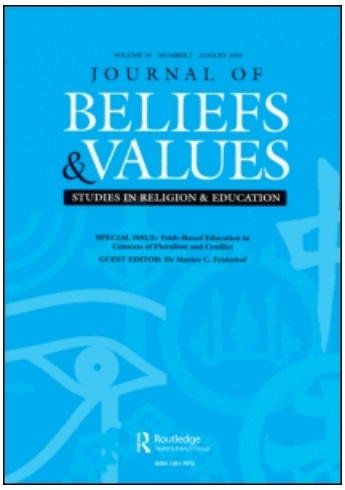
This article was downloaded by: *[Hakola, Raimo]*
On: *25 May 2009*
Access details: *Access Details: [subscription number 911586358]*
Publisher *Routledge*
Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Journal of Beliefs & Values
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713429021

Erik H. Erikson's identity theory and the formation of early Christianity

Raimo Hakola [a]
[a] Department of Biblical Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

Online Publication Date: 01 April 2009

To cite this Article Hakola, Raimo(2009)'Erik H. Erikson's identity theory and the formation of early Christianity',Journal of Beliefs & Values,30:1,5 — 15

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/13617670902784501

URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13617670902784501

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Journal of Beliefs & Values
Vol. 30, No. 1, April 2009, 5–15

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

Erik H. Erikson's identity theory and the formation of early Christianity

Raimo Hakola*

Department of Biblical Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

Many scholars have recently maintained that it is difficult if not impossible to postulate the definite parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity in antiquity. It is argued in this paper that recent criticisms against the 'parting of the ways'-model resemble criticisms levelled against the classical identity theory formulated by Erik H. Erikson. His identity theory emphasises the sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. In recent decades, however, it has become common to question whether the notion of unified and consistent self does justice to diverse social realities in which individuals construct their sense of who they are. Furthermore, the developmental stage model claims to be universal and culturally neutral while, as a matter of fact, it is implicitly moralistic and value-laden. In case of the 'parting of the ways'-model it has become clear that the model does not match the evidence showing an intense interaction between various Jewish and Christian communities during the first centuries CE. In addition, it has been claimed that the model is not an unbiased historical account but serves Christian theological interests. Comparing the 'parting of the ways'-theory with the Eriksonian identity theory highlights the problems inherent in both theories. It is suggested that psychological and social-psychological theories arguing for the flexible and dynamic nature of identity construction are best suited to describe the emergence of early Christian identity in relation to Jews and Judaism.

Keywords: identity; social identity; Erikson, Erik H.; Christianity and Judaism

Identity has become a common catchword that is used to describe a variety of phenomena in different fields of humanities. The word is increasingly used also with reference to the origins and formation of early Christianity but, more often than not, with little or no discussion of what the term actually means. According to a minimal dictionary definition, identity denotes 'who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group which make them different from others' (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/). This common-sense definition reflects a prevailing idea in many more advanced philosophical, psychological, sociological, feminist and post-colonialist definitions of identity. Scholars representing different academic fields have emphasised that individuals and groups always define themselves in relation to those experienced as different. It has often been repeated that the 'Self' needs the 'Other' to define itself, or that the 'Other' constitutes the 'Self'.

If we follow these leads in recent discussions of identity, it is clear that the crucial question in the construction of early Christian identities is how early Christians

*Email: raimo.hakola@helsinki.fi

ISSN 1361-7672 print/ISSN 1469-9362 online
© 2009 Taylor & Francis
DOI: 10.1080/13617670902784501
http://www.informaworld.com

understood themselves in relation to those who were differentiated and excluded as others in Christian sources. Different forms of early or proto-Christianity are nowadays commonly placed with good reasons in the context of diverse forms of first century Judaism. This means that it is especially in the discourses and polemics with other Jews where early Christian self-definition and identity construction first evolved. In this article, I want to examine whether some recent psychological and social psychological identity theories could prove helpful in understanding the dynamics of early Christian identity formation.

1. Christian origins and Judaism: the parting of the ways?

One of the most dramatic changes in the twentieth-century studies of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity started with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late 1940s. The Scrolls challenged previous ways of understanding Judaism and Christianity by proving that there was not just one way of being a Jew, but that Judaism was divided into many different groups having individual beliefs of their own. New manuscripts also contained many beliefs that had formerly been regarded as alien to Judaism and characteristic of Hellenistic or Gnostic thinking. For example, scholars soon found in some of the Scrolls obvious points in common with John's dualism earlier taken as evidence of the syncretistic or Gnostic background of the Fourth Gospel (Hakola 2005, 198–210). These observations were part of an ongoing and thorough reversal in the search for the context of early Christianity. Early Christianity was increasingly placed in the context of diverse first-century Judaism, and early Christians were essentially seen as Jews among other Jews.

The above described change has made all the more complex the question concerning the alleged separation between Judaism and Christianity. Judith Lieu has emphasised the elusiveness of this question by saying that 'it becomes more difficult to understand why, how, and when, "Christians" could no longer be located [in the diversity of Judaism], in their own self-understanding or in that of others, or – and this is an important distinction – in that of scholars who describe them' (Lieu 2001, 2).

A conventional solution to this question has long been to identify those topics that separate Christians from Jews in order to pinpoint a more or less clear date for the parting of the ways of these two religions. The decisive moment in history has been variously located in the proclamation of Jesus, the teachings of Paul, the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE or in the aftermath of the Bar Cochba war in 135 CE. The logic of the 'parting of the ways'-model is clearly seen in James Dunn's discussion in his book entitled *The partings of the ways between Christianity and Judaism and their significance for the character of Christianity*. In his book, Dunn summarises the position of the first century Christians by saying that, 'As we move into the second century, not only certain Christian sects can be described as "Jewish-Christian", but Christianity as a whole can still properly be described as "Jewish Christianity" in a justifiable sense.' Dunn also notes, however, a little later in his book, that the letter of Pliny, dated to 112 CE, shows that 'the issue was clear: Christians are not Jews. By then the perception from outside reinforces the impression that *the partings of the ways had already become effective*' (Dunn 1991, 234, 241, original emphasis).

The 'parting of the ways'-model clearly takes seriously the reassessment of early Christianity as one of the many forms of first century Judaism and then seeks to trace the development culminating in the foundation of Christianity as an independent religion. This process could be described as a series of developmental crises, either

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

internal or external in nature. An example of internal crisis intensifying the separation between Jews and Christians was the introduction of non-Jews into Christian communities without demanding that they should be circumcised. The decision that non-Jews are not obliged to follow Jewish food regulations also pushed Christian congregations away from many of their fellow Jews. Various discussions in Paul (Gal. 2) and in other early Christian sources (Acts 15) prove that these evolutions were not smooth but caused division and disagreement among early Christians. In addition to these internal forces, there were external crises affecting the growth of Christianity – the destruction of the Jerusalem and its temple in 70 CE is perhaps the most dramatic one. Many scholars also want to see the rise of rabbinic Judaism as one of those external crises with its attempts to 'draw boundaries more tightly round "Judaism"' (Dunn 1991, 221–2, 238).

To be sure, the 'parting of the ways'-model emphasising gradual steps leading to the final separation of Christianity from Judaism has been called into question in recent years. Before I proceed to these re-evaluations of the model, I want to stop for a while and compare the model to how identity construction has been understood in the field of developmental psychology. I propose that there are clear structural points in common in how the formation or early Christianity has been visualised and how the development of personal ego identity has been understood in a classical identity theory.

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

2. Erikson's identity theory and the parting of the ways

The classical identity theory was formulated by Erik H. Erikson in a series of publications beginning from *Childhood and society* (1950; 2nd edition 1963). Erikson wrote in the Freudian, psychoanalytic tradition, but, while Freud focused on the fundamental stages of infancy and operated with the five stages of *psychosexual* development, Erikson postulated eight stages that every human being goes through from birth to death to reach her full development (see Friedman 1999, 149–241). In his life cycle model, Erikson presented an overall theory of human *psychosocial* development that tried to give a due emphasis on the interplay between the inward development of an individual ego and outward social and cultural stimuli. Each of the stages in the life cycle model is defined as a conflict or crisis that will result in a successful resolution if individual learns to hold the extremes of each specific life-stage challenge in tension.

In his later writings, Erikson complemented the life cycle model with the introduction of life virtues which are characteristic of each stage and which a person gains as she goes through the different stages (Friedman 1999, 338–9). For example, 'trust' and 'mistrust' must both be understood and accepted in order for realistic 'hope' to emerge as a viable solution at the first stage of human development. The names Erikson gave to different developmental stages reflect the Freudian legacy of his theory. However, while the Freudian psychoanalytical tradition focused mainly on alleged childhood traumas, Erikson's theory marked a break with that tradition by providing a complete representation of life-long, *normal* human development. The stages in the Eriksonian life cycle model and respective extremes and virtues are: (1) oral sensory: trust vs. mistrust, hope; (2) muscular-anal: autonomy vs. doubt and shame, will; (3) locomotor-genital: initiative vs. guilt, purpose; (4) latency: industry vs. inferiority, competence; (5) puberty and adolescence: identity vs. role confusion, fidelity; (6) young adulthood: intimacy vs. isolation, love; (7) adulthood: generativity vs. stagnation, care; and (8) maturity: ego integrity vs. despair, wisdom.

One of the basic thrusts in Erikson's identity theory is the idea that sameness and continuity are the marks of successful identity formation. According to Erikson, 'ego identity is more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It is the accrued experience of the ego's ability to integrate all identifications with the vicissitudes of the libido, with the aptitudes developed out of endowment, and with the opportunities offered in social roles'. In this way, the sense of ego identity is 'the accrued confidence' in 'the inner sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others' (Erikson 1965, 253). In the background of this emphasis are Erikson's experiences in the rehabilitation of World War II veterans in the late 1940s. In this connection, Erikson became aware that traditional psychoanalysis did not have proper diagnostic terms for normal people who were facing difficulties in their lives. Erikson noticed that his patients had 'lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity' and were experiencing 'identity crises', which represented the temporary absence of 'a sense of what one is, of knowing where one belongs, of knowing what one wants to do' (Friedman 1999, 160–1). The introduction of the term 'identity crisis' into psychological discussion became one of the most well-known aspects of Erikson's theory.

At the first glance, it may not seem obvious what this discussion about the personal psychological development has to do with such historical processes as the making of early Christianity. However, Erikson himself was renowned as an interdisciplinary intellectual who did not hesitate to assess various historical, social and cultural phenomena in light of his identity theory. Many studies have earlier established the value of Erikson's theory for the psychology of religion (see Capps 1984, 1997). As a matter of fact, in one of his last publications, Erikson addressed the issue of the relation of a self-conscious 'I' to others and the Ultimate Other in the context of the study of the historical Jesus, drawing especially on Norman Perrin's study *Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus* (Erikson 1981). Donald Capps has most recently applied productively some of Erikson's insights to Jesus' healing activity in his *Jesus: the village psychiatrist* (Capps 2008, 124–30). Given this genuinely interdisciplinary promise in Erikson's publications, it is not contrived at all to find certain phenomenal similarity between the 'parting of the ways'-model described above and Erikson's life cycle model.

Both these models put a great emphasis on the role of definitive crises in the developmental process. Crises are seen as possibilities to rise to a new stage in which a satisfactory and lasting solution to an earlier problem is found. In both of these models, crises are steps, the true meaning of which can be seen only in light of the final outcome. In the case of Christianity, this outcome is the formation of independent and self-sufficient religion, in the case of identity theory, the formation of ego integrity.

The emphasis on the final result of a developmental process is seen in how these theories allow for cases that run against the favoured outcome. In Eriksonian tradition, failure to integrate different forces in each specific life-stage challenge is regarded as underdevelopment or even as personality disorder – Erikson himself spoke of 'identity diffusion' (Erikson 1968). In a similar way, the 'parting of the ways'-model has difficulties to give a positive role for those forms of early Christianity that resist the neat distinction between a Christian and a Jew still long after these two traditions have allegedly separated. From the point of view of what later developed into orthodox Christianity, different 'Jewish-Christian' groups are not true Christians at all but they are lumped together with other groups regarded as heretical.

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

In light of these initial similarities, it may not be surprising that recent criticisms against both the Eriksonian identity theory and the 'parting of the ways'-model resemble each other. As a Biblical scholar, I am not qualified enough to estimate whether the criticism levelled against Erikson's life cycle model has always been justified. Erikson's model has been recycled in various publications, and it may be that the model has become, despite Erikson's intentions, too rigid and cohesive in the hands of its popularisers (Friedman 1999, 226–7). Sameness and continuity may not be as central to Erikson's original theory as has been presented in the 'neo-Eriksonian' psychological literature where the theory has been tested and developed further (Schachter 2005, 145). I think, however, that it is productive to take a look at some main points in these criticisms so that we may create more nuanced and appropriate models to conceptualise the formation of early Christian identity.

3. Re-evaluating Erikson and the parting of the ways

In recent decades, it has been called into question whether consistency and sameness are as essential to the notion of identity as Erikson's theory seems to suggest. To be sure, Erikson was not the first to present these virtues as typical of healthy personality. Kenneth Gergen has remarked that William James had already described a healthy person as 'harmonious and well balanced from the outset'. For James, the only salvation for those who had 'divided selves', was the 'normal evolution of character' and the 'straightening out and unifying of the inner self' (Gergen 1968, 301). Gergen suggests that this traditional notion of unified and consistent self – Gergen takes Erikson as a representative of this tradition – is ill-conceived and needs to be revised toward a theory of multiple selves. Gergen draws on many empirical studies which show how a person may adapt her identity to new and changing circumstances and even behave in antithetical ways without feeling that she is behaving inconsistently and without losing her subjective sense of integrity (Gergen 1968, 306–7).

It has become all the more common to question whether the notion of unified and consistent self does justice to diverse social realities in which individuals construct their sense of who they are. As Elli Schachter has noticed, this question is urgent when the Eriksonian model is applied in a post-modern context of pluralisation and complexity where people live in fragmented socio-cultural contexts and are required to cope with different multifaceted and contradictory tendencies in their self-concepts. This kind of context demands the flexibility of self-identifications and 'sameness and continuity in self-definition become problematic and all the more so the ability to match the self-image as seen by the individual with the one seen by the significant others around her' (Schachter 2005, 141).

In a similar way, one of the main criticisms against the 'parting of the ways'-model has been that it does not match with the evidence showing an intense and ongoing intellectual and social interaction between various Jewish and Christian communities during the first centuries CE. This view is presented, for example, in many articles in a book the title of which, *The ways that never parted*, is a conscious challenge to the 'parting of the ways'-model. The editors Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam Becker summarise the emerging new thinking by saying that 'Jews and Christians (or at least the elites among them) may have been engaged in the task of "parting" throughout Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, *precisely because* the two never really "parted"' (Reed and Becker 2007, 23). In a similar vein, Paula Fredriksen has concluded that, while 'a principled insistence' upon separation is attested in some

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

Christian writers, 'on the ground, the ways were not separating, certainly not fast enough and consistently enough to please the ideologues' (Fredriksen 2007, 61). On the basis of the evidence for the interaction between Jews and Christians, Daniel Boyarin has even suggested that we should not think of Christianity and Judaism in late antiquity as different religions at all but as 'points on a continuum' so that 'on one end were the Marcionites … and on the other the many Jews for whom Jesus meant nothing. In the middle, however, were many gradations that provided social and cultural mobility from one end of this spectrum to the other' (Boyarin 1999, 8; cf. also Boyarin 2004, 1–33).

Another major challenge to Eriksonian identity tradition has dealt with how the developmental stage model claims to be universal and culturally neutral while, as a matter of fact, it is implicitly moralistic (Friedman 1999, 239). The model prefers certain modes of being over others by presenting them as natural outcomes of normal developmental processes. The concept of progress implicit in Erikson's model 'implies that change over time is necessarily toward some "higher" or "better" state of form, and so the terms of development and maturity imply a hierarchical ordering'. Therefore, it must be asked whether Erikson's model 'values one possible developmental path while unnecessarily constraining other possibilities' (Schachter 2005, 147–489). In his model, Erikson becomes dangerously close to a 'naturalistic fallacy' in 'moving from empirical statements to value judgments' and in 'inferring an "ought" from an "is"' (Roazen 1976, 118–9).

Erikson's biographer, Lawrence Friedman, has connected Erikson's emphasis on normal human development to the family crisis prompted by the birth of a son suffering from Down's syndrome in 1940s. The son was immediately transferred to institutional care and Erikson and his wife said in public and even to two of their 'normal' children that he had died. In response to the chaos and despair that 'a developmental freak' caused, Erikson's life cycle model became 'a map of normalcy' that reaffirmed the 'healthy' members of the Erikson family in their own propriety and viability. According to Friedman, the personal background of the life cycle model explains, at least in part, why the model was able to provide 'perhaps the most helpful perspective on universal human development (and certainly the most highly regarded) in the twentieth century' (Friedman 1999, 215–20; 2001, 185).

In the case of the 'parting of the ways'-model it has been asked whether the model is an unbiased historical account or whether it serves some theological interest. Judith Lieu has claimed that the model is essentially a Christian model. According to her, the model seeks to 'maintain the Christian apologetic of continuity in the face of questions about that continuity from a historical or theological angle'. The model is based on a doctrinal definition of Judaism and Christianity in the sense that these religions and their alleged separation are evaluated in terms of their beliefs only. This ignores the fact that 'theological boundaries and social boundaries are not necessarily coterminous' (Lieu 2001, 18–9).

In recent decades it has become clearer and clearer that it is historically misleading, at least in the pre-Constantine era, to speak of normal, mainstream Christianity and discard some other forms of being a Christian as abnormal and heretical. As Daniel Boyarin states, the discourses of orthodoxy/heresy are not neutral historical descriptions but 'serve the production of ideology, of hegemony, the consent of a dominated group to be ruled by an elite' (Boyarin 2004, 27). If we are ready to abandon the idea that certain formulations of Christian identity are inevitable and natural, our quests for new models of Christian identity may go beyond the borders of

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

our canon. For example, Stephen Wilson has suggested that the non-canonical evidence concerning some Jewish-Christian groups is important because it 'demonstrates that the views that Christians took of Judaism were far more diverse than the monochrome, negative portrait that was later to dominate the Christian tradition' (Wilson 1995, 141).

4. How to conceptualise the formation of early Christian identities?

The above comparisons have revealed how the Eriksonian identity theory and Biblical studies on the history of early Christianity have been faced with similar kinds of challenges. Theoretical models used to describe the processes of self-definition and identity construction have proved to be too inflexible in multiform social contexts. But how could we conceptualise the formation of early Christian identity using recent theoretical discussions on the subject? I list in a preliminary way some theories that would allow us to take more seriously the multiform evidence concerning the formation of early Christian identities. It is fair to say that the theories mentioned here are perhaps not totally contrary to what Erikson wrote of identity. In some of his later writings, Erikson sensed that contemporary life required a 'protean personality' that is responsive to the self-sustaining change in modern societies. As Lawrence Friedman has remarked this 'represented a major shift in Erikson's perspective on identity' (Friedman 1999, 410; see also Erikson 1974, 51–60; Lifton 1993).

Edward Sampson has posited the concept of a decentralised identity which is not arranged in a hierarchical fashion and whose very being hinges on its continuous becoming (Sampson 1985, 1203–11). Hermans, Kempens, and van Loon have claimed that the embodied self, in contrast to the typical Western notion of the individualistic and rationalistic self, is always tied to a particular position in space and time. This means that we can not view self-definition and identity construction as abstract and universal processes but processes deeply rooted in specific historical, cultural, ecological and social environments. These writers have presented the dialogical self where 'I has the possibility to move, as in a space from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time' (Hermans, Kempens, and van Loon 1992, 23–33).

Elli Schachter, re-reading Erikson in a pluralistic context, has developed the concept of 'identity configurations' which implies that individuals can construct identity in more than one way. According to Schachter, different identity configurations are dependent not only on inner psychological processes but on social and cultural factors too. From this perspective, the identity is 'the result of a dynamic process that involves a complex negotiation between personal objectives and contextual constraints' (Schachter 2004, 195).

It is noteworthy that all these psychological theories underscore the importance of social and cultural factors for the formation of identity. It would be natural, therefore, to include recent social psychological theories in the search for a valid theoretical framework to model the emergence of early Christian identity. Hazel Markus and Elissa Wurf have reviewed social psychological research where the emphasis on the multidimensionality of the self-concept has made it problematic to speak of *the* self-concept. Instead, they emphasise the dynamic nature of self-concept. They speak of the 'working self-concept', which refers to the self-concept of the moment that is a 'continually active, shifting array of accessible self-knowledge' (Markus and Wurf 1987, 306).

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

The dynamic and social nature of the self is a key element in the so-called 'social identity approach', which has recently been applied to early Jewish and Christian sources (Esler 1998, 2003; Hakola 2007, 2008). The 'social identity theory' was first developed by social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in Great Britain in the late 1960s and early 1970s and it was later developed into a more general explanation of all cognitive processes connected to group formation in the so-called 'self-categorisation theory' (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1981; Turner and Reynolds 2001). The social identity approach seeks to find out necessary and sufficient reasons for the emergence of intergroup conflicts and explain the emergence and function of social stereotypes and prejudice for group identities. It takes social categorisation as a fundamental aspect of group behaviour which often results in exaggeration and a polarisation of perception. Social categorisation is seen as dependent on the specific social environment and those comparative relations that are present in that environment. Therefore, people who are categorised and perceived as different in one context can be re-categorised and perceived as similar in another context.

These initial observations suggest that theories highlighting the flexible and dynamic nature of identity construction are best suited to describe the emergence of early Christian identity in relation to Jews and Judaism. In light of these theories, we do not need to play down some obvious features of ambivalence and the signs of both continuity and discontinuity in early Christian representations of Jews.

The ambivalence of Christian identity is seen, for example, in how Paul re-evaluated his Jewish heritage. While in some contexts Paul can be highly critical of such central parts of Jewish identity as the law (Gal. 3), in his discussion in Romans 9:2–5 Paul expresses his continuing identification with the people of Israel: 'I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh.' Philip Esler has proposed, from a social identity perspective, that Paul's 'passionate outbursts are the product of his reconnecting with the often dormant but nevertheless deeply rooted Israelite dimension to his self-concept'. In his career as 'the apostle to the non-Jews', Paul mostly laid aside this aspect of his identity (Esler 2003, 272).

The ambivalence of John's portrait of Jews and Judaism is captured in two sayings that have been much discussed in recent decades. In John 8:44, Jesus says to his Jewish opponents, 'You are from your father the devil', a saying that has often been characterised as one of the most anti-Jewish passages in the New Testament. On the other hand, Jesus says in John 4:22, 'Salvation is from the Jews', a saying that has recently been taken as a potential corrective to Christian anti-Judaism (see Hakola 2005, 96–112).

There is also evidence later that the positions early Christians took on Jews and Judaism were not uniform and stable. For example, Origen, at least occasionally when arguing against his opponents, sides with Jews even though his writings otherwise do not lack anti-Jewish outbursts. Origen says that the worship of the Jews was superior to all other forms of worship because the Jews were 'instructed almost from their birth, and as soon as they could speak, in the immortality of the soul' and thus deserved to be called the 'portion of God' (*c. Celsum* 5.42). Augustine's interpretation further exemplifies ambiguities inherent in Christian portraits of Judaism. It has been claimed that Augustine, influenced in his views of Jews and Judaism especially by Romans 9–11, was rather moderate and unpolemical compared with some other early Christian writers (see now Fredriksen 2008). However, in his homilies in *Tractatus in*

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

Ioannis Evangelium Augustine shows that he is capable of the same kind of hateful and violent language as, for example, Chrysostom and Cyril. Paula Fredriksen has recently concluded that Augustine's Johannine Jews in his *Tractatus* 'seem a different tribe from the one encountered in [Augustinus'] *Against Faustus*' (Fredriksen 2008, 305). It is clear that any model that is used to conceptualise the Christian identity formation must allow of these kinds of discontinuities and ambiguities.

Earlier in this article, I have used Erikson's identity theory as an example that does *not* provide a helpful model for visualising the creation of Christian identity. Instead of taking the lead from what Erikson allegedly said in his theory, we could perhaps be inspired by the story of Erikson's own life which is curiously at odds with his emphasis on sameness and continuity as trademarks of identity. Especially in relation to his Jewish background, Erikson was often vague and even self-contradictory. Some of his critics have even accused him of 'evasion of his Jewish identity' which undermines his claim for a universal identity because if a universal identity 'can be attained only by suppressing one's own particularity', then it 'is a phoney universality, built on a lie, rotten to the core' (Friedman 1999, 432–33; Friedman cites here Marshall Berman's essay in *New York Times Book Review* in 1975). It is not unusual to see in Erikson an example of a person who thinks, in spite of his Jewish background, that 'no positive content can be attached to Jewish identity' and 'that there is nothing within Judaism worthy of being affirmed' (Whitfield 2002, 164). In his article 'The Galilean sayings and the sense of "I"' Erikson understood Jesus' teachings as 'an event central to our Judaeo-Christian heritage – a step in human comprehension and self-awareness which is by no means fully expressed in, or restricted to, its ecclesial fate'. This has been taken as 'a disturbing suggestion that the advent of Christianity was an evolutionary step up from Judaism' (Erikson 1981, 362; Andersen 1993, 64). However, these criticisms may be one-sided. In his personal correspondence, Erikson said that he 'found a healthy unity of soul and body in the tradition of both the Hebrew Torah and the Christian Gospels' and 'that nobody who has grown up in a Jewish environment can ever be not-a-Jew' (Friedman 1999, 453–54). Asked once by one of his friends whether he was a Protestant or Jew, Erikson answered: 'Why both of course' (Friedman 1999, 345). Erikson's biographer, Lawrence Friedman has concluded that Erikson, through the story of his life, 'spoke to the possibilities of border crossing – the excitement and freedom of shifting ideas, moods, vocations, religious proclivities, geographic settings, and more' (Friedman 1999, 478). This may be a paradoxical summary of the life of a man who was known for his theory emphasising the need of personal sameness and continuity. This paradox, however, may serve as a healthy reminder that all our efforts to define and clarify identities – whether past or present – are bound to remain incomplete and are always potentially frustrated by the uncertainties of life.

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

References

Andersen, D.C. 1993. Beyond rumor and reductionism: A textual dialogue with Erik H. Erikson. *Psychohistory Review* 22: 35–68.

Becker, H. Adam and Annette Yoshiko Reed, eds. 2007. *The ways that never parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Boyarin, Daniel. 1999. *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the making of Christianity and Judaism.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Boyarin, Daniel. 2004. *Border lines. The partition of Judaeo-Christianity.* Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press.

Capps, Donald. 1984. Erikson's life-cycle theory: Religious dimensions. *Religious Studies Review* 10: 120–7.
Capps, Donald. 1997. Childhood fears, adult anxieties, and the longing for inner peace: Erik H. Erikson's psychoanalytic psychology of religion. In *Religion, society, and psychoanalysis: Reading in contemporary theory,* ed. J.L. Jacobs and D. Capps, 127–62. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
Capps, Donald. 2008. *Jesus: The village psychiatrist.* Louisville and London: Westminster John Know Press.
Dunn, James D.G. 1991. *The partings of the ways between Christianity and Judaism and their significance for the character of Christianity.* London and Philadelphia: SCM Press and Trinity Press.
Erikson, Erik H. 1965. *Childhood and society.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
Erikson, Erik H. 1968. Identity and identity diffusion. In *The self in social interaction. Volume I: Classic and contemporary perspectives,* ed. C. Gordon and K.J. Gergen, 197–205. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
Erikson, Erik H. 1974. *Dimensions of a new identity: The 1973 Jefferson lectures in the humanities.* New York: Norton.
Erikson, Erik H. 1981. The Galilean sayings and the sense of 'I'. *Yale Review* 70: 321–62.
Esler, Philip F. 1998. *Galatians. New Testament readings.* London and New York: Routledge.
Esler, Philip F. 2003. *Conflict and identity in Romans: The social setting of Paul's letter.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
Fredriksen, Paula. 2007. What 'parting of the ways'? Jews, Gentiles, and the Ancient Mediterranean City. In *The ways that never parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* ed. H. Adam Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, 35–63. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
Fredriksen, Paula. 2008. *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian defence of Judaism.* New York: Doubleday.
Friedman, Lawrence J. 1999. *Identity's architect: A biography of Erik H. Erikson.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
Friedman, Lawrence J. 2001. Erik Erikson on identity, generativity, and pseudospeciation: A biographer's perspective. *Psychoanalysis and History* 3: 179–92.
Gergen, Kenneth J. 1968. Personal consistency and the presentation of self. In *The self in social interaction. Volume I: Classic and contemporary perspectives,* ed. C. Gordon and K.J. Gergen, 299–308. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
Hakola, Raimo. 2005. *Identity matters: John, the Jews and Jewishness.* Leiden: Brill.
Hakola, Raimo. 2007. Social identities and group phenomena in the second temple period. In *Explaining early Judaism and Christianity: Contributions from cognitive and social science,* ed. P. Luomanen, I. Pyysiäinen, and R. Uro, 259–76. Leiden: Brill.
Hakola, Raimo. 2008. Social identity and a stereotype in the making: The Pharisees as hypocrites in Matt 23. In *Identity formation in the New Testament,* ed. B. Holmberg and M. Winninge, 123–39. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
Hakola, Raimo and Adele Reinhartz. 2007. John's Pharisees. In *In quest of the historical Pharisees,* ed. J. Neusner and B. Chilton, 131–47. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
Hermans, Hubert J.M., Harry J.G. Kempen, and Rens J.P. van Loon. 1992. The dialogical self: Beyond individualism and rationalism. *American Psychologist* 47: 23–33.
Lieu, Judith. 2001. *Neither Jew nor Greek: Constructing early Christianity.* London and New York: T. and T. Clark.
Lifton, Robert Jay. 1993. *The protean self: Human resilience in an age of fragmentation.* Chicago and London: Chicago University Press.
Markus, Hazel and Elissa Wurf. 1987. The dynamic self-concept: A social psychological perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology* 38: 299–337.
Perrin, Norman. 1967. *Rediscovering the teaching of Jesus.* New York: Harper and Row.
Reed, Annette Yoshiko, and Adam H. Becker. 2007. Introduction: Traditional models and new directions. In *The ways that never parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* ed. A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed, 1–33. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
Roazen, Paul. 1976. *Erik H. Erikson: The power and limits of a vision.* New York and London: The Free Press and Collier Macmillan.

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009

Sampson, Edward. E. 1985. The decentralisation of identity: Toward a revised concept of personal and social order. *American Psychologist* 11: 1203–11.

Schachter, Elli P. 2004. Identity configurations: A new perspective on identity formation in contemporary society. *Journal of Personality* 72: 167–99.

Schachter, Elli P. 2005. Erikson meets the postmodern: Can classic identity theory rise to the challenge? *Identity* 5: 137–60.

Tajfel, Henri. 1981. *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tajfel, Henri, and John Turner. 1979. An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In *The social psychology of intergroup relations,* ed. W.G. Austin and S. Worchel, 33–47. Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Turner, John C. and Katherine J. Reynolds. 2001. The social identity perspective in intergroup relations: Theories, themes, and controversies. In *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: intergroup processes,* ed. R. Brown and S. Gaertner, 133–152. Oxford: Blackwell.

Whitfield, Stephen J. 2002. Enigmas of modern Jewish identity. *Jewish Social Studies* 8: 162–7.

Wilson, Stephen. 1995. *Related strangers: Jews and Christians 70–170 C.E.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Downloaded By: [Hakola, Raimo] At: 12:14 25 May 2009