"Becoming Christian": Solidifying Christian Identity and Content

David G. Horrell, University of Exeter

1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with one of the key questions — perhaps *the* key question —
in the history of earliest Christianity: How did an originally Jewish messianic
movement come to be a separate religion with its own particular identity and beliefs?
More specifically, how did the identity and content of this new religious movement
come to be specifically "Christian", a new and distinct category? Like the other key
question about Christian origins — How and why did Christianity come to be the
dominant religion in the Roman empire? — the question of Christianity's separation
from Judaism concerns a situation which was established only after the New Testament
period. Although the New Testament writings bear witness to varied degrees of tension
between Christ-followers[1] and Jews, and to a developing sense of distinct identity, the
schism was certainly not definite or complete in this early period, nor for some time to
come. Some scholars see the period between 70 and 135CE as the key time for the
"parting of the ways" between Judaism and Christianity and regard some of the later
New Testament documents (e.g. Matthew, John) as witnessing to the heightened
polemic and sense of separation; others argue that the parting is only established some
time later than this, with the emergence of an authoritative rabbinic Judaism and a
powerful "orthodox" Christianity (see further Dunn 1991; Dunn 1992). We know from
Justin Martyr (c.100–c.165CE) of Jewish Christians in the second century who
continued to follow the Jewish law (*Dial* 47), and from later writers of the continued
involvement of some Christians in the synagogues and of the various Jewish Christian
groups which survived into the fourth or fifth centuries, eventually being marginalised
and excluded from both the Christian and the Jewish sides (see Horrell 2000a). So the
process of "becoming Christian", becoming something with a distinct and defined
identity and content vis-à-vis Judaism, was hardly a swift or unified process, and it can

[1] Since the term "Christian" appears only rarely in the New Testament and does not
emerge as a self-designation until around the end of the first century (see below for
discussion), and since the term can anachronistically imply the end of the process of
identity-formation which is precisely what we need to study in its emergence, it is
perhaps best to avoid (over-) using this term as a label for the earliest adherents of the
Christian movement. Cf. Esler 1998: 3, 44, etc., from whom the term "Christ-follower"
is taken — though this label too is a neologism rather than an ancient description.

only be said to be completed after the period of earliest Christianity, reaching some point of culmination in the fourth-fifth centuries, with the classic formulations of Christian doctrine at the councils of Nicea (325CE) and Chalcedon (451CE). However, it is in the New Testament period that the foundations of this distinctively Christian identity and content are laid down; it is in this period of earliest Christianity that one can trace the changes and developments that are crucial to the process of "becoming Christian". The following essay will therefore focus upon the first century CE and primarily upon the New Testament documents and the evidence they provide for the developing sense of Christian identity and of Christian doctrine and belief. I shall adopt broadly standard views of the dating and authorship of the New Testament writings, though these views are, of course, by no means undisputed.[2]

2. Resources from the social sciences

So how can the social sciences help us to understand this crucial period of earliest Christian history, and specifically the development of Christian identity and content therein? Obviously there is an enormous range of studies, both theoretical and empirical, which could potentially be used to shed light on the subject. What follows is just one approach, using some mainly theoretical studies to construct a framework for understanding.

2.1 Structuration theory

My first and most fundamental theoretical orientation concerns the essentially diachronic, or processual, nature of social life and social structure. In opposition to those traditions of social theory, notably functionalism, which take a synchronic view of social structure and institutions, theorists like Philip Abrams (1982) and Anthony Giddens (1979; 1982; 1984) insist that all socio-historical analysis must be "an analysis of structuring situated in process in time" (Abrams 1982: xviii); "large-scale systems of social relations do not exist (and persist) independently of their reproduction by human subjects in the course of their daily lives" (Condor 1996: 291). Structure exists only as it is produced and reproduced in and through human action. It exists only in the "process of becoming"; "even apparently stable systems of social relations rely upon continuous social reproduction over time" (Condor 1996: 290). Social psychologist Henri Tajfel, to whose work we shall turn below, insisted that

---

[2] Discussions of the introductory issues of date, authorship, etc., may be found in Schnelle 1998; Johnson 1999; Brown 1997.

"social groups are not 'things'; they are processes" (Tajfel 1982: 485). Incidentally, this break with the synchrony/diachrony division implies the end of any meaningful distinction between history and sociology.[3]

Perhaps the most full articulation of this approach to social theory is in Giddens' structuration theory (see Giddens 1979, 1982, 1984).[4] In this theoretical approach, Giddens seeks to transcend the division between action and structure and thus to resolve one of the fundamental problems of social theory. He does so with the conception of the "duality of structure". Giddens explains: "By the 'duality of structure' I refer to the essentially recursive character of social life: the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (Giddens 1982: 37). Social structure is thus analogous to the structure of language: the rules and resources of a language are simultaneously drawn upon *and* reproduced in the process of speaking or writing (cf. ibid.). Thus Giddens brings production, reproduction and transformation to the heart of social theory (Cohen 1987: 306). The central term "structuration" refers to a process, to "the structuring of social relations across time and space" (Giddens 1984: 376).

This theoretical focus on social life as process in time, and on the production, reproduction and transformation which occur over time, is essential for the understanding of all social relations and structures, even those which are apparently stable. Yet it is especially crucial for the study of a group undergoing rapid change and development, as in the earliest period of Christian origins. Giddens' structuration theory encourages us to appreciate the extent to which the content of Christianity, and the Christian sense of identity, rooted in long-established Jewish traditions, are in *the process of becoming*, and are formed and re-formed as human agents draw upon the existing rules and resources available to them and at the same time both reproduce and transform them.

2.2 Social identity theory

Identity has become something of a buzz-word in recent social science and in studies of early Christianity. Yet the apparently simple notion proves to be somewhat slippery to define and use. This is largely because a person's identity comprises a multiplicity

---

[3] So Giddens 1979: 230; 1984: 355ff; Abrams 1982: x-xi, xviii, 17, 200-201 etc. On this issue see further Horrell 1996: 26-31.

[4] For further detail on structuration theory and its application to New Testament studies see Horrell 1995; 1996.

of factors, or even a multiplicity of identities, not all of which are relevant, or salient, in every situation. One cannot therefore speak simply of someone's "identity", but must rather consider what aspects of identity are being considered, and why these are relevant in a particular context. Moreover, one must consider how any particular identity affects or defines other aspects of a person's identity and social conduct. Again this is not self-evident. A particular religious identity, for example, might have little apparent impact on certain other aspects of someone's identity, such as their ethnic, familial, or professional identities. Yet in certain circumstances a religious identity can affect, challenge, or redefine other aspects of identity, which might in different circumstances be unaffected by that religious commitment. There may come a point at which, say, professional and religious commitments clash, such that a decision has to be made as to which identity will prove determinative; or there may arise a situation in which religious and national identities coalesce, such that religious difference comes to be seen as aligned with national or ethnic difference.

In dealing with the development of Christian identity, we are dealing with *social* as opposed to personal identity; that is to say, with identity based on belonging to a particular and defined *group*.[5] Henri Tajfel's definition of social identity makes this clear:

> social identity [is]… that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership… however rich and complex may be the individuals' view of themselves in relation to the surrounding world, social and physical, *some* aspects of that view are contributed by the membership of certain social groups or categories. Some of these memberships are more salient than others; and some may vary in salience in time and as a function of a variety of social situations (Tajfel 1981: 255).

The work of Tajfel and his followers in developing social identity theory may therefore be helpful for understanding the development of Christian identity, as Philip Esler has

---

[5] Tajfel and Turner define a group as follows: "a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership in it" (quoted in Turner and Bourhis 1996: 30).

already shown, in the most detailed application of Tajfel's ideas in New Testament studies to date (Esler 1998; also 1996; 2000).

Tajfel's interest in social identity and inter-group dynamics was born from his own life-experiences as a European Jew who survived the horrors of the Second World War (see Tajfel 1981: 1ff; Turner 1996: 2-4; Billig 1996). The fundamental issue which drove his work was that of "the relations between social groups and their conflicts" (Tajfel 1982: xiii) and the question as to how and why, in certain circumstances, a person's attitudes and actions came to be defined on the basis of group membership and of distinctions between ingroup and outgroups.

Experiments carried out by Muzafer Sherif in the 1950s showed that simply categorising people (boys on summer camps, in the early experiments) as members of one group or another led to an increase of friendships and bonds within the "ingroup" and, in certain situations, hostility towards "outgroup" members (Sherif 1956; Turner 1996: 14-16; Esler 1998: 42). In other words, merely the sense of belonging to a particular group by itself may engender certain attitudes to those who, in relation to the group-boundary, are categorised as insiders or outsiders. In this categorisation process, two major principles emerged from Tajfel's research. These are "accentuation and assimilation: people tend to exaggerate the differences between categories and simultaneously minimise the differences within categories" (Brown 1996: 170). Members of the group are seen and described in ways which accentuate their similarities, the features that bind them together, while they are sharply distinguished from outsiders. This process may be referred to as a form of categorisation, a process which leads to stereotyping, whether positive stereotyping (of group members) or negative stereotyping (of non-members) (see Hogg and Abrams 1988: 68-78).

Tajfel's social identity theory proposed that it was "a psychological requirement that groups provide their members with a positive social identity and that positive aspects of social identity were inherently comparative in nature, deriving from evaluative comparisons between social groups" (Turner 1996: 16; cf. Brown 1996: 179). Various strategies are available to groups and group members to enhance their own positive identity, ranging from leaving the group and joining another (where this is possible) to redefining or shifting the grounds of comparison between groups, so as to give the ingroup a positive identity vis-à-vis the outgroup(s) (see Esler 1998: 49-55). Clearly, acting as a group or engaging in intergroup comparisons is most likely in a

situation where there is "a widely shared belief that 'passing' to another group is undesirable, impossible or very difficult" (Tajfel 1982: 491).

In attempting to refine our understanding as to why intergroup comparisons develop in some situations and not in others, Steve Hinkle and Rupert Brown (1990) have suggested that there are particular circumstances in which such comparisons are likely to become important for identity: one is when the cultural setting is one in which collective, group-based achievements and ties are more prominent than individually-based competition and achievement, another is when a comparative ideology pervades the group or its wider context (Hinkle and Brown 1990: 65-68; see also Esler 1998: 45-49). However, while these sets of circumstances clearly establish the kinds of general contexts in which intergroup comparisons may arise, there remains the interesting, and more specific, question as to why a *particular* group identity becomes prominent at a particular point in time: out of a range of possible categories and groups to which a person belongs, why is it *this* aspect of their multi-faceted identity which becomes the basis for stereotyping and comparison? According to Brown, one from a number of categorical dimensions — race, gender, religion etc. — tends to dominate in real-life situations, though "which category dimension will assume pre-eminence in any situation is very dependent on particular local circumstances" (Brown 1996: 172-73). Investigating and understanding these "local circumstances" is therefore crucial. What may be especially interesting to consider in the case of early Christianity is the issue as to the conditions under which the sense of a particular group identity develops and assumes a predominance for its members. Situations of perceived threat, or of unclear boundaries, or of experienced hostility may all provide such conditions. In particular, it may be interesting to consider the role of conflict.

2.3 Conflict

Conflict is generally seen as something negative, something to be avoided, and indeed conflict can involve or lead to the most violent and destructive types of human interaction. It was the lasting contribution of Georg Simmel, in his classic work on sociology, published in 1908, to outline the ways in which conflict contributed to the formation and maintenance of forms of human sociation.[6] Simmel wrote of "the

---

[6] Subsequent work in the field of social psychology has, without denying the positive consequences of conflict, tended to focus, *inter alia*, on the differences between destructive and constructive conflict, and on strategies of conflict management and resolution (see Deutsch 1973; Rubin and Levinger 1995).

positive and integrating role of antagonism" (Simmel 1955: 18), "the collectivizing effect of conflict" (p. 101), and "the socializing power of competition" (p. 63). Groups, for example, often derive unity and strength from facing external (or internal) opposition (cf. p. 97): "Conflict may not only heighten the concentration of an existing unit, radically eliminating all elements which might blur the distinctness of its boundaries against the enemy; it may also bring persons and groups together which have otherwise nothing to do with each other" (pp. 98-99).

Simmel's ground-breaking work was taken up by Lewis Coser in *The Functions of Social Conflict* (1956), where Coser sets out in the form of a series of propositions the characteristics and functions of conflict as outlined by Simmel. These include, for example, its group-binding and group-preserving functions, and the propositions that conflict with out-groups increases internal cohesion and can create associations and coalitions (cf. also Deutsch 1973: 8-10). Coser agrees with Simmel:

> Far from being only a "negative" factor which "tears apart", social conflict may fulfil a number of determinate functions in groups and other interpersonal relations; it may, for example, contribute to the maintenance of group boundaries and prevent the withdrawal of members from a group. Commitment to the view that social conflict is necessarily destructive of the relationship within which it occurs leads… to highly deficient interpretations (Coser 1956: 8).

Coser's work is formulated within a now largely discredited functionalist framework (cf. Giddens 1977: 96-134; Horrell 1996: 33-38) and so needs to be set within a rather different theoretical framework. As Jonathan Turner has pointed out, functionalism often implies an "illegitimate teleology", the notion that some aspect of social life (in this case conflict) comes about because of its consequences, described as its social function (Turner 1974: 21-27, 52, 72-73). Giddens' structuration theory, briefly outlined above, is explicitly and self-consciously a "non-functionalist manifesto" (Giddens 1979: 7) while at the same time incorporating what Giddens sees as the strength of functionalist approaches, namely their focus on the impact, the unintended consequences, of social activities. Where functionalism speaks of functions, structuration theory, with its insistence on reproduction and transformation through time, refers to the (often unintended) *consequences* of social activity which in turn become the (often unacknowledged) *conditions* of further activity (see Horrell 1996: 49-50). Some of Coser's propositions, derived from Simmel, if taken up into a more

adequate theoretical framework, can help in a consideration of the *impact* of conflict in the history of earliest Christianity. Conflicts, both internal and external, may arise for particular reasons based in "local circumstances" (and are *not* to be "explained", therefore, in terms of their social function) and may have an impact — a range of consequences, both intended and unintended — on the development of Christian identity and content.[7]

With these various perspectives and questions in mind, I turn now to the evidence concerning earliest Christianity. I shall consider this evidence in a diachronic manner which will enable us to consider how the process of "becoming Christian" takes place. The evidence is, unfortunately, often fragmentary and incomplete, since our primary sources are the theologically committed writings of the early Christians, intended not for the purposes of historical reconstruction but to set down the stories of Jesus and to encourage and exhort the members of the early Christian communities.

3. From Jesus to the earliest church

A vast literature testifies to the difficulties in reconstructing from the gospel records a convincing picture of the historical Jesus.[8] Nevertheless, certain things may be said with confidence. Recent scholarship has, for example, taken on board something that should always have been clear: that Jesus was a Jew (cf. Vermes 1983). Thinking, acting, and speaking within a thoroughly Jewish framework, Jesus announced the nearness of the reign of God. Whether this was meant in the sense of an imminent eschatology (the kingdom would soon be ushered in, in a dramatic intervention by God) or whether Jesus thought rather in terms of people taking on the yoke of the kingdom, following the ethics and practices of the kingdom in their lives, is much more open to debate. Whether Jesus saw himself as Messiah (Christ, the anointed one) or not is also highly disputed, but it is clear that he saw himself as having been called to some key role in proclaiming the reign of God and demonstrating that reign in acts of restoration and mercy to those marginalised by poverty, disease and impurity. Jesus gathered a group of disciples around him, and spoke specifically of a close circle of "twelve", probably symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel (Sanders 1985: 98-106). They are referred to as disciples (*mathêtai*), called, quite literally, to follow Jesus (Matt

---

[7] See also Still 1999: 107-24, for an overview of the social-scientific study of intergroup conflict and a valuable list of the range of 'potential outcomes of social conflict on groups thus engaged' (p. 120).

[8] For accessible overviews of recent debate see Witherington 1995; Powell 1998.

9.9; Mark 1.17 etc.) and sent out to announce the message of the kingdom (Matt 10.7; Luke 10.11).

Most prophetic and messianic movements at the time — and there were a number — died out once the central leader had been executed. The Jesus movement did not, however, disappear after the death of its leader. On the contrary, convinced and inspired by their belief in Jesus' resurrection, Jesus' disciples continued to meet in his name, and to announce the message that God had made him Lord and Messiah (Acts 2.36).[9] Whatever their beliefs about Jesus during his lifetime, after his death and resurrection his followers were united by the conviction that he was Messiah/Christ and that God had called people to repentance and faith in him.

In terms of social identity, these earliest Christ-followers were Jews, members of Israel: they followed the customs and practices of their ancestral religion, going up to the Temple to pray at the set time (Acts 3.1), following Jewish food regulations (Acts 10.13-14) and so on. Yet they also had a distinct group-identity within Judaism, which was itself a diverse and plural phenomenon in the years before 70CE, as followers of "the way" (Acts 9.2; 19.9, 23; 24.14, 22), members of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24.5; cf. 24.14). These were probably among the earliest terms applied to the first Christ-followers. They met together as members of this messianic group, sharing fellowship in homes. Entry and membership of their group were marked by rituals which are rooted in the practices of the earthly Jesus: baptism (as Jesus himself was baptised by John: Mark 1.9) and what Luke calls the "breaking of bread" (Acts 2.42), a meal which imitates the last supper which Jesus shared with his disciples. Content therefore has both doctrinal and practical aspects. The group is united in the conviction that Jesus is risen, is God's anointed Messiah, and this conviction marks them out from their fellow Jews. Distinctive group identity is also developed through the practical acts of initiation and solidarity: baptism and Lord's supper. These acts in themselves embody central aspects of the group's faith. Baptism symbolises repentance, a turning from sin to obedience to God, and specifically a following in the way of Christ. The Lord's supper reenacts the meal in which Jesus is recorded as giving meaning to his death, to the shedding of his blood and the giving of his body (Mark 14.22-24 and parallels; 1 Cor 11.23-25) and thus places the self-giving death of Christ at the centre of Christian belief.

---

[9] 1 Cor 16.22 shows that the acclamation of Jesus as Lord goes back to the early Aramaic-speaking believers.

According to our records, the conflict and opposition which brought about the death of Jesus led at first to the scattering of many of his followers (Mark 14.50). Yet not all dispersed. Some, we are told, met together despite their feelings of fear and uncertainty, thus retaining and even strengthening their sense of solidarity and group-membership (Luke 24.33-43; John 20.19). Resurrection appearances, to specific leading figures and to groups of believers (Matt 28.9; 1 Cor 15.4-8), convinced the group that Jesus was alive, and led to the enthusiastic proclamation of this conviction despite opposition and external conflict.

4. The beginnings of the Gentile mission and the contribution of Paul

A decisive moment in the history of earliest Christianity was brought about, at least in part, by conflict, both internal and external. After the rosy picture of Christian beginnings presented by Luke in Acts 1–4 (see Acts 2.41-47; 4.32-35), the ideal community suffers both from deceit (Acts 5.1-12) and internal division (Acts 6.1). The brief record of disagreement between the "Hebrews" and the "Hellenists" (Acts 6.1-6) has long been thought to be of considerable significance for understanding the spread and development of Christianity. It is widely agreed that the two groups or categories referred to here both comprise Jews who are members of the earliest Christian communities. The "Hebrews" were those Christian Jews who originated in Palestine, for whom Aramaic was their first language and who used the scriptures in Hebrew. The "Hellenists", on the other hand, were Christian Jews of diaspora origin, whose first or main language was Greek, who used the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures) and who may have been unable to understand the readings and prayers in Aramaic-speaking synagogues (see Hengel 1983: 4-11; Hill 1992: 22-24). Martin Hengel suggests that the seven who are appointed to serve at tables in Acts 6.3 were in fact the leaders of the Hellenist grouping: Stephen, for example, causes controversy in a synagogue of diaspora Jews (Acts 6.8-15) and is recorded as giving a speech critical of his fellow Jews (Hengel 1983: 12-24).

Stephen's subsequent martyrdom marks the beginning, according to Luke, of a persecution against the church in Jerusalem, a case of external conflict (Acts 8.1). From the pieces of evidence available in Acts, it seems plausible that it was the Hellenists in particular who were targetted and scattered from Jerusalem (Hengel 1983: 13, though note the critique of Hill 1992). Whatever was the case, some of these early believers dispersed from Jerusalem and took the Christian message with them where they went. The particular socio-historical significance of this move was probably

twofold: first, the message about Christ came to be formulated in Greek, the *lingua franca* of the eastern Roman empire (cf. Hengel 1983: x, 24); second, the message began to be shared with non-Jews, a step of enormous significance for the development of Christianity (Acts 11.19-20).

The conversion of non-Jews raises in a practical and forceful way the question of identity: What *are* these new converts? Of what group have they now become members? The message about Christ is presented as a thoroughly Jewish narrative, as a fulfilment of the Jewish scriptures (cf. Acts 2.14-36; 7.2-53 etc.) and of the promises made by God to the people of Israel. Yet its central focus is Christ and the convictions about who he is; the message centres on the belief that "Christ died for us/for our sins" and that "God raised him from death" (1 Cor 15.3-4). These two convictions stand at the core of early Christian content. So when Gentiles accepted the message about Christ, what did they need to do? More specifically, what new identity, and what marks of that identity, did they need to take on? Clearly the content and marks of Christ-following identity are essential: faith in the risen Christ and initiation into the group of Christ-followers by baptism. Also essential, however, are central Jewish beliefs about the one God, the God of the Jewish scriptures, who is believed to have acted in Christ, raised him from the dead and exalted him as Lord. Hence the obvious question: do these Gentile converts need to become Jews? Is the implication of believing in Christ, joining the Messiah's people, that one adopts the marks of Jewish identity?

This question was to cause division and argument in early Christianity for some time to come, for different individuals, and different groups, argued for different answers. What was crucial at this early point in time, less than a decade after the crucifixion of Jesus, was that some early Christian missionaries, maybe some from among the so-called Hellenists, began to welcome Gentile converts into the Christian movement *without their having to become full proselytes to Judaism.*[10] Luke records this significant innovation as having first happened in Antioch (Acts 11.20), where, interestingly, he also states that "the disciples were first called Christians" (11.26). This

---

[10] Hengel and Schwemer (1997: xi) date the beginning of the mission of the 'Hellenists' in Antioch to c.36/37 CE. They stress the importance of the Hellenists to the early Christian mission, but also emphasise both that this Gentile mission is not strictly *pre*-Pauline (see pp.31-34, 208, 281, etc.), since Paul was converted in c.33CE, and that Paul was crucial in establishing and justifying theologically the Gentile mission (p.309).

particular identity-designation, which we shall consider in more detail below, probably did not develop as early in the story of early Christianity as Luke's account suggests.[11] But Antioch was clearly an important place for the development of a distinctively Christian identity, specifically in terms of the mixed community of Jews and Gentiles which met there, united by their commitment to Christ.

At this point it is time to introduce the figure of Paul, a character with enormous influence on the subsequent development of Christianity, and specifically on the development of Christian identity and content (see Horrell 2000b). We know that Paul, as a zealous Pharisee, persecuted the Christ-followers, until the point when he himself "saw" the risen Christ (1 Cor 9.1; 15.8) and became convinced of his calling by God to take the message of Christ to the Gentiles (Gal 1.15-16). Exactly what Paul did in the first years after his "conversion" is impossible to say for sure. It is often thought that he spent a period in relative isolation and inactivity ("for solitude to rethink his life" [Longenecker 1990, 34]). Yet his testimony that he was threatened with arrest in Damascus (2 Cor 11.32-33) may suggest that Paul was doing something more controversial than solitary contemplation: perhaps announcing the news of Jesus' lordship (a potential cause of political controversy) and making Gentile converts.

What is more certain is that Paul became attached for some years to the church at Antioch, operating along with Barnabas as a missionary sent out under the commission of that church (Acts 11.25-30; 13.1-3; 15.35). This link is significant since Antioch, as we have already seen, was one place where the Christian movement soon began to incorporate Gentiles as well as Jews. Paul saw himself called specifically to be an "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11.13; cf. Gal 2.7), called to the task of spreading the Christian message among non-Jews throughout the Roman empire.

Early on in his Christian career — though how early is debated, whether from his conversion or somewhat later — Paul came to the conviction that what the Christian message called for from Jewish and Gentile converts was faith in Christ and, crucially, that the implication of this was that Gentile converts should not adopt the marks of Jewish legal obedience, Jewish identity, specifically circumcision, food laws and sabbath observance (Gal 5.1-12; Rom 14.1-14; cf. Dunn 1990: 183-241). Moreover, this new commitment to Christ and its embodiment in communities of believing Jews and Gentiles could for Paul require Jewish Christians to abandon

---

[11] Though for a recent argument that the term *Christianos* was coined in Antioch (by the Roman authorities) as early as 39-40CE, see Taylor 1994.

aspects of their previous Jewish identity-defining conduct: by mixing freely with Gentiles in intimate table-fellowship and by abandoning Jewish food regulations they were now deemed to be living in a non-Jewish way (Gal 2.12-16; Holmberg 1998). Certainly Paul considered that he himself had "died" to the law which once defined his identity and his conduct (Gal 2.19-20) and was now convinced that "in the Lord Jesus" all foods were clean (Rom 14.14).[12]

Once again conflict seems to have played a significant role in the formulation of these fundamental convictions. In his letter to the Galatians, a hot-tempered and pugnacious letter urging the Galatians not to be persuaded by those Jewish Christians who wanted all converts to be circumcised, Paul refers to a previous incident of conflict and disagreement within the Christian group at Antioch (Gal 2.11-14). The established practice of mixed table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians had been challenged by Jewish Christians coming from James in Jerusalem. The Jewish believers, Peter included, had then withdrawn from this mixed fellowship. This action drew from Paul a public condemnation of Peter and, at least according to his account of the incident in Galatians, a clear presentation of the view that since both Jew and Gentile now based their belonging to God's people, their group-identity, in Christ and not on the Jewish law, it was hypocritical and senseless for the Jewish Christians to separate themselves from their Gentile brothers and sisters and thus effectively to compel those Gentiles to become Jewish. Indeed, to do so would be to empty the Christian message of its validity. This specific incident of inner-Christian conflict, James Dunn suggests (Dunn 1990: 160-63), may have been a crucial moment for the formulation of this Pauline view, a view of such central importance for Paul's missionary message and for the development of Christian identity.

This Pauline view is crucial for the development of Christian identity precisely because it creates a group-identity which is something new. By insisting that both Jewish and Gentile believers find their basis for belonging in Christ and not the Jewish law, and by insisting that Gentile believers must not adopt the marks of Jewish identity and legal observance (circumcision etc.), Paul and other like-minded Christians began the process of clearly demarcating this (Christian) group as something different, distinct from Judaism, a 'third race', as some later writers would express it (see Horrell 2000c: 341 with n.65). Gentile converts do not become Jewish, and even Jewish believers may on occasion abandon aspects of their former practice. *Their common*

---

[12] On all this, see further Horrell 2000c.

group-identity is fundamentally defined by Christ and their faith in him. Indeed, the group may be defined in Pauline terms as those "in Christ" (*en Christô*). This phrase, and near equivalents like "in the Lord", is very frequent in the Pauline letters, and virtually unique to them in the New Testament.[13] To describe an individual (e.g. 2 Cor 12.2), or a group (e.g. Rom 12.5; 1 Cor 3.1), as "in Christ" is to articulate the core-identity designation of the group, the boundary which defines insider and outsider (see further Horrell 2000c).

The new identity-designation "in Christ" cuts across previous group-designations and creates a new and wider group identity. Indeed, without of course using modern sociological language, this is more or less explicitly what the early Christians saw themselves doing. Several times in the Pauline letters we find a baptismal tradition, one which may well have been formulated at Antioch and learnt there by Paul, which expresses precisely the sense in which a new unity and identity in Christ cuts across previous major group distinctions, those of race/religion, class and gender:

> As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus (Gal 3.27-28; cf. also 1 Cor 12.13; Col 3.11).

Just as baptism marks a person's initiation into this new social group, so the Lord's supper demonstrates and affirms their membership of a group which regards itself as "one body": "we many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Cor 10.17). The "body" is an image of the Christian community which Paul develops at length in 1 Corinthians 12, and he specifies that this communal "body" is the body of Christ (1 Cor 12.27).

What is happening here is not too dissimilar to one of the possibilities social identity theorists mention for the reduction of inter-group conflict: that through "recategorization" a new and broader group-identity transcends and encompasses identities which previously defined and divided separate groups (Brown 1996: 173-75; see further Esler 2000). However, despite the scholarly tradition of contrasting

---

[13] Adolf Deissmann famously drew attention to the importance of this phrase, and similar equivalents, for Paul; he counted some 164 occurrences (see Deissmann 1926: 140). The other occurrences in the NT are in 1 Peter (3.16; 5.10; 5.14), and may well be due to the influence of Pauline language upon that letter.

Christian universalism with Jewish particularism (for a critique see Barclay 1997a), it should be clear that this new identity in Christ constructs a *new* boundary between insider and outsider, rather than transcending any such boundary altogether. The new community in Christ includes Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free persons, men and women, and unites them all by an identity in Christ; they are all brothers and sisters.[14] But the traditional Jewish distinctions between the righteous and sinners, between Jews and "the Gentiles" (*ta ethnê*), the latter being often seen as the repository of idolatry, sexual immorality, and general depravity (see e.g. Psa 9.15-20; 14.1-7; 4 Ezra 3.28-36; Wisd 12.19ff), are retained but transferred to the distinction between those in Christ and those outside (see 1 Cor 6.9-11; 1 Thess 4.3-5).[15] There is a strong sense of "them" and "us", sometimes expressed in typically sectarian contrasts, as in 1 Thess 5.5: "you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness." However, what *is* universal about the Christian message is its vision that all humanity might ultimately be incorporated within this group "in Christ" (Rom 5.12-21; 11.32; 1 Cor 15.22).[16]

So Paul plays a key role in developing a distinctive Christian group identity. He never uses the term Christian itself — this probably developed somewhat later (see below) — but his label "in Christ", applied both to individuals and to the group, is functionally equivalent as a designation of group identity. However, while this group is thus new, and distinct in identity-terms from Judaism, Paul clearly claims the positive identity-designations of the Jewish people for all who are in Christ. In other words, one of the ways in which Paul builds a positive social identity for members of his "in Christ" groups is by transferring to them the positive labels of Israel, the people of God: the identity designations of the parent community are claimed for the new grouping which is in the process of splitting off (see further Esler 1998). Thus, for example, all in Christ are equally and without distinction descendants of Abraham (Gal 3.6–4.6, 21-31; cf. Rom 9.8; 2 Cor 11.22), inheritors of God's promise (Gal 3.29; 4.28)

---

[14] On the frequency and usage of this sibling-language in the Pauline letters, see Horrell forthcoming.

[15] Note also Rom 1.19-32 and 3.9-20, where Paul draws on Wisd 13–15 and on other scriptural texts (mostly from the Psalms) to depict the sinfulness of all humanity, Jew and Gentile alike.

[16] On this universal vision and its positive and negative contemporary implications see the stimulating discussion by Boyarin 1994.

and children of the Jerusalem above (Gal 4.26). They are the "people of God" (cf. Rom 9.24-25; 2 Cor 6.16); the scriptures were written for their instruction (Rom 15.4; 1 Cor 10.11); the Jewish patriarchs are their fathers (1 Cor 10.1; cf. Rom 4.1). They are the ones who possess God's Spirit and who truly fulfil God's law, without living "under" it (Rom 6.14-15; 7.6; 8.1-4; Gal 5.13-26). And despite Paul's polemic against physical circumcision, he describes Christians as "the circumcision" (Phil 3.3; cf. Rom 2.28-29). Indeed, while the interpretation of the verse is disputed, it seems likely that in Gal 6.16 Paul refers to the church as "the Israel of God" (cf. Gal 4.29; Rom 9.6-8),[17] an Israel whose identity and practice are redefined, reconfigured around Christ and not Torah (cf. Donaldson 1997).

This left Paul with an acute feeling of anguish over what had become of the ethnic people of Israel, his own kinsfolk, to whom the gifts and promises of God irrevocably belonged (see Rom 9–11). His somewhat convoluted sense of the workings of God's purposes enabled him to hold the conviction that "all Israel" would indeed come to be saved (Rom 11.26) and that Israel's 'hardening' served a purpose for a time. He would not take the later Christian route of simply declaring that the Church had replaced Israel, but rather held in tension his belief that those in Christ now constituted the people of God with his conviction that Israel was irrevocably the covenant people of God and would thus somehow be saved in the end.

Paul's position on the incorporation of both Jews and Gentiles into a people defined by their being in Christ, which crucially established a distinctive "Christian" identity, came to be adopted in the following centuries as the orthodox Christian view. However, at the time it was controversial and in conflict with other perspectives. It is clear from Paul's own writings that he came into conflict with Christians from Jerusalem, associated with Peter and James, who took a rather different line on the question of what Gentile converts needed to do in order to be accepted into the people of God (Acts 15.1ff; 2 Cor 11.12-23; Gal 2.1–3.6; 5.2-12). Some advocated full proselytism to Judaism, marked by circumcision, while others, James included (according to Acts 15.13-21), urged for the Gentiles a minimum of regulations concerning foods and sexual morality, along with full Torah-observance for Jewish Christians (Acts 15.20, 29). The letter attributed to James may or may not come from this early period and from the hand of James himself; a majority of scholars judge it to

---

[17] For arguments in favour of this interpretation, see e.g. Dahl 1950; Barclay 1988: 98; Longenecker 1990: 298-99.

have been written somewhat later, in the name of James but after his death (see Chester 1994, 12-15). But whatever its date, the letter clearly represents a form of Christianity different in key respects from Paul's. In James there is none of the corporate Christology, the "in Christ" language, so characteristic of Paul. There is the Christian affirmation of Jesus as Lord and Christ (Jam 1.1; 2.1), but obedience to the whole Jewish law is also urged (Jam 1.25; 2.8-26; 4.11-12). Polemic against a position like that of Paul's may be implied in James 2.14-26, where, quoting some of the same texts crucial for Paul's case (Gen 15.6; see Rom 4.3), James stresses the need for works as an expression of faith. In short, the letter of James represents a form of early Jewish Christianity rather than the form of Gentile-including Christianity promulgated by Paul (see further Horrell 2000a). With the benefit of historical hindsight, it is clear to see that the Pauline position was — for better or worse — crucial to the process of establishing Christianity as something with a distinct identity, one which would eventually be separate from Judaism.

5. The passing of the first-generation leaders: the period c.65-80CE

In Weberian terms, Jesus himself is obviously the central charismatic leader of the Christian movement. But, while "Jesus has no successor" (Weber), some of the key leaders of the first generation of Christian origins, "apostles" such as James, Peter and Paul, may also be said to be charismatic figures, exercising charismatic authority in the earliest churches (see Holmberg 1978: 150-55). The removal of these key figures is likely to have caused a certain amount of trauma and difficulty for a time within the movement, or at least to have been a significant point of transition and development. This is especially so given that a number of these leaders were killed during a short period of time, a time, moreover, which was immediately followed by an external event of considerable significance. We know from Josephus of the killing of James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, in 62CE (*Ant* 20.200). Early Christian sources point to the execution of both Peter and Paul in Rome under Nero, shortly after the great fire of Rome in 64CE (*1 Clem* 5.2-7; Eusebius, *HE* 2.25.5). Then in 66CE the Jewish revolt against Rome broke out in Palestine, a revolt which was to last for some eight years or so, until the fall of Masada to the Romans in 73/74CE. A key event during this war was the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70CE. This event was naturally both profoundly traumatic and significant for Judaism and its subsequent evolution, and also of considerable influence on the continuing development of Christianity. It no doubt fuelled and added some sort of apparent

legitimacy to Christian ideas about God's judgment on Israel for her failure to believe in Christ (cf. Mark 12.1-9; 1 Thess 2.14-16) and about the Church as the new inheritor of Israel's status and identity (cf. Gal 3.29; 4.21-31; Heb 8.1-13; 1 Pet 2.9-10; *Barn* 8.1ff; 14.1ff).

So what developments took place during Christianity in this period, and what were their implications for the evolution of Christian identity and content? One significant development is that the written forms of the gospels began to appear. Certainly traditions about Jesus' life and teaching circulated and were preserved during the years after his death, though when they first began to be recorded in written form is hard to say with confidence. But it is only in this period after the death of the key leaders of the first generation that the written gospels as we now have them were first put together. Mark's gospel, widely regarded as the earliest of the written gospels, is dated by many scholars some time in the period 65-75CE (see e.g. Hooker 1991: 8). The Christian tradition that Mark was "Peter's interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord" (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.15), whether or not it is historically accurate, indicates the impetus behind the writing of the gospels as being, at least in part, to set down the knowledge of the apostolic generation. Naturally, this desire to record in written form the content of the key traditions of Christianity — the stories of Jesus — was likely to have been stimulated by the deaths of some of those key leaders and original disciples, notably Peter and James.

The significance of the first written Christian gospel is not only that it sets down in written form the narratives about Jesus — though that is significant enough — but also that it does so in a narrative thoroughly infused with post-Easter Christian theology. Mark's Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who knows he must go to the cross to give his life for others and who knows that he will rise again from the dead (see Mark 8.31; 9.9, 31; 10.32-34, 45). Moreover, some scholars suggest that the theology expressed by Mark in narrative form is an essentially Pauline theology (see e.g. Martin 1972: 161-62; Marcus 2000). Thus Mark's gospel is significant for the development of Christian content in setting down a written record of the life of Jesus seen through the lens of Christian, specifically Pauline, theology.

The Pauline tradition also receives expression in two letters which probably date from this period: Colossians and Ephesians. Many scholars regard these letters as post-Pauline compositions written in Paul's name some years after his death, though if

this is right it is difficult to date these letters with any precision. The two letters clearly share some kind of relationship, since the content and structure of each is similar, with some material shared in common. One letter was probably based in part on the other, with the most likely view being that the author of Ephesians used Colossians. The letters share similarities in their theological and ethical teaching: they contain a high Christology, exalting Christ as the head of the Church and the one in whom all the fullness of God dwells (Eph 1.22-23; 5.23; Col 1.18-19; 2.9-10; etc.); both contain a similar code of teaching addressed to the various members of the household (Col 3.18–4.1; Eph 5.21–6.9). Colossians is concerned to address a specific situation and to confront the dangerous attractions of a rival philosophy, possibly a syncretistic blend of Jewish and pagan religious elements to which some readers were attracted (for the range of possibilities see Barclay 1997b: 37-55). Ephesians, on the other hand, is not apparently directed to any particular context or problem, and may have been originally intended as a circular letter. While both Colossians and Ephesians reveal developments and changes compared with the undisputed letters of Paul, they also represent a clear encapsulation of essentially Pauline theology. In both letters Christ is central as the one in whom God has wrought reconciliation and in whom Christians now live. In Colossians it is emphasised that through Christ God has reconciled to himself "all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Col 1.20). Believers have "put on" a new nature in Christ, "where there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3.11). Ephesians emphasises the reconciliation that has been brought about in Christ between Jew and Gentile. In a quintessential expression of Pauline theology the writer asserts that through the cross of Christ, God has broken down the dividing wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile, creating one new person, one body of people in Christ (Eph 2.14-16). These letters therefore strengthen and consolidate the Pauline contribution to the development of Christian identity and content, affirming the centrality of Christ, the rootedness of Christian identity in him, and the creation of one "body", one people from diverse social identities, which is the body of Christ.

It would be misleading to suggest that in this period Christianity develops in anything like a single direction or as a united group: there is, as we shall see in the following section, continuing diversity, disagreement and division. Christian identity and content are correspondingly diverse. Nevertheless, significant developments do take place, not least within the stream of Christianity which would come to be central

to the defined orthodoxy of later times. The deaths of key apostolic leaders and the events of the Jewish war were no doubt catalysts for some of these developments. With the passing of the first-generation leaders, especially those who had been disciples of Jesus, it is understandable that the "gospel" narrative was set down in written form, thus marking a significant step in the establishment of Christian content and tradition in textual form. Moreover, this form of biography of Jesus is also an expression of early Christian theology, which thus comes to be encapsulated within the historical records of the movement's origins. The key contribution of Paul to the formation of Christian identity is also strengthened in the two letters written in his name, probably during this period. In these letters the status and centrality of Christ are further emphasised and heightened, thus focusing "Christian" identity firmly upon him; and the constitution of the Christian group as a new unity encompassing formerly distinct groups, especially Jews and Gentiles, is further confirmed.

6. Defining orthodoxy and guarding the tradition: c.80-100CE

A considerable number of the writings of the New Testament probably belong to this late first-century period of early Christianity, including the gospels of Matthew, Luke and John, Acts (Luke's second volume), the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy and Titus), Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. These documents are diverse both in genre and theology, and testify to the considerable diversity within the Christian movement at this time. Some of these writings, for example, seem to represent some form of Jewish Christianity, that is, a form of Christianity which recognises Jesus as Lord and Christ but which also practices full adherence to the practices and customs of Judaism (see further Horrell 2000a). Matthew's gospel apparently falls into this category: it is only in Matthew that Jesus is said to have come "not to destroy [the law and the prophets] but to fulfil them… So whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5.17, 19). Other documents present a thoroughly Jewish picture of Christianity and Christian identity, but, like Paul, claim this Jewish heritage for a Gentile-including Christianity in which full observance of the Jewish law does not seem to be required. Into this category come the letter to the Hebrews, which presents Christianity as the reality of which Judaism was merely the shadow, now obsolete and passing away (see Heb 8.13; 10.1-10 etc.), and the first letter attributed to Peter, which describes a largely Gentile group of believers in terms drawn directly from the Jewish

scriptures: "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's special possession" (1 Pet 2.9). Although their dating and authenticity are open to debate, there are a number of letters associated with the leading early apostles which may well date from this period: the Pastoral Epistles attributed to Paul, the letters of Peter and of James, and the Johannine letters (1-2-3 John). The book of Revelation uses the distinctive style and symbolism of the apocalyptic genre.

Given this considerable diversity it is hard to generalise about the developing Christian movement, and generalisations which are offered can easily be misleading. Nevertheless, we can pick out some themes and developments relevant to the topic of Christian identity and content, to the process of "becoming Christian".

5.2 Developing Christian identity

During this period, even in Jewish Christian writings like the gospel of Matthew, we find an increasing sense of distance from and polemic against Judaism along with a high Christology. In Matthew, for example, there is an extended section of fierce polemic directed at the Pharisees (Matt 23). The historical scenario for this conflict is probably that of the post-70 situation, where the "survivors" of the Jewish war — the Christian sect of Judaism and the pharisaic-cum-rabbinic groups who would rebuild Judaism as rabbinic Judaism — battle to present themselves as the true heirs and interpreters of Judaism's traditions (see further Alexander 1992). For Matthew, it is Jesus, and not the Pharisees, who is the authentic interpreter of the law. Moreover, Matthew presents Jesus as far more than an interpreter of the law: he is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt 1.23), God's beloved Son, Messiah and Lord (Matt 3.17; 7.21; 16.16 etc.). Commitment to Christ is clearly at the centre of Matthew's faith, and is expected to be a cause of hostility directed against Christ's followers. And, as Simmel's work on conflict suggests, this hostility seems to result in a greater sense of group identity, of being bound to, and identified by, the very name which is the cause of hostility and persecution: there are a number of references in the gospels to suffering for "my name" (Matt 10.22; 24.9; Mark 13.13; Luke 21.12, 17; John 15.21), specified as "the name of Christ" in Mark 9.41.

In the gospel of John the sense of hostility and separation from Judaism is even greater. Here Christian claims about Christ have reached the point of being regarded as blasphemous by Jews (cf. John 8.57-59) and have apparently resulted in the expulsion of Christians from the synagogues (see John 9.22, 34; 12.42; 16.2). We know of a curse upon heretics and Nazarenes (i.e. Christians, or at least Jewish Christians) as the

twelfth of the eighteen benedictions used in synagogue liturgy. Scholars disagree as to how early this curse was likely to have been introduced, and in precisely what form (see van der Horst 1994), but something like it may well form something of the background to the situation John describes. An origin for the curse towards the end of the first century seems likely, while Justin Martyr, writing around 160CE, provides the strongest second-century evidence for such a custom (*Dial* 47; Horbury 1998: 67-110).

The first letter of Peter is also addressed to Christians suffering hostility and antagonism, though in this case not apparently from Jews but from the Gentiles among whom they live. The letter is addressed to believers scattered throughout the Roman provinces of northern Asia Minor. These people are currently enduring a "fiery ordeal" because of "the name of Christ" which they bear, a similar phrase to that in Mark 9.41 (see 1 Pet 4.12-14). It is "the name of Christ" which most clearly defines the social identity of this group, and the hostility directed at them because of that name increases the salience of that aspect of their identity.

According to Larry Miller (1999), the detachment of these Christians from their wider socio-religious context and their formation of a "voluntary utopian group", defined by their commitment to Christ, consitutes a form of social protest which therefore meets with reaction from the wider society, both its general populus and its ruling authorities. The instruction contained in 1 Peter represents a response to this wider societal reaction, calling the letter's recipients both to a non-resistant reaction to their accusers (1 Pet 2.1; 2.11–3.9) and yet also to a resistance to the attempt to impose conformity to what society demands: they are to remain committed to fearing God, to doing God's will (1.13-17; 3.13-17; 4.12-19).

Especially notable in 1 Peter is a single occurrence of the word *Christianos*, the Greek word — a Latinism — transliterated "Christian" (1 Pet 4.16). This is one of only three appearances of this word in the New Testament, the other two coming in the book of Acts (11.26; 26.28). It is important to stress, therefore, that this most well-known identity-label was possibly unknown to, and certainly unused by, most of the New Testament writers, appearing only infrequently in two of the later writings of the New Testament.[18] The term *Christianos* most probably originated as a label used by hostile

---

[18] Taylor 1994 argues for an early date of origin for the term (39-40CE in Antioch), seeing it as a label attached by Roman authorities to the followers of the Messiah who had stimulated Jewish protests in the city. However, the evidence to support the argument is not strong, and the absence of the label from so much of the New

outsiders to denote members of the group of Christ-followers; indeed this seems to be implied in each of the New Testament occurrences. It identifies people as "partisans" or "supporters" of Christ, like the term Herodians — meaning partisans or supporters of Herod and his family (see Matt 22.16; Mark 3.6; 12.13) — and appears in Roman writers of the late first to early second century (Pliny *Ep.* 10.96-97; Tacitus *Ann.* 15.44; Suetonius *Nero* 16; see Lüdemann 1989, 138; von Harnack 1905, 15-19). Yet this outsiders' label came to be adopted by the Christians themselves as the primary label designating their social identity, from the end of the first century onwards, notably in the letters of Ignatius (very early second century: *Eph.* 11.2; *Magn.* 4.1; *Rom.* 3.2; note also *Did* 12.4). Ignatius's writings clearly reveal this process of claiming an outsiders' label as a true and valued self-designation: "pray for me... that I may not only be called a Christian, but may also be found to be one" (*Rom.* 3.2); "it is right, then, not only to be called Christians, but also to be Christians" (*Magn.* 4.1). 1 Peter, most likely written sometime between 75-95CE (Horrell 1998: 8-10), probably marks an important point in the history of this development. The suffering addressees of the letter are urged to avoid any behaviour which might lead to them being accused of being a murderer, a thief, or other kind of criminal; but if they are accused of being a Christian, if this is the cause of their suffering, then they should "not be ashamed, but glorify God under that name" (1 Pet 4.16). A label applied as an accusation, a cause for punishment, is to be worn with pride, even if suffering is the result. Thus what originates as a negative outsiders' label comes to be adopted as the proud self-designation of the members of the Christian movement.

All of this seems to bear out Simmel's notion, formalised as a proposition by Coser, that "conflict with out-groups increases internal cohesion" (Coser 1956: 87; cf. 38; Still 1999: 121). Because hostility and accusation from outsiders, whether Jews or Gentiles, focuses on the name of Christ, this increases the salience of this aspect of the insiders' shared social identity, increases the extent to which this aspect of their identity defines their commonality and sense of belonging together. The label "Christian" well illuminates this point: applied initially as a term of disdain by outsiders it comes to be the term which insiders proudly bear, the term which expresses that which binds them together, the basic badge of group-membership.

Testament is harder to explain if it was coined so early (and the *Didache* is unlikely to have been written as early as Taylor suggests [50–70CE; see p. 77]. A date in the late first or early second century is more widely accepted).

6.2 Fixing content

Assuming Mark's to be the earliest gospel, it seems that other Christians were not content to leave Mark as the only written record of the Jesus-traditions. Since Matthew and Luke evidently knew Mark, and John probably did too (or knew at least some material from the synoptic tradition), it is clear that these subsequent gospel writers sought to supplement, improve, correct, or reinterpret Mark's account. In part this may have been because they had access to material unknown to Mark — the source or sources known as Q — but it is also surely because they wished to present a different portrait of Jesus, to convey different theological emphases. Hence the gospel tradition finds greater diversity of expression in this period, though later writers would seek to reduce this diversity to a single harmonised account (Tatian's second century *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the four gospels, was widely used). These gospel accounts also bear some witness to the developing expressions of Christian faith, used in liturgical and ritual contexts. Matthew and Luke, for example, both include a version of the Lord's prayer, which soon became established as a key Christian prayer (Matt 6.9-13; Luke 11.2-4). All the gospels give some indications of the importance of the rites of baptism and Lord's supper: the synoptics record Jesus' baptism (Mark 1.9 and parallels) and preserve the words and actions of Jesus at the last supper (Mark 14.22-25 and parallels; cf. 1 Cor 11.23-25). These narratives thus provide the content and meaning for the ongoing practice of the major Christian rituals. John's gospel famously does not directly record Jesus' baptism (compare John 1.29-34 and Mark 1.9-11), nor does it include a narrative of the last supper. Nevertheless the baptismal and eucharistic imagery in the gospel seem to indicate that for this evangelist too these rituals were an established part of early Christian practice (cf. John 3.5; 6.32-58; 13.6-11). A most striking example of a concise liturgical formula is found at the close of Matthew's gospel, where the risen Jesus commands his disciples to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28.19). This specific trinitarian formula is found nowhere else in the New Testament and like the term "Christian" represents a late development in the New Testament period. But it is a formula which became central to the content of Christianity, expressing the trinitarian understanding of God which developed out of, but was hardly found as such within, the earliest Christian writings.

The Pastoral Epistles, written in Paul's name but reflecting the situation of second- or third generation Christianity around the end of the first century, exhibit a

clear desire to preserve sound teaching, to "guard the deposit" (1 Tim 6.20; 2 Tim 1.14) of apostolic doctrine. This concern arises from both the passing of the apostolic generation and the variety of interpretations of the apostolic heritage, which call for the "orthodox" to be distinguished from the "heretical". These letters focus a good deal on the need for "right" conduct among members of the Christian congregations, essentially meaning behaviour which is decent and socially respectable according to the standards of the time. Slaves are to be obedient and submissive; women are to be silent and subject to their husbands; church leaders are to govern their own households well, keeping their children in order (see 1 Tim 2.8–3.12; 6.1-2; Titus 1.6-9; 2.2-10). The Pastoral Epistles therefore share with other letters in the later Pauline tradition a broadly conservative social ethic which may in part be a reaction to hostility and conflict with outsiders and to the realisation that the "End", the final day of the Lord, was not going to come as quickly as earlier expected (cf. Col 3.18–4.1; Eph 5.21–6.9; 1 Pet 2.18–3.7; 2 Pet 3.8-10). Conflict with outsiders could perhaps be lessened if Christians ensured that they conformed as far as possible to standards of "decent" behaviour. At least if they were then the objects of hostility, it would be for the name of Christ alone, and not for any other reason (cf. 1 Pet 4.12-16).

The Pastoral Epistles contain a number of passages which encapsulate Christian faith in concise credal statements. These probably represent traditional, pre-formed material, included in the letter by the author and known from the context of Christian worship. Some such credal formulae, christological hymns, etc., are found in the early Pauline letters too (see e.g. 1 Cor 8.6; 15.3-5; Phil.2.5-11; Col 1.15-20) but there appears to be a greater concentration of such pre-formed and credal material in these later letters (cf. Ellis 2000: 310). These formulaic sections are an important aspect of the establishment of solid Christian content: they express in concise and memorable ways the basic core of "the faith" and can be repeated in church meetings as shared declarations of the heart of the Christian message. Probably the best example is in 1 Tim 3.16, where a few short and rhythmic lines encapsulate the story of Christ: "Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory." Other examples may be found in 1 Tim 1.17; 2.4-6; 6.15-16; 2 Tim 1.9-10; 2.11-13; Titus 3.4-8.

Also highly significant for the establishment of defined Christian content are the few indications in the later New Testament letters concerning the emerging status

of earlier Christian writings. For the early Christians "the scriptures" means the Jewish scriptures: the Hebrew Bible and its Greek translation, the Septuagint, though the boundaries of the Jewish scriptures were not firmly fixed until probably late in the first century. But towards the end of the New Testament period we find some evidence to suggest that the process of elevating early Christian writings to the status of scripture had begun. In 1 Tim 5.18, in a passage explaining why Christian leaders ("elders") are worthy of support from the church, we find the following scriptural justifications: "for the scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain', and, 'The labourer deserves to be paid'." The first of these "scriptural" quotations comes from the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 25.4). The second, however, comes from the gospel tradition (Luke 10.7; cf. Matt 10.10). Yet it seems to be quoted as scripture alongside the citation from Deuteronomy. And in 2 Peter (where, incidentally, the gospel tradition is again quoted: 2 Pet 1.17-18), the letters of Paul are apparently ranked with "the rest of the scriptures" (2 Pet 3.16). What these two references show is that a crucial process in the fixing of Christian content had begun, namely the process whereby certain early Christian writings were regarded as authoritative and canonical, to be reckoned as part of "the scriptures". This process would ultimately lead, of course, to the formation of "the New Testament", with the Jewish scriptures taking their place within the Christian Bible as "the Old Testament". Deciding *which* early Christian writings should be accorded this authoritative status took some considerable time, and for the first few centuries of Christian origins a number of writings were disputed as to their status and authority (see Gamble 1985; Metzger 1987). Some of these disputed writings eventually made it into the canon (e.g. 2 Peter); others did not (e.g. *1 Clement*).[19]

These steps towards the fixing of Christian content, both in concise credal statements and in treating certain early Christian writings as scripture, should not be taken to indicate that the movement was anything like united around this solidifying core-material. In fact, the impetus for "guarding the deposit", establishing orthodox and authoritative statements and documents, probably came in some considerable part from the sheer diversity within early Christianity. Those who regarded themselves as guardians of the apostolic tradition saw other strands and versions of the faith as dangerous and heretical and thus sought to establish the content of the faith so as to

---

[19] See Ehrman 1998 for an accessible collection of all the Christian writings, canonical and non-canonical, from the first century of Christian origins.

make clear what was sound and what was not (see e.g. 1 Tim 4.1-16; 6.2-21 etc.). The succeeding centuries would witness continuing diversity within the Christian movement, with a wide variety of Jewish Christian groups, Gnostic groups, etc., and energetic "anti-heretical" activity on the part of Christians who regarded themselves as representatives of orthodoxy (e.g. Irenaeus, Epiphanius). The eventual triumph of what came to be defined as orthodoxy may have as much to do with social and political power as with the niceties of theological argument: "the Roman government finally came to recognise that the Christianity ecclesiastically organised from Rome was flesh of its flesh, came to unite with it, and thereby enabled it to achieve ultimate victory over unbelievers and heretics" (Bauer 1972: 232).

7. Conclusions

This sketch of developments in early Christian identity and content has proceeded on the basis that these phenomena can only adequately be studied and understood as part of an ongoing process. Like all social institutions and structures they are continually in the process of production, reproduction and transformation, in the process of becoming, and never "arrive" or reach a point where one can say that development "stops". The structuring of the Christian movement is a process situated in time.

7.1 Identity

This early period of Christian origins is clearly the crucial period for the development of a distinctively "Christian" identity. Initially there is a group of disciples, followers of the earthly Jesus, who become a group of messianic Jews, convinced that the risen Jesus is God's anointed one, the Messiah. They are known as members of the sect of the Nazarene (after Jesus of Nazareth), followers of "the way". Before long the movement expands to include Gentiles as well as Jews, and key steps in the formation of a new identity are taken. Particularly under Paul's influence, these groups of Jews and Gentiles find their common social identity not in the marks of Jewish belonging — which Gentile converts do not adopt — but by being "in Christ", a faith-commitment enacted and embodied in baptism. Yet even this new social identity is rooted in the past, not only because the very notion of the "Christ" is a Jewish one, but also because the positive social identity of the "in-Christ" group is based on the claim that it now possesses the special status of Israel: sons of Abraham, inheritors of God's promises, God's special people, etc. This attempt to develop a positive social identity is comparative in nature, as Tajfel suggests such positive identities are, since the claim to

be the *true* people of God, the *real* circumcision, those who fulfil the law in the Spirit's power, and so on, is a claim which contains within it the implication that the other group which claims to hold this status is misguided and has failed.[20] (The question of the extent to which "Christian" identity is rooted in a claim to possess Israel's inheritance in a way which implicitly denies that inheritance to the Jews is one which raises profound problems, much discussed in recent years.[21])

This new group-identity "in Christ" provides a social identity which cuts across and encompasses previous social identity-distinctions (Gal 3.28). Yet at the same time it establishes a new boundary between insider and outsider, a boundary which again in ideological terms owes much to its Jewish roots, built upon the contrast between the idolatry and depravity outside the group and the holiness and righteousness within. This boundary-rhetoric may certainly be seen in terms of Tajfel's two principles of accentuation and assimilation, heightening the sense of distinction between ingroup and outgroup members, while minimising the distinctions among group members. Those inside are holy, righteous, brothers and sisters, children of light, while those outside are unrighteous, unbelievers, destined for destruction — stark examples of forms of stereotyping.

Hostility from outsiders, both Jews and Gentiles, focused on the Christian confession of Christ, though Jews and Gentiles would clearly have had different reasons for finding the confession offensive. This had the presumably unintended consequence of heightening the salience of this aspect of a Christian's complex social identity, increasing the extent to which this factor bound the group together and distinguished them from outsiders. Indeed, the distinctive name "Christian" emerges from the context of hostility, initially voiced as an accusation by outsiders, then proudly claimed by ingroup members and eventually coming to serve as the fundamental group-designator.

7.2 Content

The content of Christianity is thoroughly Jewish, though also innovative and distinctive. A basic Christian claim, from the start, is that what God has done in Jesus is a fulfilment of the message of the law and the prophets, the fulfilment of God's

---

[20] Passages from various New Testament texts which express this comparative idea include John 8.31-59; Acts 13.16-52; 2 Cor 3.4-18; Gal 4.21-31; Phil 3.2-3; Heb 8.1-13.

[21] Among many works which could be mentioned, see e.g. Gager 1983; Boyarin 1994.

promises to his people. As well as essentially claiming for itself the identity of Israel, Christianity therefore claims the content of Judaism, specifically the Jewish scriptures, as its own, although this of course involves considerable reinterpretation (cf. Gal 3.16), for example, spiritualising the idea of circumcision (Rom 2.28-29; Phil 3.2-4) and portraying the Jewish sacrificial system as but a foreshadowing of the once-for-all sacrifice offered by Christ (Heb 10.1-25). But specifically Christian content develops, based on the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is God's Messiah, the Christ. The core of Christian content concerns his death and resurrection, expressed in phrases like "he died for us" and "God raised him from the dead". Over time, hymns and credal confessions develop which encapsulate concisely Christian beliefs about Christ and his redeeming work. Paul's letters are the earliest Christian writings which we possess, the written gospels emerging after the deaths of the apostles of the first generation. Towards the end of the New Testament period we see the beginnings of the process in which these early Christian writings came to be regarded as scripture, ranked alongside the Jewish scriptures, which the Christians already possessed and used as their "bible". Thus it comes to be, after much subsequent disagreement and deliberation, that a body of Christian writings, along with the Jewish scriptures, are together regarded as containing the authoritative content of Christianity.

Yet along with these written texts and oral confessions of faith, it is important to remember the role of ritual in confirming Christian identity and communicating Christian content. Baptism and Lord's Supper, the two central Christian rituals, celebrated from the earliest days, their varied interpretations notwithstanding, both dramatise and embody key dimensions of Christian faith (see further Meeks 1983: 150-62). Baptism marks the transition from outsider to ingroup member, the transfer from the sinful world to the holy group, the moment when the convert is clothed with Christ and incorporated into him. The Lord's Supper recalls the central narrative about "the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed…" and places the self-giving death of Christ at the centre of Christian worship. It also serves to affirm the oneness of the members of the group, their common belonging to the body of Christ (1 Cor 10.16-17).

7.3 Conflict

At many points in the story of the evolution of Christian identity and content, conflict, both internal and external, appears to play a crucial role in stimulating important developments. Internal conflicts seem on a number of occasions to have been a catalyst for the development of new views, or at least for the forceful articulation of views

which prove to be of considerable significance (Gal 2.11-21, etc.). The sense of threat from "heretics" within is part of the motivation for making sure that sound teaching is preserved and set down.

External conflict in the form of hostility, accusation and ostracism has the (presumably unintended) consequence of developing the group's sense of shared identity by focusing attention on the aspect of identity which unites this group in distinction from outsiders: the name of Christ. In other words, external conflict seems to play a significant role in making the "Christian" part of a person's identity especially prominent, or salient. Without such external opposition to those who confessed the name of Christ, it might have been possible for this aspect of a person's identity to assume a somewhat lower profile. Indeed, at some times and in some places, "Christian" believers were probably rather less sharply distinguished from others, especially Jews, the identity-group within which Christianity arose. It seems to have been precisely the times of conflict and hostility which were key moments for the development of distinctive Christian identity.

While conflict does of course have its negative aspects, not least for those facing its pressures, it does seem then that the story of early Christianity bears out Simmel's thesis that conflict plays a significant role in the formation of groups and in the cultivation of group-identity. It is through a process riven with conflict and opposition — both internal and external to the Christian movement — that the process of "becoming Christian" occurs.

REFERENCES

Abrams, Philip (1982) *Historical Sociology*. Shepton Mallet: Open Books.

Alexander, Philip S. (1992) '"The Parting of the Ways" from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism', in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*. (ed. J.D.G. Dunn; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck) 1-25.

Barclay, John M.G, (1988) *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Barclay, John M.G. (1997a) 'Universalism and Particularism: Twin Components of Both Judaism and Early Christianity' in *A Vision for the Church: Studies in Early Christian Ecclesiology in Honour of J.P.M. Sweet*. (eds M. Bockmuehl and M.B. Thompson; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark) 207-224.

Barclay, John M.G. (1997b) *Colossians and Philemon*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Bauer, Walter (1972) *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*. London: SCM.

Billig, Michael (1996) 'Remembering the Particular Background of Social Identity Theory', in Robinson (ed.) 1996: 337-357.

Boyarin, Daniel (1994) *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Brown, Rupert (1996) 'Tajfel's Contribution to the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict', in Robinson (ed.) 1996: 169-189.

Brown, Raymond E. (1997) *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday.

Cohen, Ira J. (1987) 'Structuration Theory and Social Praxis', in *Social Theory Today* (eds A. Giddens and J.H. Turner; Cambridge: Polity) 273-308.

Condor, Susan (1996) 'Social Identity and Time', in Robinson (ed.) 1996: 285-315.

Coser, Lewis (1956) *The Functions of Social Conflict*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Dahl, Nils Alstrup (1950) 'Der Name Israel: Zur Auslegung von Gal 6,16', *Judaica* 6, 161-170.

Deissmann, G. Adolf (1926) *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*. 2nd ed. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Deutsch, Morton (1973) *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Donaldson, Terence L. (1997) *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Dunn, James D.G. (1990) *Jesus, Paul and the Law*. London: SPCK.

Dunn, James D.G. (1991) *The Partings of the Ways: Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity*. London: SCM.

Dunn, James D.G. (ed.) (1992) *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D.70 to 135*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Ehrman, Bart D. (1998) *The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings*. Oxford: OUP.

Ellis, E. Earle (2000) 'Preformed Traditions and Their Implications for Pauline Christology', in *Christology, Controversy and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David R. Catchpole* (eds D.G. Horrell and C.M. Tuckett; Leiden: Brill) 303-320.

Esler, Philip F. (1996) 'Group Boundaries and Intergroup Conflict in Galatians: A New Reading of Galatians 5:13–6:10', in *Ethnicity and the Bible* (ed M.G. Brett; Leiden: Brill) 215-240.

Esler, Philip F. (1998) *Galatians*. London and New York: Routledge.

Esler, Philip F. (2000) 'Jesus and the Reduction of Intergroup Conflict: The Parable of the Good Samaritan in the Light of Social Identity Theory', *Biblical Interpretation* 8: 325-357.

Gager, John G. (1983) *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*. Oxford: OUP.

Gamble, Harry Y. (1985) *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning*. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Giddens, Anthony (1977) *Studies in Social and Political Theory*. London: Hutchinson.

Giddens, Anthony (1979) *Central Problems in Social Theory*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Giddens, Anthony (1982) *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Giddens, Anthony (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity.

Harnack, Adolf von (1905) *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. Vol. 2. Trans and ed. James Moffatt; London: Williams and Norgate; New York: Putnam.

Hengel, Martin (1983) *Between Jesus and Paul: Studies in the History of Earliest Christianity*. London: SCM.

Hengel, Martin and Schwemer, Anna Maria (1997) *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch*. London: SCM.

Hill, Craig C. (1992) *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Hinkle, Steve and Brown, Rupert (1990) 'Intergroup Comparisons and Social Identity: Some Links and Lacunae', in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Approaches* (eds D. Abrams and M.A. Hogg; New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf) 48-70.

Hogg, Michael A. and Abrams, Dominic (1988) *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. London and New York: Routledge.

Holmberg, Bengt (1978) *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as reflected in the Pauline Epistles*. Lund: CWK Gleerup.

Holmberg, Bengt (1998) 'Jewish *Versus* Christian Identity in the Early Church?', *Revue Biblique* 105, 397-425.

Hooker, Morna D. (1991) *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*. London: A. & C. Black.

Horbury, William (1998) *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Horrell, David G. (1995) 'The Development of Theological Ideology in Pauline Christianity: A Structuration Theory Perspective', in *Modelling Early Christianity* (ed. P.F. Esler; London and New York: Routledge) 224-236.

Horrell, David G. (1996) *The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Horrell, David G. (1998) *The Epistles of Peter and Jude*. Peterborough: Epworth.

Horrell, David G. (2000a) 'Early Jewish Christianity', in *The Early Christian World*. (ed P.F. Esler; London and New York: Routledge) 136-167.

Horrell, David G. (2000b) *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*. London: Continuum.

Horrell, David G. (2000c) '"No Longer Jew or Greek": Paul's Corporate Christology and the Construction of Christian Community', in *Christology, Controversy*

and Community: New Testament Essays in Honour of David R. Catchpole (eds D.G. Horrell and C.M. Tuckett; Leiden: Brill) 321-344.

Horrell, David G. (forthcoming) 'From *adelphoi* to *oikos theou*: Social Transformation in Pauline Christianity', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, forthcoming.

Horst, Pieter N. van der (1994) 'The Birkat Ha-minim in Recent Research', in *Hellenism – Judaism – Christianity: Essays on their Interaction* (Kampen: Kok Pharos) 99-111.

Johnson, Luke Timothy (1999) *The Writings of the New Testament* (revised edition). London: SCM.

Longenecker, Richard N. (1990) *Galatians* (WBC, 41.) Dallas: Word Books.

Lüdemann, Gerd (1989) *Early Christianity According to the Traditions in Acts*. London: SCM.

Marcus, Joel (2000) 'Mark – Interpreter of Paul', *New Testament Studies* 46: 473-487.

Martin, Ralph P. (1972) *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian*. Exeter: Paternoster.

Meeks, Wayne A. (1983) *The First Urban Christians*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Metzger, Bruce M. (1987): *The Canon of the New Testament*. Oxford: OUP.

Miller, Larry (1999) 'La protestation sociale dans la première lettre de Pierre', *Social Compass* 46: 521-543.

Powell, Mark Allen (1998) *The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ*. Oxford: Lion.

Robinson, W. Peter (ed.) (1996) *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Rubin, Jeffrey Z. and Levinger, George (1995) 'Levels of Analysis: In Search of Generalizable Knowledge', in *Conflict, Cooperation, and Justice: Essays Inspired by the Work of Morton Deutsch* (eds Barbara B. Bunker, J.Z. Rubin and associates; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers) 13-38.

Sanders, E.P. (1985) *Jesus and Judaism*. London: SCM.

Schnelle,Udo (1998) *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*. London: SCM.

Sherif, Muzafer (1956) *Experiments in Group Conflict*. San Francisco: W.H.Freeman and Co.

Simmel, Georg (1955) *Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Still, Todd D. (1999) *Conflict at Thessalonica: A Pauline Church and its Neighbours*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Tajfel, Henri (1981) *Human Groups and Social Categories*. Cambridge: CUP.

Tajfel, Henri (ed.) (1982) *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: CUP.

Taylor, Justin (1994) 'Why were the disciples first called "Christians" at Antioch?' *Revue Biblique* 101: 75-94.

Turner, Jonathan (1974) *The Structure of Sociological Theory*. Homewood: Dorsey Press.

Turner, John C. (1996) 'Henri Tajfel: An Introduction', in Robinson (ed.) 1996: 1-23.

Turner, John C. and Bourhis, Richard Y. (1996) 'Social Identity, Interdependence and the Social Group: A Reply to Rabbie *et al*.', in Robinson (ed.) 1996: 25-63.

Vermes, Geza (1983): *Jesus the Jew*. London: SCM.

Witherington, Ben III (1995) *The Jesus Quest. The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth*. Carlisle: Paternoster.