

Chapter 2

The miraculous multiplication of loaves (Mt 14:13-21 and par): Historical criticism in perspective

[T]he old canard should at long last be put to rest which says that inherent in the historical-critical method itself is a denial of the miraculous...not the historical critical method as such but the doctrine of God to which the individual interpreter subscribes is what dictates whether he will be open or not to the possibility of miracle.

(Kingsbury 1975a:140)

A theology that...wishes to see its own reflection as that of a critical justification of the contents of the tradition of Christian faith in no way threatens the certain faith of believers by its critical attitude, but would much rather help...to consciously use as its theme the questions and uncertainties that may exist in the experiences of faith within a community.

(Van Huyssteen 1986:185; translation from Afrikaans)

In this essay certain aspects of the historical critical method are applied to the doublet of the narration of the miraculous multiplication of loaves in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew. The point of departure taken is that a single tradition apparently lies beyond the doublet. It is furthermore argued that the first narrative has been molded from out of a particular perspective within a Palestinian situation in early Christianity and the second from out of an universal perspective within a Hellenistic situation. Finally, it is argued that Mark, in his redactional interpretation of the narrative, used these perspectives for the purpose of eucharistic catechesis. Matthew, on the other hand, reinterpreted Mark's usage, fashioned the doublet into a messianic meal and emphasized more explicitly the

intermediate role of the disciples in the feeding of the crowd. The article's intention is to put the historical critical method into perspective against the accusation that this method is a threat to Christian faith.

1. INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESIS

Over the years the denunciation of historical criticism developed into a refrain, namely that as exegetic approach it is irreconcilable with the nature of the Holy Scriptures and cannot do justice to their truth.

Through the application of aspects of historical criticism to the narrative of the miraculous multiplication of loaves (Mt 14:13-21 and parallel texts), I will attempt to place the historical-critical (methodological) hypothesis into perspective to illustrate that a particular hypothesis may expect particular answers. This exposes the invalidity of the above judgment. It mixes methodological and theological issues. 'Exegesis' should, however, result in 'theology'. But the distinctiveness of the hypothesis and corresponding results of both should be distinguished from one another. Dieter Lührmann's contribution in respect of exegetic methodology is worthy of some consideration. He emphasizes the fact that the application of any method to the Bible has certain implications regarding the justification of faith, in that exegesis is, in the end, as such a theological program (Lührmann 1984:28). It is not, however, necessary to develop an aversion to 'methods' and it would be wrong to adopt his proposal, which aims to replace the term 'methodological hypothesis' with 'theological hypothesis'.

I find myself very critical of historical criticism. I will attempt to discuss, constructively, both the possibilities and the shortcomings of historical criticism, with regard to the nature and truth of the Holy Scriptures. My thesis is that it is an oversimplification of the particular exegetic methodological and theological problems to regard historical criticism as the cause of the rational and skeptical historicist hypothesis of the Enlightenment and the post-Enlightenment. Historical criticism is, rather, 'an attempt...to handle the existing problem [text-theoretically and theologically - AG v A]' (translated from Schnell 1986).

Apart from the introduction, the essay has four main parts. Firstly, historical criticism is given perspective through exegetic methodology, epistemology and the justification of faith. Secondly, *form-* and *traditionsgeschichtliche*, and thirdly *redaktionsgeschichtliche* questions are posed in respect of Matthew 14:13-21 and parallel texts. Fourthly, I will briefly return to the hypothesis set out above.

2. HISTORICAL CRITICISM IN PERSPECTIVE

2.1 A commitment to rationality

2.1.1 Genetic method of explanation

Historical criticism has a commitment to rationality. Yet its basis can only to some extent be traced back to the world of seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalism. It is not an irrational activity to research the origin and development of texts. All critical justification faces the responsibility towards rationality. Yet *rationalism* as such does not represent the point of departure of and bonding elements between the various methodical facets of historical criticism as exegetic approach. It is more probably the *genetic explanation* that forms the basis of historical-critical exegesis (see Lategan 1982:58). According to the genetic method of explanation the recovery of the *origin* and *development* of phenomena simultaneously represents their *explanation*. Both the possibilities and the shortcomings of historical criticism as an exegetic approach flow from this presupposition. With this method of explanation the evolutionary *development* of a text and the *author's* influence on its content constitute the object of the research (see Vorster 1982b:94).

2.1.2 Rationalism?

It is incorrect to place historical criticism and rationalism merely on an equal footing, and consequently pass off historical criticism as an exegetic approach which could summarily be described as anti-scriptural, anti-church, anti-dogma, anti-faith, et cetera. Such a negative attitude is to be found especially in the theological and ecclesiastical circles of both orthodoxy and pietism. Certain practitioners of historical criticism also stimulate this by their theological applications. Orthodoxy often teaches that anyone who depends on the 'intellect' gets lost along the road to 'faith'. Should we, however, exchange the word 'science' for the word 'intellect' we would realize that 'intellect' is not necessarily anti-scriptural, it does not wish to replace dogmatic theology with intellectual theology, neither does it wish to ban 'faith'.

Enough proof exists of believers in the period of the Enlightenment and later interpreting the Bible according to historical criticism and serving both dogmatic theology and the church. Negative criticism places too much emphasis on the extremes, such as on those who practice historical criticism by approaching Jesus' resurrection in a rational and historicist manner. W E G Paulus, an eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century New Testament scholar, was one such exponent of historical criticism. He was known for his radical pronouncements in respect of Jesus' resurrection (see Schweitzer 1951). He did, in fact, allow an injustice to the nature and authority of the Bible. But radical points of view such as his are all too easily generalized as being historical criticism. On the other hand, the positive and pioneering work of someone like J P Gabler at the end of the eighteenth century (see Boers 1979:23-39) is not sufficiently appreciated. Healthy tolerance has always served the church and biblical scholarship and not undermined it. Without historical criticism we would have been much the poorer.

2.1.3 The Reformation

Although some theologians deny it (e.g. Zorn 1984:10-19, and by implication Fryer 1984:260-269; [1986]), a strong case can be made for the fact that historical criticism is a continuation and intensifying of the 'historical grammatical'/literal exegetic approach from the Reformation period. To my mind the historical-critical approach is not a renegade child of the Reformation. It is one of the Reformation's most valuable heirlooms.

It is, therefore, only logical that the historical critic would often be able to make use of the results of a 'historical grammatical' explanation and exploit them further. Although an exegetic model may be supplanted, a number of the results remain of importance. Naturally this does not only apply to the historical-grammatical method, but it also involves the results of allegorical exegesis from the Middle Ages and historical-critical exegesis from the Enlightenment. Thus we find that, with regard to the narrative of the multiplication of loaves there are, amazingly, a number of contact points between the results of Augustine's exegesis (see Boobyer 1953:77), and that of Richardson (1955:146) and Schmidt [1919] (1969:172-214).

2.2 What is historical criticism?

To arrive at a clearer explanation, we shall distinguish between three things: methodology, procedure and approach.

2.2.1 Approach

Ernst Troeltsch described historical criticism as being critical, analogical and correlative. Krentz (1975:55) described these characteristics as follows:

- * historical criticism is *critical* - in other words, it is method-probing because on a historical level only probabilistic judgments can be made, as nothing is totally certain in a historical sense;
- * historical criticism is *analogical*, because the sources are used comparatively; in other words if the authenticity of an event is accepted it means that something similar (not necessarily 'identical') has occurred elsewhere;
- * historical criticism is *correlative* because this approach searches for the connection between events, in the sense of cause and effect, on the basis of the premise that there must be some interaction between phenomena.

2.2.2 Procedure

In the light of the above approach and reflecting on the work of the historical critics, De Jonge (1982:78) describes the procedure adopted by historical criticism as follows:

- * its methods are analytical;
- * it seeks signs that will indicate that the text does not form an integrated unit;
- * it tabulates differences in respect of word choices, grammar and style, discrepancies in content, doublets, et cetera;
- * it attempts to explain the text in terms of text history and criticism, socio-historical and religious-historical background, sources, formal and content-related text types, oral and literary history of transmission, redactional adaptations, et cetera.

2.2.3 Methodology

In time, historical criticism became divided into three (four?) clearly distinguishable (although not separated) methods of exegesis, namely *Literarkritik*, *Traditions-* and *Formgeschichte*, and *Redaktionsgeschichte*. These different methodological aspects of historical criticism have developed relatively from one another and consequently often intrude on another's areas. Historical criticism does not imply that one has to work through from *Literarkritik* to *Redaktionsgeschichte*, as though one could penetrate to the text's meaning with such pluralistic methodology. Different answers to different questions are found by means of different methods. With regard to the New Testament, and the gospels in particular, the field of interest of the *Literarkritik* is the author's use of sources; for example, the author of the Gospel of Matthew used the Gospel of Mark as his main source. The *Traditions-* and *Formgeschichte* emphasizes the analysis of transmission phases, the correlative

sociological situations in the early church and the impact it had on the selection, transformation and re-interpretation of the Jesus-saying traditions. The *Redaktionsgeschichte* struggles with questions regarding the nature of the influence of the biblical author, as redactor and interpreter of a specific theological perspective in a specific ecclesiastical grouping within the early church, upon the redactional editing of transmitted Jesus traditions in a macrotext such as the whole Gospel of Matthew.

2.3 Possibilities and shortcomings

2.3.1 Distance between exegete and text

Historical criticism may also be seen as an *epistemological* matter. As an epistemological paradigm (see Van Huyssteen 1986:63-87 with regard to the term 'paradigm'), historical criticism stands in contrast to a Platonic ideation (see Deist 1984:47-56). The latter epistemological theory carries within itself the basis of the most tempting deception that ever existed in respect of biblical hermeneutics, namely that of *misplaced concreteness* (see Van Aarde 1985a:568-571).

The fact that *understanding* of the Bible always simultaneously presumes present *application* implies that two periods have been bridged: the historical time of the Bible and the present time of the exegete. From this viewpoint, Rudolf Bultmann named this interrelationship *Verstehen* (= understanding) and *Glauben* (= faith). If, however, the existence of the distance that is bridged in the hermeneutic process is not taken into account both epistemologically and exegetically-methodologically, we may find that we have to deal with misplaced concreteness. This is the reason why historical-literal exegesis now lacks conviction. This paradigm does not allow the distance between the present-day exegete and the historical Bible to be bridged methodically or adequately enough. In addition to the subjectivism which may arise from this, the approach leads to a use of Scripture that is foreign to the basic intention of the Reformation.

The origin and development of reformed scholastics since the seventeenth century is, ironically, an alienating result of the Reformation. In contrast, historical criticism contributed towards the creation of the necessary distance between the exegete and the Bible. The Reformation evaluated official ecclesiastical opinion as *norma normata* (deduced, secondary authority) in contrast to Scripture as *norma normans* (primary authority). In this way any summary analogy between the Bible and contemporary ecclesiastic thought or exegesis was dismissed. In fact, the distance between the two was emphasized. Boers (1979:17) formulates this as follows:

The Bible was no longer an integral, contemporary part of the living religion but was separated from it by intervening history, that very history of the ongoing life of the church which had previously provided continuity with the Bible. *A historical consciousness thus arose with the Reformation. This was not immediately recognized, but it was only a question of time before it began to become clear, and historical criticism would emerge*

(Boers 1979:17; my emphasis).

The scholars of the Middle Ages did not use Scripture with such a historical consciousness before the Reformation. This was also to be noticed in the artwork of the Middle Ages. Biblical scenes were presented against a contemporary background and biblical characters were dressed in contemporary clothing. Contemporary people were even used in conjunction with biblical figures. In a certain sense this same type of intermingling of periods takes place in ecclesiastical dogma and ecclesiastical kerygma. However, the Reformation made us aware of the danger of the subjectivism that can arise from this type of concreteness. The demands made by the *sola Scriptura* principle and the hermeneutic procedure, *Sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres*, in fact, originated against the background of this critical historical consciousness. After the Reformation (as also acknowledged by the Roman Catholic Church some time later - see Küng 1980:510-514) the hermeneutist was not to expound texts and dogmas without taking cognizance of the possibility of misplaced concreteness. One should therefore appreciate the contribution of historical criticism in this respect. The neo-scholasticism of the period after the seventeenth century in both the Reformed and the Roman Catholic world, and the fundamentalism of our day, however, do not want to acknowledge this value of historical criticism. And we have to accept that this is the way things are when a paradigm is created and converted:

Revolution in science occurs when scientists find the old paradigm increasingly inadequate to cope with anomalies, and some become converted to a new paradigm, though theses under the old continue to proliferate.

(Montague 1979:5)

2.3.2 An element of the exegetic process

Historical criticism does not constitute the whole exegetic process, yet it forms an essential part of it:

Important as they are, historical-critical tools are not the only ones essential for biblical interpretation....[T]exts from the past must be interpreted in terms of their historical meaning - what they said in and to their own times - as at least one step essential to their understanding.

(Tucker 1975:vi)

Viewed from a particular angle, it would, on the basis of non-fundamentalistic considerations, even be possible to regard historical criticism as an illegitimate hypothesis in the exegesis of certain types of biblical literature such as the gospels (see Frye 1971). As narrative literature the contents of the gospels have been organized according to *theme* and not historically, causatively and chronologically. Thus the gospels are described as *metahistorical* literature. To expect historical 'preciseness' in a text such as a gospel is to misinterpret it. As narrative texts the gospels stand detached from their historical authors. The interpretation of narrative texts therefore does not as such concentrate on penetrating the real world of the historical author, and the place and circumstances of reception. Neither is it concerned with the description of the early written or prescriptive contextualizations of tradition.

But the gospels, seen as narratives, are not figments of the imagination. By means of, amongst other things, transmitted traditions which have been redactionally adapted in a selective, reformative and re-interpretive manner, an evangelist communicates his own type of theological perspective as redactor-narrator. A historical-critical investigation into the application of traditions in a narrative text could therefore not be irrelevant. Questions regarding the sources of texts, the transmission of traditions, redaction history, et cetera, will at least have to find a place in introductory scientific questions such as those about authorship and original readership (see Culpepper 1984:474). Knowledge about this will ensure that the exegete does not treat the Bible in a naive fashion. And irrespective of this, the study of the redactional activities of authors should be part of the exegesis of texts with an evolutionary genesis, such as the gospels. How else then would the exegete determine the theological motive behind activities such as the rearrangement, amendment, elimination, extension and abridgement of traditions? In addition, a gospel does not develop within a vacuum. It refers to a situational

context which includes the socio-political, economic and religious circumstances of the time. This situational context should be construed. Aspects of this could be examined more closely by, inter alia, comparing texts by means of the historical-critical method. The canon of Scripture, together with the non-canonical writings, has in this way been subjected to a full historical examination, while the exegete, in a theological sense, takes cognizance of the following remark by Funk (1966:11): 'The word of God...is not on trial'.

2.3.3 Historical criticism and the nature of faith

Stuhlmacher (1979:220) criticizes historical criticism because it can only make probabilistic judgments and cannot provide any historical certainties. He finds the so-called analogy principle of historical criticism a particular problem. We indicated at an earlier stage (section 2.2.1) that the probable reliability of an event would, according to this presupposition, only be accepted if something similar had happened elsewhere. Thus historical criticism does not make provision for the unique and for what has no analogy in religious texts. The reliability of the miraculousness of God concerning himself with man is therefore in contention. Krentz (1975:4) voices this objection as follows:

Scholars must ask whether historical criticism, a legacy of historicism and its philosophic presuppositions, is adequate for the investigation of the Bible....Can it do justice to the inner meaning of religious literature?

(Krentz 1975:4)

In answering this question we should keep the important point of departure mentioned above (section 1) in mind, namely that the uniqueness of exegetic and theological hypothesis respectively should be distinguished from one another. When the result of historical criticism, namely that we are not dealing with *bruta facta* in the gospels but with reformed and interpreted Jesus-saying traditions, develops into a question regarding the justification of faith we have finally arrived at theology. And it is simply not true that the acknowledgement of this result negates the historicity or the wonder of God concerning himself with man. Neither does it make the confession of faith impossible.

With regard to the relationship between the nature of faith and historical reliability, the following remark by Krentz (1975:32) may serve to answer his question quoted above:

Barth's call raised anew the question of the relationship of faith to historical method....Rudolf Bultmann also recognized the poverty of a historical approach to the New Testament. He shared with Barth a concern for the World's claim on man and *sought to use historical criticism to serve that claim*....Faith is the decision made in response to that call. *Faith is not dependent on historical knowledge. Criticism can be ruthlessly practised, because it makes the nature of faith clear.*

(Krentz 1975:32; my emphasis)

From this perspective there is no need for tension between faith and historical criticism. When critical reflection on the Bible is resisted and suppressed in the name of the confession of faith it is an indication of a narrow-minded and fearful faith that only pretends to be strong but is, in fact, foundering (see Ebeling 1981:12). God is the origin of faith. Faith is not based on methodological and other scientific verifications.

3. MATTHEW 14:13-21 (AND PARALLEL SECTIONS) AND THE 'TRADITIONS'- AND 'FORMGESCHICHTE'

3.1 What are *Traditions*- and *Formgeschichte*?

Although the *Traditions*- and *Formgeschichte* are, in fact, two different methods they are combined for our purposes. The point of departure is that we have to accept that traditions regarding Jesus were first transmitted verbally before being committed to writing.

Traditionsgeschichtliche exegesis is interested in the pre-literary stage, that is the stage before the tradition is recorded in writing. Broadly speaking, these stages extended from the historical Jesus via the Aramaic speaking/Palestinian Judeo-Christian circle of tradition up to and including Gentile Christianity. Someone who is, for example, interested in the historical Jesus or his preaching will, by means of a *traditionsgeschichtliche* investigation, attempt to probe the different layers of context on the different levels of tradition in order to reach the contextual level pertaining to the historical Jesus. The *Formgeschichte* focuses on the second contextual level and the *Redaktionsgeschichte* on the third. The second level is that of the early church before the gospels, as they now exist, were put into writing. The third contextual level is the particular community in the early church from which the various evangelists write as the representatives of specific 'theologies'.

In addition to the fact that the gospels are products of a process of oral transmission, the text theory at the basis of the *Formgeschichte* consists of a specific causal relationship between the oral tradition and the written text. What this means is that a genetic relationship is presumed between the form (= *Form/Gattung*) in which a tradition has been cast and the social environment (= *Sitz im Leben*) in which it functioned. During the oral phase traditions assumed certain forms, according to the nature of the function they had in the community of the early church. The situation in everyday life (*Sitz im Leben*) in the early church, for example the *missionary kerygma* of the evangelical message, the early Christian church service and early Christian *catechism*, was the reason why the traditions took on functional forms.

In this manner the miracle story of the New Testament took its specific form as a result of the function it had in the early church. According to this it had no intra-ecclesiastical direction such as preaching/catechism. It had a more extra-ecclesiastical, propagandistic function. The social environment from which the miracle stories originated would be situations in the Jewish-Hellenistic community, where Jesus' power over competitive gods and miracle-workers was emphasized (see Dibelius 1971:76-78).

Different criteria have been applied to the classification of the various types of miracle stories in the gospels (see e.g. Betz & Grimm 1977:6). One method of classification is according to the object of the miracle, namely man or nature. Another method is according to the dynamics of the miracle, namely healing, salvation, damnation, epiphany, demonstration of power, et cetera. Theissen (1974:111-120), in addition to distinguishing between the casting out of demons and miracles of healing, also distinguishes between *Geschenkwunder* ('miracle gifts') and *Normenwunder*. The latter may be compared with the controversy dialogues between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. The miracle serves to legitimize the fact that Jesus is correct in the controversy dialogue. As far as the Synoptic Gospels are concerned, and from a superficial viewpoint, the miraculous multiplication of loaves is classified as a *Geschenkwunder* but is intermingled with the typical *Normenwunder* in the Gospel of John.

Martin Dibelius, one of the pioneers in the practice of the *Formgeschichte*, who used the above-mentioned *Sitz im Leben* as his point of departure with reference to the miracle story, subdivides the miracle story (he calls it a 'novel') into narratives about the casting out of demons, miracles of healing and miracles of nature. Dibelius (1971:67; see also p 73-74) claims that the 'novel' has the following basic pattern:

- * a description of the 'illness' or the situation that needs to be 'rectified' by means of an implicit or explicit call for help in an emergency;
- * a Jesus-saying that brings about healing, or solves the problem;
- * an explanation of the results of the miracle - that is, the effect it had on the person who was healed or how the onlookers reacted.

With regard to the double narration of the miraculous multiplication of loaves in Matthew 14:13-21 and 15:32-38 respectively, the following *traditions*- and *formgeschichtliche* questions may be raised: Can the double narrative be classified as a 'miracle story'? In other words, is there a parallel with the formal pattern mentioned above? Was this originally one event, but transmitted as a doublet? Or should we accept that Mark and Matthew (the two evangelists who had adopted the double narrative) had related two separate yet almost identical incidents, while Luke and John only narrated one of the two events? We will now consider the types of answers a *traditions*- and *formgeschichtliche* investigation gives to these two questions.

3.2 The miraculous multiplication of loaves: One or two events?

From a genetic perspective, the double narratives are not directly linked to each other in the Gospel of Matthew. This leads Gerhardsson (1979:56) to suspect that we are dealing with two variations of the same tradition. Matthew, however, made the two narratives look more similar than Mark did:

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered. 'Bring them here to me,' he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Mt 14:13-21; NIV)

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.' His disciples answered, 'Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?' 'How many loaves do you have?' Jesus asked. 'Seven,' they replied, 'and a few small fish.' He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were satisfied. Afterwards the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children.

(Mt 15:32-38; NIV)

Both narratives have an introduction that indicates that the crowd had become hungry. They had been with Jesus for a long time in 'a remote place' (ἐρημὸν τόπον). The conclusion of these two particular narratives is given in almost identical words. Both narratives specifically mention that Jesus gave the disciples the command to give the crowd something to eat. The crowd does not need to leave to go and buy food; the disciples should provide the people with food because Jesus loves them dearly.

In contrast to Mark, the mention of fish is reduced to a minimum in both these narratives. The miracle itself is not described in either of the two doublets. Nothing suggests that either the crowd or the disciples were aware that a miracle was taking place. The reference to the *twelve* and then to the *seven* baskets which were filled with pieces of bread (and fish?) that remained does, however, imply the magnitude of the miracle. Apart from the difference in the *number* of baskets, the difference in the *number* of men (besides an unspecified number of women and children) who were fed is striking: *five thousand* as against *four thousand*. The only other conspicuous difference between the two narratives in the doublet is that the *disciples* mention the hungry crowd in the first narrative while *Jesus* takes the initiative in the second narrative.

Gerhardsson (1979:27) argues his view that the two narratives are a doublet of the same tradition by comparing the three versions of the *introduction to the narrative* in the three Synoptic Gospels. The three Gospels give different accounts of the circumstances surrounding Jesus' presence in that isolated place:

Mark narrates as follows:

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things (διδάσκειν).

(Mk 6:34; NIV)

Luke narrates the following:

He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing (ἴατο).

(Lk 9:11; NIV)

Matthew has the following account:

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick (ἐθεράπευσεν).

(Mt 14:14; NIV)

It therefore seems that Matthew came across a doublet of the same event in his sources, the Gospel of Mark and Q, and that he integrated the accounts of the two sources with each other. He found it important not to re-narrate the teaching (διδάσκειν) that Mark and Q had recorded. With reference to the crowd Matthew placed the emphasis on Jesus' healing activities. This is noticeable as Jesus' teachings are strongly emphasized elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew and are also mentioned in conjunction with his healing and kerygmatic activities in certain of the summarized reports (see Mt 4:23 and 9:35).

How then should we explain the phenomenon that Mark also knew the doublet since, according to the two-source theory, he was not dependent on Q? Van Iersel (1964:178-179) answers this question by regarding the following (accentuated) words in both Mark 6:41 and Mark 8:6 as the *central formula of a common tradition*:

[Then] *taking* (καὶ λαβὼν) the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, *he gave thanks* (εὐλόγησεν) and *broke* the loaves (καὶ κατέκλασεν). *Then he gave them to his disciples* (καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς) to set *before the people* (αὐτοῖς).

(Mk 6:41; NIV)

When he had taken the seven loaves (καὶ λαβὼν) and given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), he broke (ἔκλασεν) them and gave them to his disciples (καὶ ἐδίδου τοῖς μαθηταῖς) to set before the people (τῷ ὄχλῳ), and they did so.

(Mk 8:6; NIV)

Van Iersel regards the variation in the wording 'He gave thanks and broke the loaves' (εὐλόγησεν καὶ κατέκλασεν) (Mk 6:41) and 'When he had...given thanks, he broke them' (εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν) (Mk 8:6) as of fundamental importance. If we accept, as most scholars do, that this 'central formula' is an allusion to the celebration of communion in the early church (see Gerhardsson 1979:56-57), it is clear that, on the basis of a comparison with the corresponding words in the verse in Mark regarding the inauguration of communion (Mk 14:22), it could not have been Mark that made the words in the double narrative correspond with the words with which it was introduced.

While they were eating, Jesus took (καὶ λαβὼν) bread, gave thanks (εὐλογήσας) and broke (ἔκλασεν) it, and gave it to his disciples (καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς), saying, 'Take it; this is my body'.

(Mk 14:22; NIV)

It is quite possible that the inaugural words for communion had - even during the first days of the early church - become more or less stereotyped. Such a formula was evident in Paul's reference to the institution of communion:

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread (ἔλαβεν ἄρτον), and when he had given thanks (εὐχαριστήσας), he broke (ἔκλασεν) it and said, 'This is my body'.

(1 Cor 11:23-24; NIV)

A comparison between Mark 6:41 and 8:6 (the words of the double narrative respectively) on the one hand and Mark 14:22 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (the words of the Markan and Pauline accounts of the institution of communion) on the other, indicates indisputably that the above conclusion is correct: Mark was not responsible for relating the reports on the multiplication of loaves to the tradition of communion. It had already existed in the transmitted history before Mark. The conclusion that has been drawn is also confirmed when John associates the narrative of the multiplication of loaves (Jn 6:1-15), the allusion to the Old Testament narrative of the manna from heaven (Jn 6:22-40), and the tradition of communion (Jn 6:41-59).

The point of view that the two separate 'miracle stories', regarding the multiplication of loaves (and fish) in Mark 6:30-44 and 8:1-10 respectively, represent two traditions of the same *Vorlage* (= source) that were formed separately in different *Sitze im Leben*, is therefore acceptable.

But, is the double narrative in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark a 'miracle story' or is it a 'eucharist tradition'? This brings us to the *formgeschichtliche* question, namely whether the narrative about the multiplication of loaves should be regarded as a 'novel' (Dibelius' term) or as a catechism on communion - and that it should thus be declared functional.

3.3 The multiplication of loaves: Miracle story or eucharist catechism?

We indicated earlier that the double narrative about the multiplication of loaves (and fish?) did not report on the *miracle* as such. However, the miracle is strongly implied. The narrative(s) do not, however, contain the characteristic detail and finish of the typical miracle story ('novel') in the gospels (see Dibelius' classification and description of the above characteristics). Neither do they contain any reference to an implicit or explicit cry for help in an emergency, neither do they contain any description of the reaction of either the people who were affected or the onlookers (see Van Iersel 1964:183). In the parallel contexts in the four gospels it would furthermore not be suitable for the narrative's function to be kerygmatically propagandistic with regard to competitive (Hellenistic) miracle-workers or gods. On the other hand, our discussion has indicated that the narrative, like its parallel in the Old Testament regarding manna from heaven (see Dt 8:3 in respect of the Exodus from Egypt/the celebration of the Jewish Passover), was interpreted within the framework of the tradition of communion in the early church.

In both the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, therefore, the double narrative does not focus on the miraculous element as such and it cannot be classified as a 'novel'. In fact, the relationship between particularism and universalism could be regarded, rather, as being the focus of the content. Origen and Augustine had some idea of this in their time (see Boobyer 1953:77). This relationship bears some reference to the mission of the early church to not only the Jews but the Gentiles as well. According to Pesch (1982:17) the succession of, *first*, (particularly) the mission to the Jews and *subsequently* (universally) the mission to the Gentiles is one of the fundamental presuppositions of the mission of the early church. Pesch says that the mission to the Jews was without problems and he calls it *missio interna*. On the other hand, the mission to the Gentiles was quite problematical and he called it *missio externa*. I am of the opinion that it is this aspect that made the inclusion of

two accounts of the same tradition in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew (which used Mark as its main source) functional. However, the various trends in the Gospels of Luke and John are different (see Van Iersel 1964:190-192 in respect of Lk 9:12-17 and Schenke 1980 in respect of Jn 6:26-58). Pesch's comment is endorsed by Mark's redactional placement of the double narrative within the framework of his whole gospel. Yet this is only true in respect of Mark. In the next section I will show that Matthew re-interprets this motif to present the particularism-universalism relationship from his own theological perspective. At this stage I am interested in the question of the way in which the narrative concerned possibly functioned within the framework of the tradition of communion in consecutive transmission phases of the early church.

According to Bultmann (1970:232) Mark 8:1-10 originated at a later redactional phase than Mark 6:35-44. In the first narrative Jesus took the initiative of drawing attention to the hungry crowd, while the disciples did so in the second narrative. Mark 8:1-10 shows a clearer allusion to communion than Mark 6:35-44 and the details coincide more with that of 1 Corinthians 11:24 (Jeremias 1960:178-181). Van Iersel (1964:184 and 186) is of the opinion that the first narrative originated within a Judeo-Christian situation and the second within a Gentile-Christian situation.

This viewpoint, namely that the double narrative was formed in two separate tradition circles, each on its own, is supported by the view of Friedrich (1964:14-19). According to him the theme of the shepherd is the *Leitmotiv* of the first narrative, which also hints at a Moses-Messiah typology. In addition to the allusion to the Old Testament (Ps 23:2) in the Jesus-saying, 'Come...to a quiet place and get some rest' (Mk 6:31), and the reference to 'green grass' (Mk 6:39) (Van Iersel 1964:188), the theme of the shepherd is also clearly visible in Mark 6:34.

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he took compassion on them, because *they were like sheep without a shepherd*. So he began teaching them many things.

(Mk 6:34; my emphasis and translation)

According to Friedrich the narrative of Jesus feeding the crowd in a 'remote place' (ἐρημῶν τόπον - Mk 6:31) reminds one of Moses providing food for the people in the desert. Jesus as the 'new Moses' feeds the crowd in a messianic eschatological meal.

Van Iersel (1964:188,189) is of the opinion that the theme of the 'eschatological meal' is indeed present in the specific narrative, but that Mark is more concerned with the equality of Jews and Gentiles around the table (eucharist) of the Lord. I feel that this also becomes clear in the topographical progression from the *particular* focus on *five thousand* (Jewish) men on the *western side of the Sea of Galilee across from Bethsaida* (Mk 6:45) to the *universal* focus on *four thousand* (Gentile) men in the *region of Decapolis* (Mk 7:31). This progression from a particular focus to a universal one could also be indicated by the *number* of baskets in each instance that were filled with leftovers, namely *twelve* as opposed to *seven*. In addition we find the narrative of the (Gentile) Syrophenician woman who also had to be fed, like the dogs eating the children's 'crumbs' under the table (Mk 7:24-30), inserted between the two feeding reports. The report that it was the disciples (with a particular focus) that took the initiative in the first part of the double narrative, while it was Jesus (with a universal focus) that did this in the second, is thus more clearly defined.

According to Van Iersel (1964:180-181) the catechesis of the early church is the *Sitz im Leben* of the narrative, particularly so within the framework of communion which had not yet been separated from ordinary meals (see Gerhardsson 1979:57). The catechesis element is especially noticeable in Mark 6:34 and 8:17-21. Another aspect that is quite noticeable is the fact that the disciples play such a prominent and extraordinary role (see Mk 6:41 and 8:6). In the typical miracle stories the disciples are mentioned a few times only (Held 1961:171; Gerhardsson 1979:54). Here, as in the narrative of Jesus walking on water, this is not the case. Van Iersel (1964:181) links the mediating role of the disciples in the distribution of the bread to the crowd to the mediating role of the office bearers at the celebration of the communion.

The narrative of the multiplication of loaves therefore, in the view of the form critic, is not a 'novel' but 'catechesis of communion'. The *Sitz im Leben* is on the one hand, the *communion* (Mk 6:41 and 8:6) and the *whole congregation partaking* at the *communion table* (Mk 6:42a). On the other, it is the *intermediary function of officials* at the celebration of communion (Van Iersel 1964:182). From the *traditionsgeschichtliche* viewpoint, the narrative probably originated in both Judeo-Christian and Gentile-Christian tradition circles: In *Judeo-Christian tradition* the miracle element is scaled down by the integration of the themes of both shepherd and communion. In *Gentile-Christian tradition* it is related even more closely to the celebration of communion in which Hellenists, like Jews, took part (Van Iersel 1964:189-190).

4. MATTHEW 14:13-21 (AND PARALLEL PARTS) AND THE 'REDAKTIONSGESCHICHTE'

4.1 What is *Redaktionsgeschichte*?

A serious deficiency in *formgeschichtliche* text interpretation has been that the hermeneutic importance of the holistic contexts has not been sufficiently utilized. The development of *Redaktionsgeschichte* also gave rise to the view within the historical-critical paradigm that an evangelist should be more than a mere collector of transmitted tradition. The evangelists were seen as 'theologians' in the early church, obviously not in the sense in which 'theology' has been practised since the dawning of the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. A gospel, as we see it, is the final product of a transmission process in which the evangelist as 'theologian' has redactionally adapted those traditions. By doing a historical analysis of this redactional activity the *redaktionsgeschichtliche* exegete deduces the theological intention of the author-redactor. While the *Formgeschichte* interprets a micro-form, such as a miracle story, in respect of its *Sitz im Leben* in the early church, the *Redaktionsgeschichte* interprets the holistic text as a macro-form in respect of the *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae*. The latter term refers to the specific early ecclesiastical congregational circle for which and out of which the gospels were written to interpret a specific 'theology'. In other words, this is the third contextual level to which we referred earlier (section 3.1).

The *Redaktionsgeschichte* thus cannot be visualized without the input of the other methodical facets of historical criticism. Its cross-support comes from the results of the *Formgeschichte* and, especially, those of the *Literarkritik* and the *Traditionsgeschichte*. In continuity with the *Literarkritik*, and by using the two-source theory, and in continuity with the *Formgeschichte* and *Traditionsgeschichte*, by concentrating on the *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae*, the theological intent of an evangelist is deduced from redaction-plus-tradition and redaction-minus-tradition. The Gospel of Mark is regarded as being important in this process because both Matthew and Luke performed their respective redactional functions within the framework of the Gospel of Mark. It is as Crossan (1978:53) puts it by means of question and answer:

What happened to (the) Markan form/content...? What happened, for me, was Matthew and Luke and John....For what Mark did, genetically to Matthew and Luke and how I do not know to John, was to trap them within his form with a content they could not accept, to seduce them within his structure with a substance they could not share.

(Crossan 1978:53)

In respect of *redaktionsgeschichtliche* exegesis of the Gospel of Mark itself, the process is more complex, because some uncertainty exists regarding pre-Markan tradition. In order to help solve the problem, and in addition to the investigation of possible redactional adaptations of presumed pre-Markan tradition (e.g. Mk 4:1-34; Mk 2:1-3:6; 11:27-12:40 and Mk 14-15 - see Pesch 1977:20-21), emphasis is also placed on certain intra-textual details such as the unique beginnings and endings of discourses, and the changes in the wording and order of literary units.

4.2 The *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae* of the Gospel of Matthew

Form- and traditionsgeschichtliche investigation of the double narrative in the Gospel of Mark, regarding the multiplication of loaves, has delivered the following results:

- * the first narrative probably originated in a Judeo-Christian situation and the second in a Hellenistic-Christian situation;
- * the first narrative was probably made applicable to feeding a Jewish crowd while the second was made applicable to a universal crowd;
- * Mark redactionally related the two narratives; on the one hand he did this by inserting the narrative of the Gentile Syrophenician woman, who ate of the 'crumbs' intended for the Jews, between the two narratives; on the other hand he did this by applying the form of the 'catechesis of communion' functionally and calling the intermediary disciples/office bearers to become involved in universal missionary work.

Seen from the perspective of his particular *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae* what did the redactor of the Gospel of Matthew do with these specific Markan details? Both themes that were prominent in the Markan presentation were recorded and reinterpreted. These themes are the relationship between universalism and particularism and the particular disciple imagery.

With regard to the *disciple imagery*, Matthew adapted the Markan picture. In the Gospel of Mark the disciples are unable to comprehend who Jesus really is or what the will of God (and Jesus) entails (see Best 1977:387-388). The disciples in the Gospel of Matthew have, on the one hand, *complete insight* into the nature of Jesus' person and work. Their function is related to their missionary task as prophets (see Mt 10:40-42). On the other hand, in spite of their complete insight, they display an inclination to *little faith*. This inclination often leads them to present a perspective that could be likened to that of the Jewish leaders. This threatening commonality between the Jewish leaders and the disciples is related to disobe-

dience, in that they are unwilling to preach and live God's will as he truly intended, towards and in respect of the (Jewish) people (λαός/ἄχλοι/προβάτα) (see Mt 7:15-20 where the term 'sheep'/τὰ πρόβατα is used in v 15) (Van Aarde 1982a:87-97).

With regard to the relationship *between particularism and universalism*, Matthew modified the Markan focus on evangelization. This focus in the Gospel of Mark is characterized by the succession of, *first*, a particular Jewish focus, and *then* a universal Gentile focus. Matthew reinterprets this and creates something that is practically the opposite. Frankemölle (1982:125) summarizes this reinterpretation as follows: 'Between *missio interna* and *missio externa* there does not exist a chronological succession, but an interrelation' (my translation). Matthew's treatment of the relationship between particularism and universalism is closely related to his particular *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae*. The situation in the early church upon which the Gospel of Matthew has a bearing was probably determined by the break between the synagogue and the church (see Hummel 1966; Künzle 1978). In this situation a question such as the mission to the Gentiles was no longer in dispute. The fundamental problem of Matthew's ecclesiastical situation - however difficult it may be to reconstruct, or however incomplete the details - was the danger that the 'ecclesiastical officials' would, amidst the normal mission to the Gentiles, neglect and disregard the poor, suffering 'church community'. This 'church community' consisted mainly of Jewish Christians living in the Galilean countryside. This state of affairs could be attributed to the division between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian church. The persecution by the organized Jewish leaders at Jamnia presumably contributed to the community's unforgiving and uncharitable attitude towards the Jewish people, and their ancestors (cf Mt 27:25) who blasphemously rejected Jesus at the crucifixion. Just as the pre-paschal Jesus, during his mission to the Gentiles in Galilee (see Mt 4:15 and 15:29 as opposed to Mk 7:31), had cared for the Jewish multitude but had not excluded the Gentiles, the post-paschal 'office-bearers of the church', as an extension of the disciples, were not to neglect the disadvantaged church community. Those 'disadvantaged' are indicated by names such as 'the least of these'/οἱ ἐλάχιστοι (Mt 25:40, 45) and 'little ones'/οἱ μικροί (Mt 18:14), 'sheep'/τὰ πρόβατα (Mt 18:12), 'children'/τὰ τέκνα (Mt 15:26).

The particular Matthean picture of the disciple in question that was taken from the Markan account of the double narrative of the multiplication of loaves, and reinterpreted, is therefore closely related to the relationship between particularism and universalism in the Gospel of Matthew.

4.3 Matthean redaction

Held (1961:171-177) made a detailed and thorough study of the Matthean redaction of the following narrative in the Gospel of Matthew. In summary, two aspects are striking: Firstly, *the multiplication and handing out of fish to the crowd has been relativized quite substantially by Matthew* (see Mt 14:19 and 15:36, as opposed to Mk 6:41 and 8:7 respectively). Secondly, *the role of the disciples has without question been developed into one fulfilling a definite intermediary function*. The latter redactional change is very prominent:

(He) broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to (ἵνα) set before the people.

(Mk 6:41; NIV)

(He) broke them (the loaves) and gave them to his disciples to (ἵνα) set before the people.

(Mk 8:6; NIV)

Then he gave them (the loaves) to the disciples, and (δὲ) the disciples gave them to the people.

(Mt 14:19; NIV)

[H]e broke them (the loaves) and gave them to the disciples, and (δὲ) they in turn to the people.

(Mt 15:36; NIV)

The *relativization of the distribution and handing out of the fish* during the meal is interpreted by Held (1961:176) and Van Iersel (1964:193) as meaning that Matthew used it to place more emphasis on the communion of the meal than Mark did. However, this interpretation is unlikely. Fish played a very important part in the symbolism surrounding the early Christian communion ceremony. In a number of early Christian murals in the catacombs, both bread and fish appear as symbols of communion (see Richardson 1955:149). It is unlikely that Matthew intended to stress the theme of communion by relativizing the role of the fish in the double narrative. This does not mean that Matthew removed the archaic terminology of communion from the double narrative or that he failed to relate the institution of communion (see Mt 26:26-29). What did occur was that the element of catechism in the double narrative was reduced. Matthew stresses the theme of the messianic-eschatological meal (see Mt 22:1-14; 25:31-46 and 26:29). This reduction is also noticeable from the fact that Matthew did not adopt the reference in Mark 6:34 that Jesus taught the multitude 'many things' (see Ellis 1974:66 note 75).

The fact that Matthew reduced the element of catechism in the double narrative could be related to the structure of his holistic context and the phenomenon that he makes the disciples the object of Jesus' catechism, mainly in the long discourses given by Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew five major catechetical discourses are alternated with micro-narratives. The double narrative regarding the multiplication of the loaves is not recorded in one of these catechetical discourses but in the fourth micro-narrative, namely Matthew 13:53-17:27. In this specific micro-narrative the particular Matthean picture of the disciple and the interaction between the universal and particular mission is illustrated in a remarkable way through the handing out of the bread to the Jewish crowd.

Held (1961:172-174) neatly indicated how Matthew had adapted the particular Markan *image of a disciple* to suit his own theological perspective in the double narrative. Matthew (and Luke) omitted the crude (ironic?) reaction of the disciples to Jesus' command to feed the crowd:

They said to him, 'That would take eight months of a man's wages!
Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?'

(Mk 6:37; NIV)

Klostermann (1971:129) described this reaction as an 'inappropriate question' and a 'bold counter question'. This could be compared to the typical Markan image of disciples who display a lack of insight: It shows the total lack of understanding of the disciples, not only towards the person and mission of their Lord, but also towards the task he had given them (Held 1961:172). This lack of comprehension regarding their *own* task can be inferred from the fact that they re-use the key words of Jesus' command 'give them something to eat' in their own inappropriate counter-question.

Matthew, however, makes it very clear that, in his view, the disciples did not think that they actually had to go out and buy food from the surrounding villages. Their concern was that they had too little food with them:

'We have *here* only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered.

(Mt 14:17; my emphasis)

Thus the disciples do indeed show insight into the implications of Jesus' command, however, they do not carry it out obediently, but point out their small supply (Held 1961:173).

In the *Sitz im Leben Ecclesiae* of the Gospel of Matthew the *insight* of the disciples as well as their *little faith* are probably related to the disciples/church officials' inclination, against the background of the (universal) mission to the Gentiles, to disregard the (particular) mission to the Jews. In the event of this happening the disciples/church officials are identified with the Jewish leaders. As a result of their formalistic religious practices the latter had no time or sympathy for the 'lost sheep of Israel without a shepherd'.

I discussed this aspect of Matthew's theology in Part I of this book. One could, in particular, refer to Matthew's meaningful linking of the double narrative of the multiplication of the loaves to the narrative of the danger of the yeast (in the bread) of the teaching of the Jewish leaders (Mt 16:1-12). The 'bread' of the Jewish leaders is contrasted sharply with the 'bread' offered to the Jewish crowd (and the Gentiles) by Jesus, through his disciples. In contrast to the 'bread' given by Jesus, the 'bread' of the Jewish leaders is poisonous formalism, devoid of all love. This is the formalistic perspective that the disciples/church officials are warned against. The Matthean redaction of Mark's picture of a disciple and his presentation of the relationship between particularism and formalism were therefore clearly and effectively presented in his recording of the double narrative about the multiplication of the loaves.

5. REFLECTION

Without expounding on the value and the shortcomings of historical criticism that have already been discussed in the light of the above research, the following statement can be made in respect of historical criticism: The nature of the Bible as Holy Scripture/Word of God and its truth has not been affected by this study. Threats to dogma and enmity towards the faith were not elements of the exegetic process or its results. What in fact transpired was that certain answers were given to specific exegetic questions. The result was that the rich variety of the biblical message came to the fore. And nothing should prevent this result from being used positively in faith-justifying hypotheses regarding the interpretation of dogma and dogma formation.