



# Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament)

*By Paul Foster*

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## Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament) By Paul Foster

Paul Foster contributes to Matthean scholarship by looking at the issues of the social location of the community, the role of law within that community and its attitude towards the gentile mission. Against the current trend towards viewing the community behind the gospel as a primarily Jewish separatist group with the central belief that Jesus was the Messiah, he comes to the conclusion that although the Matthean group originated in Judaism, nonetheless, by the time of the composition of the gospel, the community functioned outside the confines of its original locus operandi . Specifically, that at the time of the writing of the gospel a major breach had occurred between the Matthean communities and the synagogues from which the original core of the evangelist's believers in Jesus had emerged. Consequently the group was now focussing its attention on recruiting new members from among gentiles, and the integration of recent non-Jewish converts created a number of tensions for long term traditionally Torah observant group members. Therefore the topics of community, law and mission in Matthew's gospel are not treated as separate entities, but as interrelated parts of an overarching whole. The gospel has both pastoral and pedagogical aims: Pastorally, to reassure group members of the correctness of the decision to break with synagogue based Judaism and pedagogically, to teach the community that the risen Jesus instructs the group to engage fully in Gentile mission.

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### **About the Author**

Paul Foster, Born 1966; 1999 B.D. (Murdoch University); 2002 D.Phil. (Oxford University); currently Lecturer in New Testament, Language and Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

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