
Chapter 7

Conclusion: Holiness, commensality and kinship

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The current debate regarding the study of space in Mark's story of Jesus, with specific reference to the settings of Galilee and Jerusalem, was summarized in chapter 2. From this discussion two research gaps were identified: First, the need for an interpretation of the text in terms of an association of a narratological and social scientific analysis. Second, the need for an analysis of the social background of the text which is aware of the fallacies of ethnocentrism/anachronism and reductionism.

The first identified research gap was, methodologically speaking, addressed in chapter 3. In this chapter the methodological aspects in regard to the association of a narratological and social scientific interpretation of texts were discussed. A narratological model in terms of the ideological perspective of the narrator on the topographical level of the text was developed (see sections 3.3 and 3.4). In chapter 4 the second identified research gap was addressed. To avoid the fallacies of ethnocentrism/anachronism and reductionism the social scientific model to be used was explicated (section 4.4). The different cross-cultural theories used in this model was also discussed in full (section 4.2).

In chapter 5 the emic reading of the text was done, and the results of this emic reading was summarized in section 5.3. This was followed by an etic interpretation of the text in chapter 6. The results yielded by this etic interpretation then was summarized in section 6.6. The investigative program set out in section 1.4 thus was carried out. As been stated in section 1.4, the following chapter will be used to draw the final conclusions of the above study of Galilee and Jerusalem as political settings in Mark's story of Jesus. This will be done as follows: In section 7.2 the main conclusions reached in chapters 5 and 6 will be used to indicate that the opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem should be seen as an opposition between a politics (ideology) of commensality (that of Jesus), and a politics of holiness (that of the antagonists). In section 7.3 the result reached in section 7.2 will be taken one step further by analyzing it against the background of the first-century Mediterranean world as an advanced agrarian society. In this section attention will be given to religion in the first-century Mediterranean world (section 7.3.1), class and status in first-century Mediterranean society (section 7.3.2) and the different social relations in first-century Palestine. In section 7.4 the final conclusions of the above study will be drawn. In section 7.5 then, a few end remarks will be made.

7.2 GALILEE AND JERUSALEM AS POLITICAL SETTINGS IN MARK'S STORY OF JESUS: A POLITICS OF COMMENSALITY VERSUS A POLITICS OF HOLINESS

In the everyday life of the Jews in first-century Palestine, the relationship between God and man was expressed by the *Shema*, a prayer which consisted of essentially two elements: The confession that the God of Israel was an only God, and, as a consequence, the setting apart of the believing and observant Jew from those people who were not acceptable to God (see sections 4.2.7 and 6.3). For the observant Jew, the creation fully expressed the divine order of the world. It encoded various 'maps' or configurations which God made for Israel to perceive and follow. By constantly 'separating' things (cf e.g. Gen 1:4, 7, 14), God thus created a series of maps which ordered, classified and defined the world as Jews came to see it. For the Jew, the holy God expressed holiness through this order. Because God was holy, they also had to be holy.

The holiness of God especially was embodied in the central symbol of Israel's culture, the temple. The temple was seen as the center of the universe (the navel of the earth), the architectonic center of Judaism, and therefore the focal symbol of the Jewish world. It was the *axis mundi* between God and man, the place where God was present and available to the observant Jew. Because the temple was seen as the earthly residence of God, the temple system became a major replication of the idea of order and purity established in the creation. As such it therefore not only became the central and dominant symbol of Israel's culture, religion and politics, but also gave rise to the creation of different maps that could organize society in such a manner that God's holiness could be replicated in the everyday life of the Jew. These maps were, inter alia, the maps of places, people, times and things.

That the temple in Jerusalem was seen as the most dominant symbol in first-century Palestine can clearly be deduced from the different maps which were produced by the temple system. In terms of the map of places, Jerusalem and the temple took up the eight most holy places; in the map of persons, the priests and Levites who served in the temple are seen as the most holy, and in the map of times, almost all the feasts referred to in the map took place at the temple in Jerusalem (see section 4.2.7). The temple in Jerusalem in first-century Palestine was perceived as the main symbol of Jewish culture; it was the place where God was available, and where God was present.

Because of this understanding of God and creation, and as it came to be embodied in the temple and the temple system, the Jewish world became dominated by a *politics of holiness* (Borg 1987:86). Though the word 'politics' is used in many different senses, most fundamentally politics concerns the organization of a human community.

Πόλις is the Greek word for city, and thus politics is concerned with the 'shape' of the city, and, by extension, of any human community. It thus concerns both the shaping and the shape, process as well as result. 'In this sense of the word, biblical religion is intrinsically political, for it is persistently concerned with the life of a community living in history' (Borg 1987:86).

The politics of holiness, however, was understood by the temple in a highly specific way, namely as *separation*. In terms of their understanding of God as being holy, it therefore meant to be holy one had to separate oneself from everything that could defile holiness. Because of this, the Jewish world became increasingly structured around the polarities of holiness as separation: Clean from unclean, purity from defilement (pollution), sacred from the profane, Jew from Gentile and the righteous from the sinner. 'Holiness' thus became the paradigm by which the Torah was interpreted (Borg 1987:87). The portions of the law which emphasized the separateness of the Jewish people from other peoples, and which stress separation from everything impure within Israel, became dominant. Or, as put by Borg (1987:87):

Holiness became the *Zeitgeist*, the 'spirit of the age', shaping the development of the Jewish social world in the centuries leading up to the time of Jesus, providing the particular content of the Jewish ethos of life. Increasingly, the ethos of holiness became the politics of holiness.

(Borg 1987:87)

Or, put in terms of the sociology of knowledge's understanding of the relationship between the symbolic and the social universe: A specific understanding of the symbolic universe (of which God was part) as holiness, precipitated in a social universe which was organized on the same understanding of holiness.

This understanding of holiness in first-century Palestine was most probably also the reason for Galilee being perceived by some as 'Galilee of the Gentiles' (cf Mt 4:15; 1 Macc 5:15). In regard to Galilee being 'Galilee of the Gentiles', Horsley (1992:10) has most recently made the following comment:

Nothing in the Gospel of Mark itself ... suggests that Galilee was Jewish. The term *ioudaioi* occurs only once prior to the passion narrative, in the parenthetical comment that 'Pharisees and all the *ioudaioi* ('Judeans?') wash their hands before eating' Nor does the term 'gentiles' (*ethne*) occur in the Galilean narrative of Mark. 'Jew versus Gentile' would appear to be an issue projected by Christian New Testament studies onto ancient Galilee. Josephus almost always refers to the people who live in or come from Galilee as *galilaeioi* and not *ioudaioi*.

(Horsley 1992:10)

From this it can therefore be inferred, at least from the point of view of the Jerusalem elite, Galileans were not perceived as being Jews because of the cultural mix in the region. Mark 14:70, where Peter is called a Galilean, should therefore be understood from this background. Moreover, the Jews in Galilee, with their emphasis on the 'Little Tradition', were opposed to the Jerusalem high priestly authority as well as their understanding of the 'Great Tradition' (see again section 4.2.8 for a discussion on these two terms). Freyne (1988:211) also notes the Jews in Galilee were also known for being reluctant and slow in the payment of tithes.

That Galilee was negatively perceived by the ruling elite in Jerusalem, is also the point of view of Wright (1992:227):

Jerusalem was obviously the major focal point of this Land. But the holiness of the 'holy Land' spread out in concentric circles, from the Holy of Holies to the rest of the temple ... to the rest of Jerusalem, and thence to the whole Land. And 'Galilee of the Nations', on the far side of hostile Samaria, surrounded by pagans, administered from a major Roman city (Sepphoris), was a vital part of this Land. It was, moreover, *a part of it which was always suspected to be under pagan influence, and which needed to be held firm, with clear boundary-markers, against assimilation.*

(Wright 1992:227)

Galilee's population also consisted mainly of the four lower classes in society, the peasants, artisans, the unclean or degraded and the expendable class (see again section 4.2.9). The peasants made up the bulk of the population and labored mainly to produce food and pay taxes to the temple and the Roman rule. The artisan class was normally recruited from the ranks of the dispossessed peasantry and their noninheriting sons. The unclean class did the noxious but necessary jobs such as tanning or mining. Finally, the expendable class was the class for whom society had no place nor need. They were people who most probably were forced off their land, and thus tended to be landless and itinerant with no normal family life. If the recent work of Fiensy (1991) is taken into consideration here, it can be argued these people were growing in numbers day by day (see again section 4.2.8; see also sections 7.2 to section 7.4).

In regard to Galilee as perceived negatively, the Pharisees' replication of the temple regulations to the bed and board of every observant Jew should also be taken into consideration here. The Pharisaic replication of the temple community in everyday life, especially in terms of their building of 'fences around the law', made it very difficult for the Galilean Jew to live a life of 'holiness'. Moreover, the Pharisees' program

had the religious implication that social ostracism was not only legitimated with divine alienation, but also took place to a large extent. The result was that the unclean and expendable class on Galilean soil were growing day by day. Also, Galilee was not Jerusalem: In Jerusalem was the temple, the place where God 'lived', the place where God was 'present' and 'available'. In Galilee, however, there was no temple. Galilee therefore, was perceived by many as a negative symbol, contra to that of Jerusalem as being the positive symbol in first-century Palestine. This is also clear when the map of places, for example, is taken again into consideration: Galilee was situated in the least holy place on the map as part of Israel. Therefore, in terms of the contextual world of Mark's story of Jesus, Jerusalem was perceived as a positive symbol, and Galilee as a negative symbol, or, at least, not as positive as Jerusalem in which the temple stood.

The narrator of Mark, however, turned this around in his story of Jesus. For the Markan Jesus, the kingdom of God had become a brokerless kingdom. God made the chief priests, scribes, elders, Sadducees and Pharisees the tenants of his vineyard. The 'official' brokers of the kingdom (i.e. the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, Sadducees), however, wanted to have the kingdom for themselves. They were therefore ruling for themselves, and not for God (cf Mark 12:1-9). More specifically, the scribes were devouring widows's houses. Jesus, for example, also warned the disciples of the yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (cf Mk 8:15). According to the Markan Jesus, therefore, God's kingdom was a brokerless kingdom. The 'official' religious leaders were retainers of the governing class, sometimes even a part thereof, instead of being the brokers of God's presence to the clients who needed it the most (see sections 4.2.9 and 6.3).

During his baptism, Jesus underwent a ritual of status transformation in which he became the new broker of the kingdom of God (section 6.2.2). The target of Jesus' brokerage was mainly the expendables in society, as well as the Gentiles (section 6.4). Jesus' brokerage of the Patron's saving presence and availability mainly consisted of his exorcisms and healings, the meals over which he presided, the way he interpreted the purity rules, and finally, the way in which he acted as the new ritual elder of the crowds. In brokering God's presence to his clients, Jesus especially made use of the symbol of the household. This can be inferred from the fact that the dominant setting and immediate cause for Jesus exorcisms and healings were those of household and kinship relations. Almost every instance of Jesus' exorcisms and other healings had to do with the transforming of unclean people and expendables, sending them back to their proper functions in the context of kinship or household relationships (section 6.4.4). From this, it is clear the main target of Jesus' brokerage was the expendables, since they were the people who tended to be landless, itinerant, and with no formal family life (see again section 6.4.9). That the crowds were itinerant and landless can

be inferred from Mark 1:28, 34, 37; 2:2; 3:7, 20; 5:21; 6:33, 54; and 8:2. The narrator also portrays the crowd not only as recognizing and following Jesus wherever he went, but sometimes staying with him as long as three days (cf Mk 8:2). The fact the crowd(s) did not have any formal family can be inferred from the fact that Jesus, in his ministry to them, first and foremost made them part of the new household he was creating. Furthermore, the narrator also portrays the crowd(s) as 'sheep without a shepherd' (cf Mk 6:34).

Jesus' interpretation of the purity rules of his day and the way he ate (i.e., with whom, where, when, what and how), respectively defined the external relationships and the inner structure of the new household he was brokering (see respectively section 6.4.2 and 6.4.3). According to the Markan Jesus, the purity maps resulted in the breaking up of the household of God; they were dividing his house and the temple. Also, it made God unavailable to his clients. Therefore the purity lines had to go, or rather, be broadened to such an extent the expendables could also be a part of the temple community. The new household, therefore, had no external fences; it was open to all. The startling element of the way Jesus 'ate' was his principle of open commensality. His meals were the places where 'nobodies' (i.e., the expendables and Gentiles, see again map of persons in section 4.2.7) met, and became somebodies in the kingdom. In the meals Jesus presided over, everyone ate the same food. There were no seating arrangements in terms of class or status. It was a situation of egalitarian commensality. Jesus' meals, therefore were, in a certain sense, not ceremonies, but rituals. By taking part, peoples' statuses were changed, especially from living without the presence of the Patron to living in his presence.

Because of his healing activity, as well as his teaching and the meals over which Jesus presided, he was not only honored by the crowds, but also became the new official ritual elder in the narrative world of Mark. Because he was merciful (cf Mk 5:19; 6:34), people were taken up in the new household, people who could not defend their honor, especially in terms of the politics of holiness as practiced by the Pharisees, scribes and chief priests. Because of this, Jesus was seen by those who practiced a politics of holiness as an anomaly in society, indeed a very dangerous person. Some scribes and Pharisees therefore came down from Jerusalem to declare Jesus a public danger, as either being from Beelzebul or having an unclean spirit, or to defend their status and honor. Jesus, however, told both the scribes and Pharisees it was them, not him, who were breaking up the household of God. This can especially be inferred in that both cases when Jesus was confronted by the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem (cf Mk 3:23-27 and Mk 7:9-13), he answered them by using examples which pertained to household situations: In Mark 3:23-27, Jesus used the example of a divided house, and in Mark 7:9-13, he made use of the Pharisees' understanding of the *qorban*.

In the new household, Jesus also redefined honor and shame, as well as the dyadic personality, as it was understood in first-century Palestine. In the new household honor was not acquired by serving the temple's understanding of the boundaries and lines in society, but by serving the household. The only way one could become shamed or dishonored in the new household was by the Patron himself. In terms of dyadic personality, Jesus asked the members of the new household to break with external control and responsibility. Praise or blame for behavior was their own. Choices had to be made personally. One of the choices the members of the new household had to make was to repent, to disallow the temple system to organize society alone, and, accordingly, to allow the new household also to organize society.

According to the narrator, therefore, Galilee was the new symbol of God's presence, the place where God was available to all. God's household was broadened, because the broker of the new household had mercy/compassion. It was also then, with this agenda, Jesus, after broadening the household of the Patron on Galilean soil, went to the temple in Jerusalem. Since for the Markan Jesus the temple was a part of the kingdom, it also had to be broadened. However, the consequences of Jesus' broadening of the temple, that is, by making it part of the new household, were quite different from his broadening of the household of God in Galilee. In Galilee it was received in a positive manner, but in Jerusalem it was perceived negatively. In Galilee, it led to Jesus being honored; in Jerusalem it led to Jesus being killed. This opposition is also highlighted by the narrator in terms of Jesus' first and second status transformations in the narrative. The result of the first was that Jesus was honored; the result of the second was that Jesus was dishonored. In Jerusalem therefore, the different ideologies of Jesus and the scribes, chief priests and elders clashed. Jesus' ideology was a politics of commensality, theirs was a politics of holiness, especially in terms of separateness.

In this sense then, Galilee and Jerusalem can be understood as political focal space in the Gospel of Mark: Jerusalem was the symbol of God's presence and availability. In terms of the politics of holiness, however, it became the place where God's saving presence was available to only the few in society. Galilee, on the other hand, was Galilee of the Gentiles, the place where God was perceived as not being present. In terms of Jesus' politics of commensality, however, it became the place where the new household of God was to be found. It became the kingdom. And when Jesus replicated this kingdom in Jerusalem by broadening the temple, that is, to make God available to all, he was killed. In Jerusalem then, and more specifically, in the temple itself, two ideologies clashed, a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality.

This conclusion also makes it possible to understand the ideological perspective and interest of the narrator on the topographical level of the text, as analyzed in section 5.2. There, it was indicated the narrator portrays Galilee as in opposition to Jerusalem, and the household as in opposition to the temple, thus, two sets of opposing focal spaces. Our etic reading of the text, as summarized above, however enabled us to understand these focal spaces as opposing symbols in the sociology of knowledge's sense of the word: In Jerusalem the understanding of God (as part of the symbolic universe), gave rise to a society in which holiness as separateness became the dominant paradigm in terms of which society was ordered. In Galilee, however, Jesus had a different understanding of the Patron. He was merciful and wanted to be made available to all. This, in turn, gave rise to a new definition of society, the new household. Also, for the crowds in Galilee, Jesus' new definition of society gave rise to a new understanding of God. God was holy because he was merciful.

Understood as such, in terms of the pragmatic dimension of the ideological perspective of the narrator, symbols are used by the narrator to orientate in order to disorientate with the aim of reorientation. For the intended readers of the contextual world of the Gospel, Jerusalem, most probably was seen as a positive symbol, since Jerusalem was understood as the central symbol in Jewish society. However, in the narrative, the narrator manipulates the reader to side with, or, to accept, the point of view of the main character, Jesus. This is done by the narrator in, *inter alia*, three ways. First, in the first 8 verses of the Gospel, the narrator indicates, by means of the ministry of John the Baptist, someone will come after John who is greater than him. When Jesus arrived on the scene, he was baptized by John. However, during Jesus' baptism, the Patron himself attested to the new status of Jesus, he was the Patron's 'Son, the Beloved' (cf Mk 1:11). Third, as the narrative developed, Jesus was not only being depicted as having more authority than the scribes, but he was the one who was honored, not the scribes nor the Pharisees, the 'representatives' of the current positive symbol of society, the temple. And since all of this was done or happened on Galilean soil, Galilee, therefore, would be understood as the new positive symbol. The narrator therefore uses the current understanding of symbols to not only orientate his readers, but also to disorientate them with the aim of reorientation.

How would this ideology of the narrator have been understood by the intended readers of the Gospel? In endnote 62, section 4.4.1, a preliminary postulation was made to situate and date the first intended readers of Mark. It was argued the situation of the Gospel was Galilee, shortly after the fall of the temple. In terms of that postulation, as well as in terms of what was said previously, I am tempted to make a few more remarks in this regard. However, it must be explicitly stated that these conclusions are preliminary in character, and will have to be worked out in the future in a more com-

prehensive manner. However, in regard to the postulation of the setting and date of the Gospel made in section 4.4.1, the following remarks can be made: Most probably, the church on Galilean soil for which Mark wrote his Gospel, was a house church (or a combination of house churches). Jesus' emphasis on the new household as being the new place of the kingdom therefore would make sense. Also, since these house church(es) most probably were in a situation where the gospel was also proclaimed to Gentiles, Jesus' ministry of commensality, which included the Gentiles, would have made sense. In this regard, Jesus' healing of Gentiles and his meals, especially in Mark 8:1-10, would have been understood by them in the correct sense. Since the members of these house church(es) on Galilean soil most probably consisted of Jews, they would therefore have been manipulated by the narrator to associate also with Jesus' mission to the expendables. The fact that Jesus' action in the temple is portrayed in the narrative as a broadening, and not a destruction thereof, would also have been positively understood: The community would have seen them as a continuation of the temple community. They most probably would have perceived themselves as the new temple, the new household of God (cf also Mk 14:58). Such an interpretation would also fit into the argument of Van Aarde (1991d:51-64), who is of the opinion that since the Second temple period, a broadening of the temple took place. The ideology of the narrator, therefore, would have urged them to associate with the mission of Jesus to the Gentiles and to disassociate with the temple's politics of holiness. However, as said above, these remarks, as well as those made in section 4.4.1, endnote 62, are preliminary in character and will have to be worked out in the future.

However, in terms of the conclusion drawn above in regard to the political opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem in the Gospel of Mark, that is, an opposition between a politics of commensality and a politics of holiness, there are other conclusions which can be drawn in a more final way. In terms of this opposition, it is possible to infer that the Markan Jesus should be seen as an a-political figure, or, more specifically, as a subversive teacher. What Jesus taught was a way of transformation. His teaching involved a radical criticism of the way in which the first-century Jewish world understood God's holiness. According to the Markan Jesus, God's holiness, and wholeness, lay in the fact he was merciful. While the religious leaders of his day taught God was not present among the unclean, sinners and the expendables, Jesus believed God, because he was a God of mercy, was especially present among these people. Thus, by proclaiming God's holiness as compassion, and not as separateness, he subverted the way in which God was perceived. Also, by forgiving sins, and by declaring unclean people clean, Jesus subverted the temple and the temple system in its essence. Or, as put by Borg (1987:116):

He taught an alternative way of being and an alternative consciousness shaped by the relationship to the Spirit (God — EvE) and not primarily by the dominant consciousness of culture (i.e., the politics of holiness — EvE). He was thus not only a subversive sage but a transformative sage.

(Borg 1987:116)

Understood as such, the narrator portrays Jesus' crucifixion as the result of a misunderstanding. It was argued previously the target of Jesus' brokerage especially was those who belonged to the expendable class on Galilean soil. As Lenski (1966:281-284) and Saldarini (1988:44) indicated, these people tended to be landless and itinerant, with no formal family life. This description fits the picture we have of the crowds in Mark (cf e.g. Mk 1:45; 2:13; 3:7-10, 20, 34; 4:1, 35; 5:12; 6:53-56; 8:1). According to the narrator, the crowds in Mark were always on the move and followed Jesus wherever he went. And because they had no formal family relations, Jesus took them up in the new household of God.

However, according to Saldarini (1988:44), the bulk of the brigands, rebels and followers of messianic claimants recorded by Josephus during the Roman period were members of this class, since illegal activities on the fringe of society were their best prospect for a livelihood. Some of these brigand groups were discussed previously by Horsley & Hanson (1985; see also Crossan 1991a:158-206). According to Horsley & Hanson, three types of social movements can be discerned in the first-century Palestine society, namely bandits, messiahs and prophets. The examples they give of bandit groups are the following: In 47-38 BCE Hezekiah, a brigand chief with a very large gang was overrunning the district on the Syrian frontier (Horsley & Hanson 1985:63-64). This group mainly consisted of Galileans, and their leader, Hezekiah, was later killed by Herod. A decade later, Herod had to suppress another brigand group in Galilee who lived in the caves near the village of Arbela (Horsley & Hanson 1985:64-66). Horsley & Hanson (1985:67-69) also describe four other brigand movements between 30-69 CE, namely those of Eleazer ben Dinai (30-50 CE), Tholomaus (40 CE), Jesus son of Sapphias (60 CE) and John of Gischala (66-70 CE). It is thus clear some banditry occurred in Palestine also in the time of Pilate.

The messiahs (popular kings) discussed by Horsley & Hanson (1985:111-127) are the following: Judas son of Hezekiah (4 BCE), Simon (4 BCE), Athronges (4-2 BCE), Menahem son of Judas the Galilean (66 CE) and Simon bar Giora (68-70 CE). Common to all these movements was their centering around a charismatic king however humble his origins. Second, the participants in this messianic movements were primarily peasants, and third, the principal goal of these movements was to overthrow the Herodian and Roman domination and to restore the traditional ideals for a free and egalitarian society.

The prophetic movements discussed by Horsley & Hanson (1985:161-187) are those of John the Baptist (late 20 CE), the 'Samaritan' (26-36 CE), Theudas (45 CE), the Egyptian (56 CE) and that of Jesus son of Hananiah (62-69 CE). More or less common to these movements was that they all led sizable movements of peasants from the villages in the rural areas to places like Gerisim (the 'Samaritan'), the Jordan (Theudas) and Jerusalem (the 'Egyptian') in anticipation of God's new, eschatological act of liberation. The Roman governors, apparently viewing these movements as popular insurrections, simply sent out the military to suppress them.

That Jesus was perceived by some people in the narrative world of Mark as pretending to be a messiah, a popular prophet or brigand leader is clear from the Markan text. Some saw Jesus as a popular prophet (cf Mk 6:15; 8:28), some perceived him as being a messiah/popular king (Mk 8:29; 11:10; 14:61; 15:2, 9, 26), and others thought he was a brigand (Mk 15:27). However, when Jesus entered Jerusalem with a large crowd following him (cf Mark 11:8-10), mainly consisting of peasants from Galilee, the Romans especially, but also the chief priests, scribes and elders, most probably thought Jesus was at least the leader of some sort of social movement. In regard to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem during the Passover, Horsley (1992:18-19) made the following remark:

Specially significant for understanding the origin and agenda of popular movements in Palestine, including those behind synoptic gospel traditions, is historical memory, in particular the memory of Israelite ancestors' freedom from and/or resistance to rulers' and imperial domination. This could be termed either a liberative or subversive historical memory, depending on the stance one assumes. Even the official Torah included the exodus narrative The exodus, moreover, was celebrated in the Passover festival in the temple itself. Not surprisingly, tensions between the people, the religious leaders and the occupying Roman troops were especially high and even exploded temporarily into violent confrontation at Passover time.

(Horsley 1992:18-19)

Also, when Jesus was in Galilee, he regularly mingled with the expendables, people who were often part of illegal activities such as brigandry. From the point of view of the religious leaders in Jerusalem, this could only mean trouble. Therefore, they decided to eliminate Jesus. The fact Pilate saw him as the 'King of the Jews', that he was willing to let Barabbas, another brigand, go in the place of Jesus, and Jesus was crucified between two other bandits, clearly indicated the governing class in Jerusalem

saw in Jesus a political opponent. And therefore, he was killed. Jesus' crucifixion therefore was a misunderstanding. According to Mark, Jesus was a religious figure, a subversive teacher, but was killed as a political enemy.

Let us finally compare some of the above conclusions with those of some of the scholars discussed in chapter 2. In section 2.2.1.1, it was indicated Lohmeyer understood the opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem as the opposition between the new 'kommende Gotteshaus' and the traditional 'Gottesstadt'. According to Lohmeyer, this opposition was theological in character. Malbon (section 2.3.5) argued this opposition can *inter alia* be understood as a geopolitical opposition, an opposition between house and temple. Belo (section 2.4.2), Myers (section 2.4.3) and Waetjen (section 2.4.4), on the other hand, argued the opposition in Mark between Galilee and Jerusalem was political in character. According to Belo, Jesus was committed to subvert Palestine's economic system. According to Myers, Jesus ministry was a 'war of myths', in that Jesus' main aim was to bind the strong men in Palestinian society. Also, John's political execution was a foreshadowing of Jesus' final destiny. And according to Waetjen Jesus, because he reordered power, was killed as a political revolutionary.

Our emic reading of the text in chapter 5 indicated, as Lohmeyer indeed argued, that an opposition exists between not only Galilee and Jerusalem in the Gospel, but also between the house(hold) and the temple. Our emic reading also enabled us to indicate, *inter alia*, that the target of Jesus, the protagonist, can be seen as the crowds. From this emic reading, it also became clear the main interest of the protagonist was focused on Galilee, while that of the antagonists was focused on Jerusalem. Our etic reading of the text in chapter 6 enabled us to also understand these results of our emic reading from a social scientific point of view: Jesus' interest in Galilee was that of a politics of commensality, a message especially proclaimed to the expendables in society. The antagonist's interest, however, was that of a politics of holiness.

It can thus be said that our social scientific reading of the text complements especially that of Lohmeyer and Waetjen. In terms of Malbon's conclusion, our etic reading, however, indicated the opposition between house and temple should not be understood as a political opposition as such. It should rather be seen as a part of the narrator's usage of focal space to portray the opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem as an opposition between a politics of commensality and a politics of holiness/purity/separateness. Furthermore, since we concluded the Markan Jesus should be seen as a religious, a-political figure, or, in other words, a subversive teacher, the readings of Belo and Myers cannot be accepted. In reading Mark by concentrating only on the economic institution in first-century Palestine (Belo), or by only concentra-

ting on politics and economics (Myers), they both conclude Jesus had a political agenda. This, as our reading of Mark indicated, was not the case in regard to the Markan Jesus. However, in a certain sense, our reading of Mark also complements that of Belo and Myers, in that we indicated Jesus' politics of commensality indeed had some implicit political and economical implications. To postulate, however, the Markan Jesus was only interested in the economical and/or political aspects of first-century Palestine, would be a reductionistic reading of the text.

The previous results, however, leave a few questions still unanswered. In section 4.2.1, it was indicated that honor and shame were the pivotal values in first-century Mediterranean society. We also argued kinship should be seen as the dominant social institution in the first-century Mediterranean world as an advanced agrarian society. If, for instance, kinship was the dominant institution in first-century Mediterranean society (as Waetjen and Myers also have indicated), what was its relationship to economics, politics and religion? What did it mean that Jesus interpreted the kingdom in terms of a new household, that is, defined it in kinship terms? It may also have been noted that thus far not much was said of the relationships between the different interest groups (i.e., the chief priests, elder, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians) we find in the narrative. Why, for example, did the elders, chief priests and scribes team up to get Jesus removed? What were their specific interests? Also, what role did status and class play in the first-century Mediterranean world? To which class did Jesus belong? Was he a peasant? Mark portrays Jesus as a carpenter. Jesus however, did not fulfill that role. Was there a reason for this?

In the next section (section 7.3) it will be indicated that the answers to these question will help us, hopefully, to avoid a reductionistic reading of the text. Moreover, it will also enable us to define the opposition between a politics of commensality and a politics of holiness that exists in the Gospel, as indicated above, also in terms of kinship, the dominant social institution in first-century Mediterranean society.

7.3 THE FIRST-CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN WORLD AS AN ADVANCED AGRARIAN SOCIETY

In section 7.2, it was argued the 'political' opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem can be understood as an opposition between a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality. Defined more precisely, the politics of holiness resulted in separateness, and the politics of commensality in inclusiveness. Furthermore, it was concluded also that in Mark, the symbol of the politics of holiness can be seen as that of the temple, and the household as the symbol of Jesus' politics of commensality.

In section 4.2.8, it also was argued kinship should be seen as the dominant social institution in the first-century Mediterranean world. It also was postulated that the narrative world of Mark (as well as its contextual world) should be studied as an example of an advanced agrarian society. These postulations, however, immediately bring to the fore the question of the relationship between the institutions of kinship, politics, economics and religion. In other words, if kinship was indeed the dominant institution in the first-century Mediterranean world, what was its relationship to politics, economics and religion?

It also was argued honor and shame were pivotal values in the first-century Mediterranean world. This argument, however, raises a few questions: If honor and shame were pivotal values in the first-century Mediterranean world, what was their relationship to kinship as the dominant institution in society? Moreover, what was the relationship between, on the one hand, honor and shame, and, on the other hand, class and status?

The two main reasons for posing the above questions are as follows: First, it will be indicated in the subsequent section that in answering these questions, it will be possible to define the main conclusion reached in section 7.2, that is, that the opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's gospel should be seen as an opposition between a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality, more specifically and comprehensively. Second, in section 2.5, it was indicated one of the positive results of the ideological-critical readings of Belo, Myers and Waetjen is that it enables us to take the object/target of Jesus' conduct in Mark's narrative more seriously. Or, put differently, it makes the reader become more aware of the exploitation and marginalization which occurred in the narrative world of Mark. However, it was also argued in section 2.5, that especially Belo and Myers, by assuming economics was the dominant institution in first-century Mediterranean society, fell prey to the fallacies of ethnocentrism/anachronism and reductionism. Very recently Van Aarde ([1993]a:2) argued one of the main reasons why texts are read in an ethnocentric manner is because biblical scholars are sometimes convinced that the political and economical factors which cause social injustice/exploitation in our modern world should be seen as exactly the same factors which led to social exploitation and dispossession in the social world of Jesus. This hermeneutic fallacy can also be called anachronism, a result of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness (Van Aarde [1993]a:2; see also Van Aarde 1985b:547-578). However, misplaced concreteness can also be the result of reductionism (Van Aarde [1993]a:2). In section 2.5, it was argued that the readings of Mark by Belo and Myers fell prey to this fallacy of reductionism, in that Belo only focused on the economical institution in first-century Mediterranean society and Myers only on the political and

economical institutions. According to Van Aarde ([1993]a:2), the fallacy of misplaced concreteness occurs often in materialistic readings which consciously employs neo-Marxist literary theories to analyze biblical texts. In these readings, it is sometimes the case that social ostracism and social injustice in biblical texts are seen as the results of specific political and/or economical ideologies similar to those which Marx identified in modern society.

Therefore, in trying to avoid these fallacies, but also because the answers to the above posed question might enable us to define the opposition between a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality in Mark's story in a more comprehensive manner, we now turn to address the above questions. This will be done as follows: In section 7.3, attention will be given to the fact that in first-century Mediterranean society (as an advanced agrarian society), religion was embedded into the political and economical institutions of the day (section 7.3.1), the important role that class and status played in first-century Mediterranean society (section 7.3.2), as well as to the social relations between the different (religious) interest groups in first-century Palestine (section 7.3.3). In section 7.4, the conclusions reached in section 7.2 will then be used to analyze the opposition between a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality in Mark's gospel in terms of kinship, the dominant social institution in first-century Mediterranean society. In section 7.5, we will make a few end remarks.

7.3.1 Religion in first-century Mediterranean society

The modern separation of church and state and the stress on the individual, private faith commitment as the foundation of religion were unknown in antiquity (Saldarini 1988:5). In first-century Mediterranean society, religion was embedded in the political and social fabric of the community (see again section 4.2.8). Religious belief and practice were part of the family, and the ethnic and territorial groups into which persons were born. People did not choose their religion, nor did most social units or groups have members with different religions. Radical conversion to another religion and rejection of one's inherited beliefs and behavior meant separation and alienation from family and one's hereditary social group (Saldarini 1988:5; cf also Stark 1986:314-329). Thus, involvement with religion is in itself political and social involvement in the broad sense of the word. Consequently, the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes (as well as the Jesus-movement) should not be seen as sects withdrawn from society with no political impact. This is even true regarding the Qumran community (Saldarini 1988:5). To be a Jew was to be part of the Jewish society, albeit some of these groups differed ideologically from the temple authorities or did not share in the privileges of the temple (Van Aarde [1993]a:8).

Though religion was embedded in political society in a way it is not today, those with cultic or religious functions could form separate power centers in political society. Groups with a strong religious base, for example, could acquire independence and power within society by stressing universal values and ideology and by a relatively open membership. Such groups which were separate from the traditional territorial and status hierarchy. They could be conservative in support of the regime (and so be politically valuable for central political leaders), or promote a critical stance toward society, based on moral and symbolic appeals to people (Eisenstadt 1963:62-65). Such a relatively independent religious establishment is firmly political and typically tries to dominate society through the establishment of a canon of sacred books, schools to interpret texts, educational organizations to spread knowledge, and the fostering of a total worldview (Saldarini 1988:5).

The conflict between the Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests and scribes in Mark's gospel should therefore be understood as a struggle between these groups to gain control over Judaism as well as its important symbols, especially the temple (Van Aarde [1993]a:8-9). Furthermore, to understand the social dynamics which were at the base of the different relationships between, for example, the Pharisees and the scribes we find in the gospels, it is also necessary to take into account aspects of first-century Mediterranean society like honor and shame, class and status, as well as the difference between coalitions, factions, voluntary groups and involuntary groups (Van Aarde [1993]a:9). To this we turn now in the next section.

7.3.2 Class and status in first-century Mediterranean society

In section 4.2.9, attention was given to the different classes which existed in the first-century Mediterranean world. Regarding class in ancient society, Finley (1973:42) pointed out Roman society was first divided by *ordo* or estate, a legally defined category which possessed clearly defined privileges and disabilities, and which stood in a hierarchical relationship to other orders. Class, therefore, was constituted by law, and this led to a specific hierarchy. However, although a society is organized on the surface by specific laws and regulations, it is also true that 'behind' these laws and regulations', at its base, a society is also organized by other forces (and ideologies in the pejorative sense of the word) — the so-called false consciousness of Karl Marx (Van Aarde [1993]a:10-11; see also Althusser 1971:127-188). According to Althusser (1971:159) ideology, for Marx, is conceived as a pure dream, that is, a nothingness. All its reality is external to it. Ideology, in terms of false consciousness, is thus thought of as an imaginary construction whose status is exactly like the theoretical status of the dream, that is, an illusion. Understood as such, ideology, insofar as it is a

pure dream, is a negative determination, and has no history of its own. However, although 'it is so silent' (Althusser 1971:155), it plays the dominant role in society (see also Ricoeur 1973:205-213, Abercombie 1980:11-28 and Avineri 1980:22-37 for the same understanding of Marx's notion of false consciousness).

As such, certain laws and other social regulations (like the maps of persons, places, times and things; see again section 4.2.7) can be seen as the legitimating manifestations of deeper and even invisible or unconscious (false) preferences which are socially-dynamic in character. However, because of the pejorative and self-seeking character of these ideological preferences and interests, people normally deny the existence and dominant influence of such ideologies in their actions and in the way they would like to understand society. When this is the case, ideology functions as a 'false consciousness; it is an illusion or a dream (Van Aarde [1993]a:11).

However, to return to our discussion on the concept of class, Finley (1973:46-47) argues the way in which the nobility class (aristocrats) in Roman society (as an example of an advanced agrarian society) spontaneously rose to hierarchical prominence, should be seen as paving the way for the class-system in first-century Mediterranean society. Kautsky (1982:24) defines the aristocracy as a social class as follows:

An aristocracy ... is a ruling class in an agrarian economy that does not engage in productive labor but lives wholly or primarily off the labour of peasants. Hence aristocratic empires must contain not only aristocrats but also peasants who, in turn, live in agrarian societies. Because ... it takes many peasants to support one aristocrat, this also implies that aristocratic empires are necessarily a good deal larger than primitive societies.

(Kautsky 1982:24)

The aristocracy did not have legal status, but it had power and was a status group based mostly on families who had a member reach the office of consul. The aristocracy, both clerical and lay, had no solid ancestral claim to its prestige (Wright 1992:210). Goodman (1987:113) has argued convincingly that the Romans chose to elevate, and work with, local landowners, who were thus given a position for which their family status would not have prepared them. Herod, in addition, had carefully disposed of the Hasmonean dynasty, and, since there was no question of becoming high priest himself, he took care to that the office should be held by people who posed no threat to him personally, as a dynamic or well-born high priest might easily have done. Thus, by the time Judea became a Roman province in 6 CE, the ruling high priest family was firmly established, but without any solid claim to antiquity (Wright 1992:210). In this regard

Wright (1992:210-212) is also of the opinion that the Herodian interest in Palestine was not grounded in previous aristocratic family lines like that of the Herodians (i.e., the later Sadducean temple authorities). Herod was an Idumean (i.e., not part of the Jewish aristocracy). However, after Herod was appointed by Caesar as king of the Jews, he and his family became part of the hierarchical family structure in Palestine. This explains, according to Wright (1992:211), why the Romans tried to have strong affiliations with Herod. This, to my opinion, also explains the aversion the Herodians had for the Sadducees, as well as the coalition between the Pharisees and the Herodians in Mark (cf Mk 3:6; 12:13). The Pharisees most probably had a problem with the fact that the Sadducees were in control of the temple. The Pharisees and Herodians, therefore, both saw the Sadducees as having too much control in society, and therefore formed a coalition to counter this control.

In terms of the aristocracy, family and birth, therefore, played a much more important ideological role than can be inferred from the surface of society, as it was organized by certain laws and regulations (Van Aarde [1993]a:11). Legal and traditional social categories, therefore, did not really define Roman society on a deeper level. Much depended on social status (as a result of family and birth), which was often the road to money and political power. Social class based on one's wealth was much less important because one usually gained and kept wealth through political power and one achieved political power through one's status (and not class) in society (Finley 1973:49-51). Wealth was necessary to the upper class person, but its possessions did not make one a member of the upper class. By contrast, status gained by membership in the upper class could give the opportunity for acquiring or increasing wealth. Thus, status and power were more important than wealth in first-century Mediterranean society.

Hence, although it may seem on the surface of society political positions and wealth were important status symbols, it was nevertheless family and birth which led to a specific status, which in turn, led to political power and wealth (Van Aarde [1993]a:11). Status was determined in the first place by belonging to an aristocratic family. Therefore, although it is true in first-century Palestine the dominant role of the extended family came under pressure and started to disintegrate (see again Fiensy 1991 in section 4.2.8), it is also true belonging to an aristocratic family still functioned as the dominant social structure which made political power and material wealth possible. Understood as such, the familial structure (kinship) functioned as false consciousness, while on the surface, society was structured by political (sometimes brutal) and juridical power.

The role kinship played in first-century Mediterranean society can therefore be compared with the role of economics in modern twentieth-century societies (Van Aarde [1993]a:11-12). In modern 'democratic' societies, politics has become everything and politicians normally have all the power in society. Political positions, therefore, are also status symbols. However, economics still plays the dominant role in any politician's success, since the feasibility of the politician's policy depends mainly on economical factors. To get elected in a political position in the USA as a economic world power, such a person would therefore have to be able to indicate his political program would result in economical prosperity. The so-called 'bread and butter' implications of his political program would therefore determine his election. Understood as such, economics can be seen as the false consciousness of society, and also determine social status (Van Aarde [1993]a:12). In first-century Mediterranean society, however, the dominant social institution was not economics, but kinship. Status was achieved by being born into a specific family, and as such, the familial structure (kinship) functioned as false consciousness.

7.3.3 Social relations in first-century Palestine

The emergence of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and other groups in the Has-monean period can effectively be explained by the sociological process of group formation (Saldarini 1988:59). Judaism struggled for four to five centuries adjusting to Greco-Roman culture, from the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE to the formation of the Mishnah about 200 CE. In its battle to retain their Jewish identity, with emphasis on monotheism, sabbath observance, the Torah, purity and the like, many groups emerged, struggling for control of Jewish society, disagreeing over how Judaism was to be lived, and reacting differently to the activities of foreign rulers.

These groups were either *involuntary* or *voluntary* in character. Involuntary groups are familial, political communities, social classes, castes and other collectivities into which one is born. They are usually corporate groups which have explicit goals and make concrete demands on their members (Lande 1977:xix). In antiquity, one usually was born into an involuntary (kinship) group. However, achieved membership could also be acquired if it was ascribed by, for example, God, a king or another aristocrat. A good example of this is Herod the Great, which was declared by the Roman senate in 40 CE as the 'king of the Jews', although he was an Idumaeen. In terms of involuntary groups, kinship, however, was the most important aspect. The Sadducees can be seen as such an involuntary group. Josephus, for example, does not tell us much about the Sadducees. However, it is still possible to infer they were prosperous, controlling some part of the ruling, governing and retainer classes (Duling 1991a:16, see again section 4.2.9). On the surface they were a voluntary group who stood for the *status quo* (Van Aarde [1993]a:26). However, they were also an

involuntary group since they came from the Hasmonean families, and because of this tried everything possible to keep the control of the temple and the Sanhedrin in the hands of the elite-families (Van Aarde [1993]a:27).

Voluntary groups, on the other hand, are much more varied because they are organized for a great variety of purposes, some comprehensive and some very restricted (Saldarini 1988:63). Corporate voluntary groups have fixed goals, modes of action and relations among the members. Non-corporate voluntary groups usually lack fixed structures, are held together by temporary and narrow common interests, cannot by right claim the resources of the members and have an identity which is less clear than stable, corporate groups. Such voluntary groups are called factions or coalitions. A coalition is 'a temporary alliance of distinct parties for a limited purpose' (Boissevain 1974:171), and a faction is a coalition which is 'recruited personally according to structurally diverse principles by or on behalf of another person (Boissevain 1974:173). Factions also tend to be 'characterized by unstable membership, uncertain duration, personalistic leadership, a lack of formal organization, and by a greater concern for power and spoils than with ideology or policy' (Lande 1977:xxxii). A good example of a faction in Mark are the Pharisees.

In Mark, however, there are also examples of coalitions: The chief priests, scribes and elders (cf Mk 8:31; 11:27; 14:53), Pharisees and Herodians (cf Mk 3:6), the chief priests, elders, scribes and Pharisees and Herodians (Mk 12:13), and that of the chief priests, elders, scribes and Pilate (cf Mk 15:1-2). In all of these coalitions, therefore, one of their 'limited' purposes was to get rid of Jesus.

7.4 HOLINESS, COMMENSALITY AND KINSHIP IN MARK'S STORY OF JESUS

It was indicated above that the conflict between the different interest groups in Judaism can be seen as an indication of the struggle between these groups to gain control over Judaism and its main symbols, especially the temple (Van Aarde [1993]a:8; cf also Wright 1992:224). However, the conflict between the different interest groups in first-century Palestine was also a struggle for honor. In section 4.2.1, it was indicated honor and shame were the pivotal values in first-century Mediterranean society. In Mark's story of Jesus, the people who belonged to the highest classes were some of the Sadducees, the chief priests and elders (see again section 4.2.9). Since status was a limited good in first-century Mediterranean society, honor was of great importance, because by receiving a grant of honor one was able to maintain one's status. However, groups like the Pharisees, or the scribes (if they were not part of the Pharisees) were also groups who had a specific status, since they could be seen as fictive kinships. In this regard, Van Aarde ([1993]a:6) made the following remark:

In regard to interest groups like the chief priests and elders (as an 'coalition'), one can, simply because they are called 'chiefs' or 'heads' of families, infer that they were elites in society. However, since they are called 'chiefs' or 'heads' of families, it is also clear that these elites should not only be related to religious matters, but also to the institution of kinship.

(Van Aarde [1993]a:6; my translation from the Afrikaans)

From what has been said thus far in this chapter, it can, therefore, be argued the conflict between the different interest groups in Mark was not only a conflict in terms of control over the main symbols of society, but also a conflict of the maintenance of status. And since, as was indicated in section 7.3.2, status was acquired in terms of kinship, the conflict was also a conflict of 'families'.

In this regard the respective understandings of God's presence among the people by the Sadducees, chief priests and Pharisees can serve as example. Above it was indicated that the Sadducees, as an involuntary group who stemmed from the elite Hasmonean families, tried everything possible to keep the control of the temple and the Sanhedrin in the hands of these elite-families (Van Aarde [1993]a: 27). To maintain their status (derived from kinship), the Sadducees used everything in their power, like the purity rules, tithes and taxes. In this regard, they especially made use of symbolic media like power, commitment and influence (see again section 4.2.2). This is also the case regarding the chief priests: They acquired their status on the grounds of blood and family lines. To maintain this status, they used everything they had, for example, the temple, the interpretation of the Torah, a specific socio-political program, tithes and taxes in order to maintain their position. The Pharisees, on the other hand, since they did not had control over the temple, replicated the temple to the bed and board of every observant Jew. In this they not only sought power and influence among the masses, but organized themselves in terms of a fictive family. This meant status, and by being honored by the masses, they were able to maintain their status.

It is therefore clear that the conflict between the different interest groups in first-century Palestine was not only conflict regarding religious affairs, but especially conflict over status, honor and kinship. When one remembers kinship was the main reason for the social stratification in first-century Mediterranean society (see again section 7.3.2), the result of the conflict between the different interest groups in Judaism is clear: Since it was essentially conflict over status, and therefore also kinship, it led to further stratification. The respective understanding of God's presence among the people by the chief priests/Sadducees and the Pharisees can serve as example here: Both the chief priests/Sadducees and Pharisees used, for example, the symbolic media

of influence (see again section 4.2.2) to gain control over people. The fact that the Sadducees and the chief priests belonged to specific families which warranted status, was seen as divinely ordered. Because of this, they were perceived as reliable sources of information, that is, persons who knew how to interpret the Torah. As a result of this, they were also able to influence the judgment and actions of others. They exercised their influence in the political and economical sphere. They thus used everything they could to gain influence over and to control the masses. By doing so, they tried to maintain their status. The Pharisees, on the other hand, did not like the situation where all the power in society was caught up in only a few aristocratic families. Therefore they organized themselves as a fictive kinship group, and replicated the temple to the bed and board to every observant Jew. To gain influence, therefore, as well as status and honor, they declared God's presence in a different manner. It can therefore be argued all of these groups used God to maintain their positions.

To summarize: In first-century Mediterranean society, people who had political power (like the aristocracy and the elite, including inter alia the chief priests, elders and Sadducees) did not, in the first place, strive for more power nor wealth, since power and wealth did not lead to status. Status, one of the most important limited goods in first-century Mediterranean society, was especially acquired by birth. Being born in the right family led to status, which in turn led to political power and wealth. In terms of the chief priests, elders and Sadducees birth led to specific religious positions, control over the temple and wealth. Hence, since status was everything, everyone, including individuals and families, tried to maintain status. To maintain their status, the chief priests, elders and Sadducees used everything they could, especially by making sure taxes and tithes were paid. This meant more and more was extracted from the peasants, and when peasants could not keep up anymore, they either lost their land or were themselves sold as slaves. This meant the expendables increased in numbers. In a certain sense, therefore, God was used to secure and maintain status, that is, the temple became a den of robbers (cf Mk 11:17).

Since status was a limited good in first-century Mediterranean society, other interest groups like the Essenes and the Pharisees were opposed to the fact that all the power (and control over the temple) was in the hands of a few families. In reacting to this situation, the Pharisees, for example, did two things: They created a fictive kinship and replicated the temple to the bed and board of the masses. By doing this, the Pharisees therefore also strove for status, and in a certain sense, also had 'control' over the temple. In the time of Jesus, for example, an important bone of contention between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was whether the temple rules should be applied to everyday life. Saldarini (1988:234) describes these opposing views as follows:

The application of purity laws to the people at large was a new mode of understanding Jewish life, law and Scripture and it is reasonable and even inevitable that the Sadducees had their own (probably more traditional) understanding of Judaism and promoted it against the new Pharisaic view. If many of the Sadducees were priests or supporters of the traditional priesthood, they would have had another motive to oppose the Pharisees. The priests would not want purity practices characteristic of the Temple and priesthood to be diluted by adaption to the multitude.

(Saldarini 1988:234)

Moreover, with their 'fences around the law', the Pharisees made it more and more difficult for people to be 'holy', and more and more people were ostracized. However, in its essence, the struggle between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was a struggle over the maintaining of status, which, in a certain sense, was a conflict between families. It is in this regard that it was argued above that kinship was not only the dominant institution in first-century Mediterranean society, but also the false consciousness.

The pressure on the peasants on Galilean soil thus came from two sides, economical pressure in terms of taxes and tithes, and religious pressure in terms of the program of the Pharisees. The effect of these two pressures, however, was the same: Peasants lost their land, became landless and homeless because they either could not survive economically, or because they were declared as unclean because of many reasons. When the latter happened, they had to leave their families, since their extended families normally conformed with the purity regulations of their day (see again Fiensy 1991:85-98; section 4.2.8). First-century Mediterranean society thus became even more stratified.

That first-century Palestine became more and more stratified because of the respective aims and programs of inter alia the chief priests, Sadducees, elders and Pharisees is attested by Horsley (1992:15-18) in the following manner: In addition to the trauma of direct violence against tens of thousands of people, there was the heavy impact of increased economic demands on the peasantry. The Romans laid the country under tribute, but left the temple-state intact. But in addition, they imposed their client king, Herod, who launched massive and costly development projects such as the rebuilding of the temple. Thus, in a period of one generation, from 63 BCE to 37 CE, the layers of rulers demanding tithes, tribute and/or taxes tripled. The result was the disintegration of families and village, peasants were unable to feed themselves, and all experienced a downward spiral of indebtedness, supplementary wage-labor, and the loss of their traditional family inheritance as well as their standing and identity in their local communities. Moreover, the chief priests, when their legitimacy and influence among the

people started to decline and their rivalry with the Herodians and each other increased, resorted to strong arm tactics, using privately funded goon squads to intimidate the people and to forcibly expropriate the tithes intended for ordinary priests. The scribes and the Pharisees, on the other hand, being retainers of the Jerusalem temple-state, also helped to maintain the *pax Romana* and enabled the Romans to exploit the country economically. In order to maintain some influence over affairs in the country, they had to accept what amounted to a 'demotion' under Herod and made the best of the situation by peddling whatever influence they could at court. Also, in their concern to protect and preserve the sacred traditions of the people against the alien cultural influences, the tendency was to tighten or 'freeze' the Judean laws and customs. In effect, therefore, they exacerbated the burdens of the people. From these remarks of Horsley (1992:15-18), it is therefore clear the respective aims and programs of the different interest groups in first-century Palestine, in trying to gain and maintain status, led to a further stratification of society. This is also the point of view of Waetjen (1989:96):

The use and the control of power by the ruling class are self-serving, oriented toward a preservation of the existing structures and institutions without regard for the mutuality of coordinated interests and obligations which they were originally commissioned to order and supervise. The system had no integrity. Economic, political, and social conditions engendered greater impoverishment among the masses of people.

(Waetjen 1989:96)

According to the narrator of Mark's gospel, Jesus was also a product of these circumstances. In Mark 6:3, the narrator informs the reader that Jesus, before being baptized by John the Baptist, was a 'carpenter, the son of Mary'. From Mark 6:1-6, it is also clear Jesus was ostracized by his extended family in the village of Nazareth. Probably, according to them, Jesus was supposed to be a carpenter, but was not fulfilling the role of a carpenter. Although the narrator of Mark does not give a reason for Jesus being ostracized by his extended family, there could have been at least two reasons: First, since Jesus is depicted as the 'son of Mary', it is clear from the narrative world of Mark that Jesus did not have a father. In terms of the map of people, Jesus therefore was fatherless (cf t. Meg. 2.7; see again section 4.2.7). If this was the case, Jesus' extended family would have been under pressure to ostracize him from the village. Mark 3:31-35, where Jesus' private family wanted to have contact with him, should therefore be understood in this context.

However, there could also have been another reason for Jesus being put out of his family. In sections 4.2.8 and 6.3, the economical situation in first-century Palestine was discussed. There it was indicated the commercialization of agriculture and the encroachment of landlords on hereditary peasant landholdings led to more and more

peasants losing their lands. And, as Fiensy (1991:2) indicated, in agrarian societies land was life (cf also Wright 1992:226-227). Politics, therefore, put pressure on the subsistence margin of the typical peasant household, and more and more peasants lost their land. If this was the case with Jesus' private family, Jesus most probably had to leave his village in search of a livelihood (Oakman 1991:5). Although the text is not clear on this point, it can, however, be concluded that the narrator of Mark clearly depicts Jesus as being ostracized from his private family, or, put differently: Jesus was not fulfilling the role in his family which was expected of him by his extended family, namely that of being a carpenter.

How did Jesus cope with his situation of being outside the household? According to the narrator, Jesus went to John the Baptist. To belong somewhere, Jesus then was baptized by John. However, during his baptism, the 'fatherless' Jesus received a 'new father', the heavenly Patron. Jesus thus experienced himself as living in the presence of the heavenly Father/Patron, although the Pharisees and scribes, for example, thought otherwise. As was indicated in section 6.4, Jesus, because of his understanding of the kingdom and the heavenly Patron, created a new household, a fictive kinship, in which the expendables in society were also welcome. However, in Jesus' new household, a different understanding of the heavenly Patron existed: While the temple and the Pharisees declared God as unavailable and not present among the expendables, those in the new household experienced the Patron as being available and present. However, this new household's understanding of the availability of the Patron was not the only point of difference with that of the temple and the Pharisees. Jesus also redefined honor and status (see again section 6.4). Understood as such, Jesus' false consciousness also was that of kinship. Jesus did not have a family and father. In restoring the kingdom by way of the new household, Jesus, and the other members of the new household who had no family or a father, gained kinship and a father. Because of this, they had honor and status, but honor and status defined in a radically new manner.

The conflict between Galilee and Jerusalem in Mark's story of Jesus is therefore not only a conflict between a politics of holiness and a politics of commensality, but also a conflict between kinship, that aspect of first-century Palestine which led to status. The conflict in Mark's story of Jesus, therefore, was a conflict on both the surface and the base levels of society: On the surface, it was a conflict between a politics of holiness and commensality, but on the deeper level it was a conflict between different understandings of kinship, and therefore also status. Jesus' understanding of kinship and status led to the availability of the Patron, and that of the temple and the Pharisees to the unavailability of the Patron.

The earlier conclusion that Jesus was an a-political figure should also be understood in terms of the above conclusion. Jesus was an a-political figure because he did not have a specific political program. If this was not the case, Jesus would have tried to become a retainer, that is, tried to move up in the stratification ladder which would mean more power and privilege (see again section 4.2.9). This, however, does not mean Jesus was not part of the political game of first-century Mediterranean society. By redefining honor and status, and by creating a new household, Jesus challenged the power of the elites in society. What clashed was two different understandings of kinship and status, and since kinship (family) and status was not only a limited good in first-century Mediterranean society, but also the most important aspects thereof to gain honor, Jesus' new understanding of the kingdom opened the possibility of restructuring society in its essence. Because of this, he had to be eliminated.

7.5 END REMARKS

In sections 7.2 and 7.3, it was indicated that the 'ideology' of Jesus and that of the other interest groups in Mark was that of kinship. The chief priests', elders', scribes' and Sadducees' understanding of kinship was that it paved the way to gain and maintain status and honor. To maintain this status (and their honor), however, fences were built around the law which led to the situation that people were exploited and ostracized. This ostracism was legitimated with divine alienation. Because God was holy (whole), his people also had to be holy. Those who were not, were not part of God's people. For the Markan Jesus, however, the dominant characteristic of God was that he was present among his people, not only in the temple, but also among those who could not defend their honor.

Therefore, it can be argued in terms of the way in which Jesus defined kinship (as the new household), a correlation can be indicated between Jesus' 'ideology' and in the way in which this 'ideology' surfaced in his ministry on especially Galilean soil. Or, put differently: For Jesus the dominant aspect of his relationship to the Patron, the privilege of continuously experiencing God's presence, was the incentive behind both Jesus' 'ideology' and his visible ministry to the expendables in the society of his day. In regard to the Markan Jesus, there thus was an integration between 'ideology' and the brokerage of God's kingdom. Moreover, because Jesus' 'ideology' was embedded in kinship, in terms of inclusivism, the new household he created was a household of commensality, a household in which everyone was welcome. However, since the 'ideology' of the chief priests, elders, scribes and Pharisees was that of exclusive kinship (status), the result was alienation from God. Therefore, when the Markan Jesus defined kinship in a radically different manner than understood by the chief

priests, elders, scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees, their 'ideology' was brought into the open. Jesus' understanding of kinship thus criticized their total understanding of society, status and honor, that is, their 'ideology'.

This understanding of the Markan Jesus, however, also has importance for the modern reader of Mark's story of Jesus, especially those who sees themselves as being part on the church of Christ. We who see ourselves as part of the believing community are confronted by the Markan Jesus especially in terms of our hidden agendas when we try to define the church of Christ. For the Markan Jesus, the main value of the good news was that God's saving presence was available to everyone. This was recognizable in his brokerage. The dominant value of the good news, God's saving presence which is available to all, thus also became his ideology.

For the modern believer, this should also be the case. If the essence of the Markan Jesus indeed was the brokerage of God's saving presence to all, this should also become our attitude, especially in the church of Christ. The essence of the good news of the Markan Jesus, therefore, should become our incentive on both the deeper and surface level of society.

Moreover, we should also allow our ideology which can be seen as the driving force of our understanding of the church of Christ, to be challenged by that of Jesus. And if it is anything else than believing that God's saving presence should be available to everyone everywhere, we should allow our 'ideology' to be corrected by that of the Markan Jesus. For the Markan Jesus the dominant aspect of the good news was that God was available to all.

A final remark: In this study a plausible construct of the Markan Jesus was postulated, namely Jesus as a religious, a-political figure. According to Mark, Jesus was a subversive teacher. He had a different understanding of the heavenly Father than most others of his day. For him, God was available to all, especially to those who were not able to defend their honor in a society where honor was very important. A postulation was also made in regard to the Markan community: They most probably lived in Palestine just after the fall of the temple. It was suggested the Markan community consisted of one or more house churches, and saw themselves in continuity with the temple community. This construct enabled us to understand something of the Markan Jesus, as well as something of the ideological perspective and interest of the narrator of Mark's story of Jesus. Clearly, not all the questions in this regard were addressed. Some were answered, and others were only touched upon. Moreover, such a construct also raised new questions. However, it is hoped that our understanding of the political opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem, as well as that of the Markan Jesus, will make a contribution not only to the scholarly debate in regard to the understanding of the Gospel of Mark, but also in the way in which the Gospel of Mark could be understood, and utilized, by today's believing communities.

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