio' acts as the end of the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9.

The causality of the text is illustrated at the hand of the model of Bremond (1977). This model acts as the narratological confirmation of our basic assumption that all conflicts are essentially a conflict of interests. The essential questions are: 'What has changed through the narrative?', and 'What relations have been changed?' Following the model of Bremond, especially the concept of 'combination by joining', we state that the outcome of the same event, has in itself the possibility of both success and failure. The process of mercy, has in the miracle

stories the potentiality of both success *and* failure. It has in itself the potential of improvement *and* deterioration of relationships *and* conflict. In fact, the improvement of one group's position could during the same events and at the same time imply the deterioration of another group's relationships, in particular in as far as conflict is concerned. The merciful deeds of Jesus dialectically resulted in the improvement of the situation of the beneficiaries, and the (deepening) deterioration of the relationship between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, in that the at first latent conflict, now became a manifest outburst. The narrative has both a 'happy' and a 'tragic' end.

Jesus is depicted as the model of the community. He is the one to follow. He acts unexpectedly, helps willingly and encourages the marginalized. His mercy and authority exceeds all limits. His attitude is one of willingness to help. He focuses on the weak. He is viewed as the reliable *Kyrios*, the Son of man and the Son of David (the Messiah). His view challenges all - the Jewish leaders, the crowds, and the disciples - to do the same. He challenges them all to become involved and in the process marginalize themselves.

5.4.1 The joint sequences schematized

We could schematize the joint sequences of improvement and deterioration as a logical (causal) sequence in Matthew 8 and 9, linked to some of the concepts we derived from the social location of the Matthean community, as follows:

The beneficiaries (the marginalized in terms of the text and social stratification) to be helped.

↓

= The crowds and disciples to acknowledge the authority (i.e. the ability and position to control and command) of Jesus.

↓

vs Potential (latent) conflict.

↓

Jesus' mercy in the miracle stories, dialogues, callings, dining with sinners.

↓

= Exemplary stories and the miracles.

↓

vs Jesus' mercy in the miracle stories, controversial dialogues, calling, dining with sinners.

↓

Healed and taken up in the community, i.e. moved upwards over stratification levels, given a new identity.

= Positive, but reserved (ambivalent) reaction of the crowds. Indecisive position (yet) of the disciples. Potentiality of new conflict.

vs Manifest conflict. Total rejection of Jesus. Threat to their stratified position as retainers. Threat to their position to achieve unity within Judaism. Threat to their acquired authority from the Roman rulers.

ENDNOTES

1. A distinction is made by literary theorists between the 'real author' and the 'implied author', and between the 'real reader' and the 'implied reader' (cf Chatman 1978:148-151; see also Kingsbury 1988a:31, 37; Van Tilborg 1994:2-3). The real author is the flesh-and-blood author(s). It can be one person or a group, a school or a committee (cf Chatman 1978:149). The implied author is a created literary version of the real author. The implied author is 'implied' for it is reconstructed by the reader through the narrative. It is a 'second self' of the real author, which the reader comes to know through the process of reading the story of the narrative (cf Chatman 1978:148; Kingsbury 1988a:31). It has no voice, it instructs the reader silently, 'through the design of the whole' (Chatman 1978:148). It is always present in the narrative, but may or may not make use of a narrator (the voice or invisible speaker). The real author can postulate whatever norms he/they like(s) in an implied author. In the narrative, it is the implied author that establishes the norms (cf Chatman 1978:149; Kingsbury 1988a:31).

The counterpart of the implied author, is the 'implied reader'. As the implied author, the implied reader is also always part of the narrative. The real reader is the flesh-and-blood reader. The implied reader is the imaginary person who is to be envisaged, in pursuing the story,

...as responding to the text at every point with whatever emotion, understanding, or knowledge the text ideally calls for. Or to put it differently, the implied reader is that imaginary person in whom the intention of the text is to be thought of as always reaching its fulfilment.

(Kingsbury 1988a:38; see also Chatman 1978:150)

The implied reader may or may not materialize as a character-narratee in the text (cf Chatman 1978:150; Kingsbury 1988a:38).

2. 'Where the term *οἱ ὄχλοι* occurs in the Gospel of Matthew, the context is coloured by Jesus' loving concern for them' (Van Aarde 1994b:85). Jesus reveals the same concern for the blind, lame, leprous, deaf and poor, and therefore this phenomenon can strengthen our suggestion that we are here dealing with the same crowd as in Mt 7:28-29.

3. Events always happen *somewhere* (cf Bal 1986:52). But, the *setting* or space in a narrative is not just meant to present the reader with some 'background' information. It certainly has a communicative value: '*Space* is a fully communicative epic category that, on the level of the story, the narrative and the discourse, works together considerably to determine the communication and the form of the work' (Venter 1992b:455; my translation from the Afrikaans; see also Van Eck 1993:134-151).

4. A distinction is made between disease and illness. Sickness as *disease* is seen as a biomedical malfunction afflicting an organism, and it is a pathological state affecting only the individual (cf Pilch 1986:102; 1988:62; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:71). Sickness as *illness*, is a socially disvalued state in which many others beside the individual are involved. A whole social network has been disrupted and meaning lost. Illness is not (only) a biomedical matter, it rather is a social one (cf Pilch 1986:102; 1988:63; Malina & Rohrbaugh 1992:71).

5. Harrington (1991:113) calls this 'an honorific address, which can both mean "sir" and "Lord" (*kyrie*)'. See also our discussion of Mt 8:18-22, where this address again surfaces.

6. The Greek word *παῖς* can both be translated by 'servant' or 'boy'. Only in Jn 4:51 there is reference to this word as 'son'. However, I agree with Newman & Stine (1988:234) that here the word is probably used of the Roman officer's orderly. Hence the translation of *παῖς μου* in Mt 8:6 can either be 'my servant' or 'the man who serves me' (see also Gundry 1882:142; Davies & Allison 1991:21; Harrington 1991:113).

7. Davies & Allison (1991:72) argue that it is possible that an ancient motive of a sleeping deity lies behind this story. They say that there are many Ancient Near Eastern texts in which sleep is a symbol of supreme and unchallenged ability. Only the one that is in complete charge can sleep in peace. Thus Jesus' sleeping indicates not powerless but the fullness of absolute rule.

8. Hawthorn (1954:79-80) diagnosis the demoniac as suffering of schizophrenia, with some manic-depressive symptoms (see also Beare 1981:218; Gnilka 1986:321).

9. We take the 'sinners' and the 'small ones' (marginalized) to be the same because of the common Jewish view in that time that being ill means having sinned and therefore being a sinner (see Gundry 1982:163; France 1985:165; Gnilka 1986:326). Furthermore, there is a direct connection between the two concepts as is seen from the address of Jesus to the lame man. Jesus addresses him in terms of endearment (cf Davies & Allison 1991:88) as: *τέκνον* (son, or child = small one), and directly thereafter Jesus forgives him his sins. And as last argument, we refer to Mt 9:10, where the tax collectors (also seen as marginalized) and the sinners are mentioned in one phrase as referring to the same kind of people. Narratively speaking, we can thus refer to the marginalized in a collective character as 'the sinners'.

10. Note that the Pharisees are here mentioned for the first time in the narrative of Matthew 8 & 9, and the scribes are not mentioned again in these two chapters. Matthew does make some distinctions among these groups, but we will not attend to this issue any further (see Kingsbury 1987:58-59; 1988a:17-19 on this issue). We will debate no further on whether the evidence Matthew used in his treatment of the Jewish leaders was uncritical or at least anachronistic (see Carson 1982:161-174).

But, why does Matthew make a distinction at all? To Rivkin (1978:113), Matthew is likely to replace the scribes with the Pharisees when he has Jesus raise the question as to the lineage of the Christ (cf Mt 22:41-46). But this is not the case in Matthew 9:9-13. There is no question on Jesus' lineage here. We would rather suggest a view that stands in connection with the citation from Hosea 6:6: '῎Ελεος θέλω καὶ θυσίαν·' in 9:13, which could be linked with the Pharisees, rather than with the scribes (see below). Suffice it to say here is that the criticism Jesus had against the Pharisees in this particular pericope, can be extended to the whole group of Jewish leaders within the broader Matthean context.

11. Malina & Rohrbaugh (1992:82) explains the unfavourable position of the tax collectors as follows: 'The tax collectors...were for the most part employees of the chief tax collector and were often rootless persons unable to find other work.' Van Aarde (1994b:262), explains their unfavourable position in following Malina (1991) as follows:

> 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 (and tax collectors - EJV) transgress these boundaries and do not retain the politics of purity. They respect no lines of exclusiveness.

Therefore they are collectively referred to as 'the sinners' (see also endnote 9 above).

12. The analogy of the physician in 9:12 is a quite self-evident statement: Who really doubts the fact that a physician (under 'normal' conditions) cares for the ill and the sick? It is clear, as Davies & Allison (1991:103) indicate that the saying 'It is not the strong that have need of a physician but the sick' (9:12) is a parable of which the meaning is transparent: the sick are the tax collectors and sinners, the strong are those who oppose Jesus, and the physician is Jesus. Placed in this context, this saying (9:12) receives an ideological function in order to legitimize Jesus' stand. He uses this self-evident statement, transcends it to an ideology to substantiate his own choice of interests. By doing this, he heightens the conflict in that it is extended to an ideological level, especially in his repudiation of the Pharisees in 9:13. By this, the whole calling and dining episode gets a paraenetical (*paränetische*) function (as Luz 1990:45 correctly views; see also Gundry 1982:168). Those who saw this event happen, *should learn and do the same.* Also the words in 9:13b: οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς is a confirmation of why Jesus acted the way he did. It explains the purpose of his mission, namely to take up the case of the sinners. This statement explains *why* Jesus in fact came and began to preach and heal (cf Powell 1992a:195). Davies & Allison (1991:106) ask what the status of the 'righteous' in 9:13 is? They see four different possibilities. (i) Jesus did not call the righteous because they were presumed to be saved already. (ii) Jesus did not call the righteous because he knew it would do no good: they were too stubborn to heed his proclamation (cf Mt 13:14-15). (iii) All the emphasis lies on the 'sinners' and one should not draw any inference at all about the status of the righteous. (iv) Jesus could have been saying that everyone is a sinner (cf Mt 7:11; Rm 3:9-18). The 'righteous' would then simply be those who failed to see that they were no better off than everyone else. The righteous refers to subjective opinion, not objective fact. The saying would contain irony.
    But which interpretation is correct? They conclude: 'With regard to the historical Jesus all four options have been argued, although (iii) or (iv) is the best guess. With regard to Matthew, only (ii), (iii), and (iv) are possible, and we regrettably fail to see any way to judge between them' (Davies & Allison 1991:107). This needs some further investigation, which I here have to refrain from doing.

13. Cohen (1984:37-40) argues that there is no historical evidence that the rabbis (after 70 AD), and thus Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, referred to themselves as being Pharisees, or even descendants of the Pharisees. But this does not mean that it was impossible for them to be Pharisees. From the evidence of the New Testament and Josephus we could deduce that they were. Cohen (1984:40-41) concludes that the rabbis were latter-day Pharisees who had no desire to publicize their connection with the Pharisees. He says that the rabbis assembled at Yavneh were Pharisees or descendants of Pharisees, but they made little of their ancestry (Cohen 1984:50). Thus we also accept the rabbis at Yavneh to be Pharisees of which the author of the Gospel knew.

14. Both Gnilka (1986:333, n.20) and Luz (1990:44, n.38) deny the possibility that there can be a link between Matthew and Yohanan on this point. Neither of these two scholars, however, explain why not. But, as Neusner (1973:97) states: 'The historical importance of the academy at Yavneh cannot be overestimated.' And, since the Pharisees, as Neusner (1973:11) indicated, produced the rabbinic masters who, after 70 AD, defined the law and doctrine that became normative for the Judaic tradition, it is unlikely that the Gospel, which was written in the same period of time that this strong Jewish tradition was vested, did not know their values, and could not have responded to it.

15. I would, however, differ slightly here from Luz in that I do not see this corrective view as 'against' the kingly Messiah, but rather as 'alongside' with. By this it can further support Jesus' position as the long expected Messiah, who was from the lineage of David.

16. France (1985:174) and Luz (1990:9) regard this as the climax of the narrative. We, however, regard the conflict as part of the whole and therefore there is no clear climax. Nevertheless, we will view 9:34 as an inevitable outcome, because everything leads to this point. We rather see it as the termination of the conflict in Mt 8 & 9 (see also chapter 6, the section on *The ongoing potential of conflict*).

17. For more on 'labelling', see Malina & Neyrey (1988).

18. A short remark has to be made on the *processes* of both improvement and deterioration. Because not all these elements can be identified in the text of Matthew 8 & 9, we will only scan through the material as presented by Bremond (1977:205). In order to improve a situation, obstacles are to be removed by way of *means*. The actor can *fulfil the task* on his/her own, but it can also happen by the *intervention of an ally/benefactor*, and/or by the *elimination of the opponent*. The opponent can be eliminated by means of *negotiation* or *aggression*. Deterioration can happen, or obstacles can emerge when an actor makes a *misstep*, when his/her opponent *takes credit*, when he/she *makes a sacrifice*, when he/she *undergoes an serious attack* or is *punished* by his/her opponent.

19. We will in this study not concentrate further on the classical distinction of Forster (1988:41; originally already published in 1927) between *round* and *flat* characters (see also Chatman 1978:131-134; Rimmon-Kenan 1983:89; Bal 1986:88-89, Brink 1987:75-76; Kingsbury 1987:59; Abrams 1988:22-24; Powell 1990:55; Van Aarde 1991a:119, 1994b:42; Johl 1992:200).

20. Jesus not only functions as the so called 'protagonist' in the narrative, but in terms of the model of Bremond, he acts as the benefactor of the beneficiaries. He is the patron, or the supporter (or *begunstiger*, as Bal 1986:36 calls it; see also Malina 1988a on *Patron and client*-relationships in the synoptic theology, which the model of Bremond compliments). Jesus is the one (the subject) who makes things happen to others. There is indeed a change in as far as his relations to the opponents are concerned. As we repeatedly have indicated, he stands in conflict with the leaders and this conflict changed from latent to manifest conflict from the side of Jesus in his repudiation of the scribes in 9:4 and the Pharisees in 9:12-13. And because he took on the interests of the beneficiaries, he stands as part of a stratified group against the opponents, the leaders. This corresponds with what we have seen from Dahrendorf (1959:126; see chapter 3 above on *Incompatible interests*) that there can only be two opposing groups in any particular conflict. If there is more than one party (as is the case in this narrative), the parties tend to group together or 'form coalitions' but end up as two opposing (stratified) groups. Bremond (1977:189) says: 'De modellen die wij aan het verwerken zijn, houden zich er dus verre van de verhaalstructuur te construeren in functie van *een speciaal gezichtspunt - dat van de "held" of dat van de verteller...*' (my emphasis). Therefore we here will not focus on Jesus' perspective in terms of the model of Bremond. However, as 'hero' or protagonist of the narrative, who is opposed to the Pharisees, we will at the end make a few commends.

21. Saldarini (1988a) correctly argued that there was no clear-cut separation between the religious, political and social aspects in those early societies.

22. By placing the crowds and the disciples together here does not mean that I regard them as having the same narrative function. In fact, they display very distinct roles and characteristics in the narrative (cf Carter 1993:58, 60, 62). However, they are here placed together to fit into the model of Bremond, in that at this point in the narrative of Matthew as a whole they are both 'open ended' and undecided in terms of the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

23. See Van Aarde (1982:60); Rimmon-Kenan (1983:138); Bal (1986:108-109); Brink (1987:138); Venter (1992a:133-134); Van Eck (1993:105) for a discussion of the different terms, i.e. *focalization* and/or *point-of-view*. We do not make this sharp distinction and use these terms inter-changeably. We agree with Brink (1987:139): 'Essentially it is not the name we give to it, but the fact that we take note there of that focalization can have different "contents" within the text, varying from the simply sensorial to the internal' (my translation from the Afrikaans).

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CHAPTER 6

TYING THE KNOTS TOGETHER

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

No community can or will ever be a perfect community without any conflict. Conflict was, is and will always be present as a positive creative force to make it a lively and real society or community. Even the 'ugly face' of society plays a creative role. The community of Matthew, in no way was an 'utopian community'. It was very much involved in conflict. This conflict and the *dynamics* thereof we wished to investigate.

In tying the knots together, we proceed by summarizing our findings under the headings of the already identified categories, namely: conflicting interests, survival, power and authority, changes and the ongoing potential of conflict. We will here attempt to fill in these categories with the findings of chapters 3, 4 and 5. What is worked out in this chapter is not new, it merely wraps up everything.

6.2 CONFLICTING INTERESTS

At the basis of this study lies the assumption that all conflicts essentially are conflicts of class/group interests. Furthermore, all human activities are driven and motivated by the strive/drive for the maximizing of own interests. There is always a person/group that wishes to rule or to dominate and a subordinate person/group. They serve different interests, namely to retain the *status quo* or to pursue change.

The focus of this study was on the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders as it unfolded in the plot of Matthew 8 and 9. We see this as a transparency of the conflict between the community of Matthew and formative Judaism. Jesus acted as the role-model both of and for the after 70 AD Matthean commun-

ity. The conflict between the community and the 70 AD Jewish leadership (possibly the Academy at Jamnia) was projected backwards to the time of the 'historical Jesus' and his contemporary adversaries, the leaders (as collective narratological character depicting the Pharisees and the scribes). The Jewish leaders, as we have indicated, belonged to the *retainer class* of their society. The community of Matthew regarded themselves as *marginalized* within the society. They, as we have shown in chapter 4, in fact comprised predominantly involuntarily marginalized people, being part of the urban non-elites, peasantry, unclean and expendable classes.

The Pharisees served the interests of the Roman rulers and opted in political and religious terms to maintain the *status quo*, in order to remain in control. In fact, they were perceived by Matthew as the dominant group within formative Judaism. Jesus was seen by Matthew as exalted by God himself because he was seen as from the genealogy of David, but also the therapeutic Son of David (cf Mt 1:1-17; 9:27). Therefore, he was in a position to challenge the Jewish leaders, although he himself was from the lowest strata of society. Applied to the community of Matthew: they saw themselves as marginalized, but exalted by God. Therefore they saw themselves as in a position to challenge the Jewish leaders, who indeed experienced their existence as a challenge to their own positions as retainers of the authorities. The Jewish leaders could have experienced this as a threat to their privileged status. Because of the fear of losing it, they dearly protected their status.

Furthermore, the Matthean community was on their way out of the sphere of influence of formative Judaism. But because they were still part of Judaism, the conflict presented itself as very 'radical and peculiar', to use the words of Grundmann (1972:281). Grundmann, however, did not give a sufficient explanation of *why* the conflict was as intense as it was. We now know that it was because the community was still part of Judaism, and it was therefore seen in terms of renegadism. Because they were still in, they were still very close to the Jewish leaders and yet they challenged their authority. Within the circle of Judaism, the community of Matthew was seen as a heretic group. In very intimate groups there often evolves some sort of 'heresy hunting' because the so-called

heretics often claim loyalty from the group/society they are still part of. This was a cause of intensified conflict. The leaders were losing influence, which is confirmed by the crowds' acknowledgement of Jesus' authority (Mt 7:29; 8:1; 9:8; see also below) and the addressing of Jesus as *Kyrie* (Mt 8:2; 8:8; 8:25; 9:28; see also 9:18).

There were attempts from the academy at Jamnia to unify and reconcile the split-up Jewish community after the disaster of the Jewish war. There was a wide-spread need for tolerance, and internal purity. Therefore Hosea 6:6: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' was stressed by Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai (see our discussion of the pericope of the calling of Matthew: Mt 9:9-13 in chapter 5). However, it seems that they did not measure up to their own standards (dormant values). This was challenged by the community of Matthew (cf Mt 9:13, the challenge of Jesus, as transparent of the community). The leaders did not meet the expectations of Jesus (or the community of Matthew), they failed their dormant values and they failed to pursue the value of tolerance. This is seen as a further intensification of existing conflict.

The position of the Matthean community is confirmed by the choice Jesus made in the miracle stories to take up the *interests of the marginalized*. In fact, the miracle stories of Matthew are seen as exemplary stories to legitimize the point of view and identity of the community. Jesus deliberately chose the interests of the marginalized, or the 'beneficiaries' (in terms of the model of Bremond 1977; see above). Therefore the Matthean community could easily identify with Jesus and furthermore identify with the involuntarily marginalized of which they were part themselves.

The interests of the community and those of Jesus were 'ideologically legitimized' by a number of verses in Matthew 8 and 9. By this we mean that the interests of a group are transcended to a 'supra-individual' level to transcend the individual. By this transcending of interests to 'higher' levels, the individual or a group can have 'a good conscience' about their interests. This also intensifies conflict. This can be done by a number of means of which the traditionalization of values is one. Thus, Jesus (and the community) legitimizes his (their) interests by traditionalising his (their) position by citing from the Old Testament (Mt 8:17;

9:13) and by linking up with traditional figures (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - Mt 8:11; Son of David - Mt 9:27). Another way of legitimization is by the claiming to be the true interpreter of the law and the tradition. By this Jesus challenged the presuppositions of the leaders with regard to illness and forgiveness (Mt 9:6). The scribes did not meet the expectation to forgive people on earth. Put differently, the scribes failed to pass on the forgiveness of God to the people, which Jesus indeed did (Mt 9:6). Jesus' last legitimization of his position in Matthew 8 and 9 was the specific redactional phrases in Matthew 9:35.

The Jewish leaders legitimized their own interests by the technique of labelling Jesus as 'blasphemous' (Mt 9:3) and 'being from the devil' (Mt 9:34). Of course, the implied reader is led to realize that this labelling is unreliable, and therefore it actually legitimized the position of the protagonist in a reverse order.

6.3 SURVIVAL

One of the highest priorities of a human being is to survive. This means that he/she should have a sufficient supply of basic needs. But in order to be in control of these basic needs for survival, one also needs to have control of surpluses. This one often attains by being in a position of privilege. Being in a position of privilege, one also has access to power and authority (see also below). Having these scarce resources, one is constantly threatened by the possibility of losing it. Therefore one can, viewed from the perspective of one who is in a privileged position, say that he/she in order to survive, also needs power, privilege and prestige to remain in a position to control basic needs. One needs to be honoured for this. One is in fear of losing it. One also needs support. One needs new members. If this is challenged, conflict is surely intensified. Therefore the Matthean community posed a threat to the Jewish leaders.

We have a number of examples from the text. The first, on the level of basic needs, is the example of the bloodflowing woman (Mt 9:20). She knew that to survive she had to go to Jesus for support and comfort. This also applies to the Matthean community. Furthermore, there were the herdsmen and the city-dwellers (Mt 8:33, 34) whose basic needs were threatened by Jesus' taking up the interests of the expendable classes, i.e. the demoniacs. Their survival, both in

terms of basic needs and authority (to control the economic resources), were threatened, and thus there was intensified conflict.

6.4 POWER AND AUTHORITY

A distinction is made between power and authority (although they often go together). By power, a person *enforces* his/her will on others, notwithstanding the position he/she holds. Often power is the ability one has to control scarce and surplus resources. Authority is more of a *relational term*, related to the *position* the person occupies to exercise this power (cf Dahrendorf 1959:166; see the in-depth discussion in chapter 3). Power is more related to the *individual*, whereas authority is a *social position*. We have also given the view of Lenski (1966:44-46) on power and authority, but relate more to the view of Dahrendorf (1959:166). In all societies or groups, there always will be those who are in a position of domination and those in subordination. Those in domination tend to be more conservative, in that they wish to retain the *status quo*. Those in subordination often tend to be more revolutionary in that they pursue changes (as we have also seen from the notion of interests). It thus is important to determine in what position one is in terms of domination or subordination. This is also true of the relation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Jesus and the community of Matthew are, in fact, in a position of subordination because of their social position in terms of stratification, and the Pharisees and scribes (Jewish leaders) in one of domination because of their position as retainers. Both, however, *claim* to be in control, thus *claim* to be in a position of domination. The Pharisees wished to remain in control (*status quo*). Jesus and the community wished to gain control (to bring about change). There indeed seems to be 'politics' behind the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

The Jewish leaders wished to remain in a position of control. They also wished to remain in a position to be honoured. In fact, honour (like authority) in the first century Mediterranean world was perceived as a scarce resource. We read in the text of Matthew 8 and 9 of a few instances where the crowds rather accepted the authority of Jesus and not that of their leaders (Mt 7:29; 8:1; 9:8). Furthermore, there are a number of instances where people fell down in tribute to

Jesus (accepting his authority). One such person was from the retainer class himself (Mt 9:18) and addressed Jesus as *Kyrie*, which is seen as a *hoheitsvolle Anrede*, to say it with Luz (1990:9; cf Mt 8:2; 8:6,8; 8:25; 9:28). At the end of the narrative the reader is led to believe that Jesus indeed had *more* authority than the leaders, as the expectation was created at the beginning of the narrative (Mt 7:29-8:1). The authority Jesus claimed to have even exceeded that of the leaders in another way as well. The authority Jesus had was an authority the leaders never could have claimed to have: Jesus had authority over illness (Mt 8:2-4; 8:5-13; 8:14-5; 9:2-8; 9:20-22; 9:27-31; 9:32), he had it over the forces of nature (Mt 8:23-27), over the demons (evil forces; cf Mt 8:28-9:1) and even over death (Mt 9:18-26). Jesus furthermore had *Vollmacht* to forgive sins on earth, i.e. to re-interpret the law and the tradition (Mt 9:6; 9:13) in order to lead to forgiveness. The community, in identifying with Jesus claimed this sort of authority for themselves as well, although they, in fact, were marginalized and comprising the lower classes. This brought them into confrontation with the leaders, for this posed a serious threat to the authority they claimed as the retainers in the interests of the Roman rulers. They would not allow anyone from the lower classes of society to ever dominate them.

The situation depicted above is confirmed by our chapter on the social location of the Matthean community. The Jewish leaders of the Jamnian Academy filled the political and religious vacuum left by the Jewish war. They tried to reunite and rebuild (formative) Judaism. But the Matthean community, although still part of Judaism (they shared the same values; Mt 9:13), was on its way out, out of the sphere of influence of the leaders (they broke the purity rules; Mt 8:2-4; 9:11). This once again posed a threat to their position, and thus there was intense conflict. They had almost lost their position of domination as far as the Matthean community was concerned.

The community was threatened as well. They were in the minority and clearly, although they claimed to have more authority, were part of the lowest classes. The Pharisees' influence stretched over and above the possible recruiting field of the community. They were under the threat to be absorbed and persecuted by the leaders. They perceived themselves as being in a struggle for survival

because they were the underdogs. The fact that the crowd, later on in the Gospel (in the passion narratives), indeed acknowledged the authority of the leaders against their initial (seemingly half-hearted) choice for Jesus, might confirm this. Furthermore, the community of Matthew pursued its own identity (see also below). They challenged the legitimacy of Jamnia by challenging their dormant values (forgiveness and mercy), in that they saw the leaders as not 'practising what they preached' (Mt 9:6; 9:13).

6.5 CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT

We have seen that conflict is the creative force of change. The change manifests itself on the level of the identity of the community, and particularly in terms of values and changed boundaries.

Jesus became the 'master status' of the community of Matthew. All Jewish symbols became subordinate and reinterpreted in terms of this master status. As Jews, the Torah played a significant role for them. But as a reformist movement, more emphasis is placed by them on the weightier values of forgiveness (Mt 9:6; 9:13), which, as we have seen before, also acted as the ideological legitimization of the Matthean community and their interests.

An important implication of conflict is the re-assessment of a group's boundaries. Because the Matthean community evolved as the interest group for the marginalized people, they 'opened' their borderlines to become a mixed society, comprising all classes and all kinds of people (Gentiles and Jews). We have a number of references in our text to confirm this. In Matthew 8:11 'many from the east and the west' are incorporated into the tradition of Israel (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). A Gentile centurion comes to Jesus for help (Mt 8:5-13). Jesus issues an open invitation to all classes (to a scribe as part of the retainer class) to follow him, if they are willing to take up his viewpoint (Mt 8:18-22; see also our discussion of this particular pericope in chapter 5, in particular the notion of the invitation). Jesus enters into Gentile country (Mt 8:28-9:1). Jesus is against the exclusive claim of the scribes that only God may forgive, making it impossible on 'doctrinal' grounds for people to forgive other people (Mt 9:2-8). Jesus not only calls the upright, but also the despised and the outcasts (Mt 9:9). The 'tax collectors and

sinners' as unfavoured people, were dining with Jesus as a gesture of closeness and intimacy (Mt 9:10). As part of formative Judaism, the eventual outcome of the conflict was that the community was moving out of the sphere of Judaism. However, this was not completed in the time of Matthew (the author).

6.6 THE ONGOING POTENTIAL OF CONFLICT

We have identified a number of instances where conflict was present because of the difference in interests. This was not really part of the primary conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders or the plot as a whole, but we have indicated that all these instances were potential new levels of conflict. Although one would narratologically speaking not expect any possible conflict between Jesus and the beneficiaries in the story, sociologically there always is the potentiality thereof. We have seen this from the episode of the healing of the demoniacs in that Jesus challenged the sphere of control (*status quo*) of the demoniacs (Mt 8:28-9:1) in order to cure them. Furthermore he challenged the economic interests of the Gentile herdsmen and city-dwellers who in terms of their Gentile background should have been part of the beneficiaries in the Gospel. There also was the potential rejection and disobedience (conflict?) as we have seen it from two other beneficiaries: the two blind men. They spread the news about their cure despite Jesus' prohibition not to make it known (Mt 9:27-31).

In this study we focused primarily on the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders as a transparent of the conflict between the Matthean community and their contemporary Jewish leaders. But what about the potential of inner-community conflict? In fact, there are those who regard the conflict in the Gospel of Matthew as primarily a conflict within the Matthean community itself and *not* a conflict between the community and the 'synagogue across the street' (cf Smith 1989:20-21, 1992:231; see also the discussion on the *intra-muros* view in chapter 4). But are these two views totally irreconcilable? I don't think they are, particularly if we take our theory of conflict into consideration. This falls slightly outside the primary focus of this study and also outside the text on which we concentrated, for the disciples in Matthew 8 and 9, as we have seen, do not yet feature very strongly in the narrative. Nevertheless there are some implications

that the plot of Matthew 8 and 9 has for discipleship. Therefore I will only give a few basic guidelines, which could and should be developed in further detail in studies to follow, either by myself or by others.

In terms of the so-called spiral of conflict, we have seen that the outcome and resolution of one conflict is at the same time the potential beginning of the next. Conflict evolves as a never-ending spiral. Furthermore, the positive outcome for one group, may very well at the same time be perceived as negative for another. The equilibrium for one is a disequilibrium for the other, or an equilibrium is dialectically speaking at the same time a disequilibrium. This is confirmed sociologically by the conflict theories of Dahrendorf (1959) and narratologically by the causal theory of Bremond (1977). Therefore we may ask: Is the tragic and 'negative' way in which the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Matthew 8 and 9 comes to an end (in terms of the negative response and total rejection; Mt 9:34), and the tragic resolution of the conflict in the passion narratives (in terms of the crucifixion; Mt 27:32-44) the end of the conflict? It certainly cannot be, for the resolution of one conflict is at the same time the potential beginning of another. In our case this will imply conflict within the community of Matthew itself. Sociologically speaking, we could imagine that this community also was a very close-knit community in that they had a common enemy (the Jewish leaders). Therefore there also could have been intensified conflict because of this close contact. They also could have searched within their own ranks for inner heretics. This certainly is what Minear (1974b:76) implies by his study on the false prophesy and hypocrisy in the Gospel of Matthew. In their community ranks there also were leaders in a position of domination and those in subordination. Just like Jesus challenged the Jewish leaders to 'practise what they preach' and take up the interests of the marginalized (which they did not do), Jesus also challenges the disciples (and thus leaders of the Matthean community) to do so. There remains in the community a need for tolerance, forgiveness and mercy, as desperate as in formative Judaism.

Evidence of this level of potential conflict already surfaced in Matthew 8:21-22; 8:23-27. Although the narrative role of 'helper' of the protagonist (cf Kingsbury 1988a:129) is developed very strongly in Matthew 8 and 9, the poten-

tial conflict is brought into the inner circle of disciples in that Jesus repudiates the one disciple for first wanting to bury his father (Mt 8:21), and the other disciples for their little faith (ὀλιγοπιστία; Mt 8:26). We have seen that in the 'real life situation', the disciples were perceived to be marginalized themselves. In the context of the community they are, as the leaders (retainers) themselves, challenged to become 'voluntarily marginalized' and see to it that they remain faithful to the perspective of Jesus, that is to foster the interests of the lowest classes in their own society and community. Will they really do this? We are led to question this by the repudiation of their little faith. This little faith displays a perspective that is a potential parallel to the opponents of Jesus (cf Van Aarde 1994b:88). To Kingsbury (1988a:130) it is in the third part of the Gospel (Mt 16:21-28:20) as he sees it, that the conflict Jesus experiences with disciples becomes more intense. Kingsbury (1988a:130; see also 139) says:

> It has to do with the disciples' imperceptiveness, and at times resistance, to the notion that *servanthood is the essence of discipleship* (my emphasis).

Led by Minear (1974a:32), Garland (1979:38) says that the disciples as leaders in as far as Matthew 23 is concerned, are susceptible to the same spiritual cataracts that blinded the scribes and the Pharisees. And as Van Aarde (1994b:88-89) correctly indicates: 'To depict this darker side of the disciples, Matthew uses the same names for the disciples as those he has used elsewhere for the Jewish leaders. The most striking examples of this are the names ὑποκριταί (Mt 7:5; 24:51) and ψευδοπροφῆται (Mt 7:15,22)'. Or as Minear (1974b:93; see also Van Aarde 1994b:89) says: 'Matthew speaks in 7,23 of the ἀνομία of the false Christian prophets and in 23,28 of the ἀνομία of Jewish scribes. *What was true of the one group was true of the other*' (my emphasis).

If we take the so-called *spiral of conflict* into consideration the conflict in Matthew 8 and 9 went through the following phases: (1) The parties became *aware* of the latent conflict in that the crowd in Matthew 7:28-8:1 acknowledged that Jesus had more authority than their leaders. (2) The conflict *escalated*

through the narrative in the different miracle stories. The conflict became manifest and open, especially in the narrative of the healing of the paralytic (Mt 9:2-8), and in the narrative of the calling of Matthew (Mt 9:9-13). The conflict was further intensified by the different ideological legitimations in Matthew 8:17; 9:13; 9:35. Eventually the conflict (3) *de-escalated* and (4) was *terminated* (these two phases fall together) in the resolution in Matthew 9:34, the reaction of the Pharisees. In this resolution, the potential of renewed conflict was already present in the inner circle of the disciples in the next chapter (Mt 10). In Matthew 10:1, 7-8, Jesus commissioned the disciples to preach and heal. The spiral started all over again. This, however, falls beyond the focus of this study, but it opens a new possible field of study: what are the stages the conflict in the whole Gospel went through? Kingsbury (1988a) has done a narrative study on the development of the conflict in Matthew. A sociological study still remains to be done.

In compounding this, I dare to say that the resolution of the conflict between the Matthean community and the Jewish leaders, is at the same time the beginning of an internal conflict between the implied author and the leaders of the community, in that the implied author challenges the community leaders to become voluntarily marginalized themselves, in line with the involuntarily marginalized composition of the rest of the community.

6.7 A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

There is conflict in Matthew 8 and 9. The *dynamics* of this tension I investigated. This conflict was predominantly a conflict of interests between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Jesus pursued change, the leaders wished to retain the *status quo.* This conflict is resolved in Matthew 9:34. In chapter 1, I accounted for the use of the social-scientific criticism and conflict theory in particular. In chapter 2, I indicated that the dynamics of conflict was not sufficiently investigated by the different selected scholars. In chapter 3, I explained in detail what conflict theory was all about, and deduced five important categories: interests, survival, power and authority, change and the never ending potential of conflict. Chapter 4 was an important in-between chapter to link the theory of conflict to the text. Chapter 5 was the exegetical part of the study in which conflict theory was applied to the

miracle stories in Matthew 8 and 9. In chapter 6, the findings of the study was implemented in terms of the five deduced statements.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABR = Australian biblical review
AThR = Anglican theological review
BiLiSe = Bible and literature series
BEvTh = Beiträge zur evangelischen Theology
BJRL = Bulletin of the John Rynlands Library
BJSt = Brown Judaic studies
BR J SOCIAL = British Journal of sociology
BTB = Biblical theology bulletin
BU = Biblische Untersuchungen
CBQ = Catholic biblical quarterly
ET = The expository times
EvTh = Evangelische Theologie
FRLANT = Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HSRC = Human Science Research Council
HNT = Handbuch Zum Neuen Testament
HThK = Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
HThR = Harvard theological review
HTS = Hervormde teologiese studies
HTS Suppl = Hervormde teologiese studies Supplementum
HUCA = Hebrew Union College Annual
Interp. = Interpretation: A journal for Bible and theology
JAAR = Journal of the American academy of religion
JBL = Journal of Biblical literature
J CONFL RES = Journal of conflict resolution
JETS = Journal of the evangelical theology society
JRH = Journal of religious history
JSJ = Journal for the study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman period

JSNT = Journal for the study of the New Testament
JSNT.S = Journal for the study of the New Testament Supplement series
LV = Lumen Vitae
LWF.D = Lutheran world federation documentation
NTD = Das neue Testament Deutsch
NTS = New Testament studies
RNT = Regensburger Neues Testament
SBL = Society of Biblical literature
SBL.DS = Society of Biblical literature Dissertation series
SBS = Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SOCIAL FORC = Social Forces
ThEv(SA) = Theologica evangelica: Pretoria
ThHK = Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
TQ = Theological quarterly
TS = Theological studies
TynB = Tyndale bulletin
UBS = United Bible Societies
WdF = Wege der Forschung
ZNW = Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
ZThK = Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

CONFLICT IN THE MIRACLE STORIES IN MATTHEW 8 AND 9:
A SOCIOLOGICAL AND EXEGETICAL STUDY

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SUMMARY

The conflict in the Gospel of Matthew has been investigated by a number of scholars before. However, the emphasis in this study is placed more on the *dynamics* of conflict. How does conflict 'work' and why are people in conflict? A theory of conflict is developed. The aim is to offer a systematic way of organizing the information on conflict in order to focus the attention on the social structures and processes thereof. The basis question is: 'Why is there conflict between Jesus and the leaders of Israel?'

The thesis is that Jesus was in conflict with the leaders because of contradicting interests. The leaders acted on behalf of the Roman rulers as retainers, and therefore failed to realize the interests of the marginalized. Jesus (and the Matthean community) acted on behalf of the marginalized. The community challenged the authority of the Jewish leaders because they were on their way out, out of the sphere of the authority of the leaders. This was perceived as a threat. Furthermore the community challenged the dormant values of the leaders to forgive and to act merciful, that is: to act in the interests of the marginalized. The conflict is resolved negatively in Matthew 9:34 by the label that Jesus was possessed by the devil (by implication this also applies to the

community). At the same time the conflict has the potential to go on and challenge the leaders of the community themselves to act in the interests of the marginalized, which we call: 'to become voluntary marginalized'.

Chapter 1 serves as an orientation of the possibilities on where to enter into the debate on the miracle stories. It leads to accounting for the use of the social-scientific criticism, conflict theory and the use of the model as template or heuristic tool.

Chapter 2 serves as an attempt to identify a research gap. Different scholars are investigated in terms of their views on the marginalized and their use and explication (or not) of conflict.

In *chapter 3* an own synthesis is developed, predominantly from the theories of Coser and Dahrendorf. As a theory (and a model), five basic statements are derived from this chapter:

(1) All conflicts are essentially conflicts of class/group *interests.*

(2) Closely related to the above is the urge one has to *survive*.

(3) In basically all societies/groups there are those who in terms of *power and authority* are in positions of either domination or subordination.

(4) Conflict almost always brings about *change*.

(5) Conflict is always present as a *never ending spiral.*

Chapter 4: In between the high level of abstraction on a macro-level (conflict theory; chapter 3) and the text to be interpreted on a micro-level (Mt 8 & 9; chapter 5), chapter 4 is placed to act on a 'meso-level' and to bring these two poles together. The social location of the Matthean community is investigated. It is argued that they are not on their own yet, but are in a process of parting from Judaism.

In *chapter 5*, the implications of chapters 3 and 4 are applied to the text of Matthew 8 and 9. This chapter is the exegetical part of the study. Emphasis is placed on the plot as it unfolds in terms of time and causality.

All the knots are tied together in *chapter 6*. The findings of the study is implemented in terms of the above five statements.

KONFLIK IN DIE WONDER-VERHALE IN MATTEUS 8 EN 9: 'n SOSIOLOGIESE EN EKSEGETIESE STUDIE

deur

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OPSOMMING

Die konflik in die Evangelie van Matteus is al tevore deur 'n aantal geleerdes bestudeer. Die klem val egter in hierdie studie meer op die *dinamiek* van konflik. Hoe 'werk' konflik en waarom is mense in konflik? 'n Konflikteorie word ontwerp. Die doel is daarom om 'n sistematiese werkwyse te bied om die inligting oor konflik te orden, met die oog daarop om die fokus te plaas op die sosiale strukture en prosesse van konflik. Die basiese vraag is 'Waarom is daar konflik tussen Jesus en die leiers van Israel?'

Die tese is dat Jesus in konflik met die leiers was vanweë teenstrydige belange. As ondersteuners (*retainers*) het die leiers in die belang van die Romeinse heersers opgetree, en daarom nagelaat om die belange van die gemarginaliseerdes in te sien. Jesus (en die gemeenskap van Matteus) het in die belang van die gemarginaliseerdes opgetree. Die gemeenskap het die gesag van die leiers uitgedaag want hulle was op pad uit, uit die gesagsfeer van die leiers. Die leiers het dit as 'n bedreiging gesien. Verder het die gemeenskap die sluimerende waardes van die leiers uitgedaag om te vergewe en om barmhartig op te tree, dit wil sê, om in die belang van die gemargaliseerdes op te tree. Die konflik is op 'n negatiewe manier opgelos in Matteus 9:34 deur die etiket dat Jesus deur die

duiwel besete was (dit geld by implikasie ook vir die gemeenskap). Terselfdertyd het die konflik die potensiaal om voort te gaan en die leiers van die gemeenskap uit te daag om in die belang van die gemarginaliseerdes op te tree. Dit noem ons 'vrywillige marginalisering'.

Hoofstuk 1 dien as 'n oriëntasie van die verskillende moontlikhede waar om tot die debat oor die wonderverhale toe te tree. Die bedoeling is om die gebruik van die sosiaal-wetenskaplike metode, konflikteorie en die gebruik van 'n model as templaat of heuristiese werktuig te verantwoord.

Hoofstuk 2 is 'n poging om 'n navorsingsgaping te identifiseer. Verskillende geleerdes is bestudeer in terme van hulle sieninge ten opsigte van die gemarginaliseerdes en hulle gebruik en verklaring (al dan nie) van konflik.

In *hoofstuk 3* word 'n eie sintese uitgewerk, hoofsaaklik na aanleiding van die teorië van Coser en Dahrendorf. As teorie (en as model), word vyf stellings uit hierdie hoofstuk afgelei:

(1)   Alle konflikte is in wese konflikte van groep/klasse-*belange*.

(2)   Die drang tot *oorlewing* is nou aan die stelling hierbo verwant.

(3)   In vrywel alle gemeenskappe/groepe is daar dié wat in terme van *mag en gesag* in 'n posisie van óf dominasie óf subordinasie verkeer.

(4)   Konflik bring altyd *veranderinge* mee.

(5)   Konflik is altyd teenwoordig as 'n *nimmer eindigende spiraal.*

Hoofstuk 4: Tussen die hoë vlak van abstraksie op 'n makro-vlak (konflikteorie; hoofstuk 3) en die teks wat interpreteer moet word op 'n mikro-vlak (Matt 8 en 9; hoofstuk 5), word hoofstuk 4 geplaas as 'meso-vlak' en om die twee pole bymekaar te bring. Die sosiale plasing (*location*) van die gemeenskap van Matteus word bestudeer. Daar word geredeneer dat die gemeenskap nog nie op hulle eie is nie, maar in die proses van skeiding met die Judaïsme is.

In *hoofstuk 5* word die implikasies van hoofstukke 3 en 4 op die teks van Matteus 8 en 9 van toepassing gemaak. Hierdie hoofstuk is die eksegetiese deel van die studie. Klem word gelê op die plot in terme van tyd en kousaliteit.

Al die los drade word in *hoofstuk 6* saamgevat. Die bevindinge van die studie word geïmplimenteer in terme van die genoemde vyf stellings.