

***Mission and Meaning
Essays Presented to Peter
Cotterell***

Edited by

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The Paraclete and Mission in the Fourth Gospel

Antony Billington

1. Introductory Remarks

A focus on a single gospel, not to mention a single theme within that gospel, will inevitably bring the accusation of narrowness and exclusivity. Are we selecting biblical references to provide the answers we have decided beforehand to look for?

In fact, of course, we need to define mission and the mandates for it within the scope of *all* that the Scriptures teach – including John's gospel. Matthew 28:19-20, the so-called 'Great Commission', is often regarded as the central mandate for mission, and it is not difficult to sympathise with John Stott when he suggests that we have perhaps placed too much emphasis on it.¹ Here, then, we consider the witness of the Fourth Gospel, and the role of the 'Paraclete' in particular, but not without acknowledging that work needs to be carried out in other areas for a complete and balanced biblical synthesis.²

1 J.R.W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975), 29.

2 For a wider understanding of mission in John's gospel, see e.g. M. Arias and A. Johnson, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models for Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 78-97; K. Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns: A Theology of Mission Today* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 154-73; D. Senior and C. Stuhlmüller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (London: SCM, 1983), 280-96. See also G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 115-22. Contrast D.J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), who has chapters on Matthew, Luke-Acts, and Paul, but virtually nothing on John. For an *apologia*, see 54-55.

It's interesting to note, however, that while many missiology textbooks discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in mission,³ few consider the distinctive contribution of the Johannine 'Paraclete'.⁴ This essay offers an attempt to join with these few in filling an important gap.

2. 'Paraclete': The Search for Meaning

There has been much discussion on the meaning and significance of the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel (*paraklētos* occurs only in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 and 1 John 2:1). Here we can do no more than summarise various proposals.⁵

That the word *paraklētos* is translated in a variety of ways is an indication of the ambiguity which surrounds our subject.⁶ The AV

For a recent corrective (which regrettably arrived too late to be considered here) see P.H. Towner, 'Paradigms Lost: Mission to the *Kosmos* in John and David Bosch's Models of Mission', *EvQ* 67:2 (1995), 99-119.

3 H.R. Boer, 'The Holy Spirit and Church Growth', in W.R. Shenk (ed.), *Exploring Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 249-59; also his classic study, *Pentecost and the Missionary Witness of the Church* (Franeker: T. Wever, n.d.); Gnanakan, *Kingdom Concerns*, 174-94; R.S. Kuitse, 'Holy Spirit: Source of Messianic Mission', in W.R. Shenk (ed.), *The Transfiguration of Mission: Biblical, Theological and Historical Foundations* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1993), 106-29.

4 The exceptions are Boer, *Pentecost*, 127-29; P. Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness: The Good News in a World of Suffering and Disorder* (London: SPCK, 1990), 118-20, 136-38; also P. Cotterell, *The Eleventh Commandment: Church and Mission Today* (Leicester: IVP, 1981), 16-18; L.A. Drummond, *The Word of the Cross: A Contemporary Theology of Evangelism* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 172-79; Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Mission*, 286-88.

5 Secondary literature on the Paraclete is huge; the following items are offered as a selection: R.E. Brown, 'The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel', *NTS* 13 (1966-67), 113-32; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Vol. 2, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 1135-44; G.M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 3-41, 203-221; E. Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, CBNTS 14 (Uppsala: Gleerup, 1985); D.E. Holwerda, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1959), 26-38; G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, SNTSMS 12 (Cambridge: CUP, 1970); Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, Vol. 3 (London: Burns & Oates, 1982), 138-54; M.M.B. Turner, 'The Concept of Receiving the Spirit in John's Gospel', *VoxEv* 10 (1977), 26-28. For helpful semi-popular introductions, see Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life*, 70-79; W.J. Dumbrell, 'The Spirit in John's Gospel', in B.G. Webb (ed.), *Spirit of the Living God: Part One* (Homebush West: Lancer, 1991), 84-86; M.M.B. Turner, 'Holy Spirit', in J.B. Green, S. McKnight, I.H. Marshall (eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Leicester: IVP, 1992), 349-51.

6 Cf. J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 476-77: 'The name 'Paraclete', in spite of dozens of energetic attempts to elucidate it, remains imperspicuous.'

with 'Comforter' goes back to Wycliffe; the NIV translates with 'Counsellor', the GNB has 'Helper', while the NAB transliterates, giving 'Paraclete'. F.F. Bruce suggested that the word *paraklētos* 'is best understood as a verbal adjective with passive force, denoting one who is called alongside as a helper or defender'.⁷ This popular definition is based on the root meanings of the two parts of the Greek word – *para* ('by', 'with') and *kaleō* ('to call'). We suggest that such a definition based on etymology alone has little to do with *paraklētos* in John's gospel. Even before Barr's seminal 1961 work on semantics appeared,⁸ William Hendriksen could write:

The fact that by derivation the word is a verbal adjective derived from the passive (perfect) form of the verb *parakaleō* must not be interpreted to mean that therefore the resulting word *remains forever passive in meaning*. The *derivation* of words is one thing, the *history of their meaning in actual usage* (to which the science of semantics devotes its attention) is a different matter... The context must decide. In John it is the *active* idea that is stressed, as every reference to him indicates.⁹

A forensic function is ascribed to *ho paraklētos* in 1 John 2:1, where it refers to Christ, and could be translated 'advocate' (an assistant or friend at court). This meaning, however, though it might be appropriate for the use in John 15:26 and 16:7-11, does not at first glance appear to fit the references in 14:16 and 14:26. What, then, about other options?

In an essay with the title 'The Primary Meaning of Παράκλητος', J.G. Davies investigated the use of *parakalein* in the LXX, paying special attention to the consolation expected in the messianic age.¹⁰ Viewing *paraklētos* as belonging to a *complex of ideas* used by the Fourth Evangelist, Davies then attempted to discover this same complex in the LXX. He refers to the fact that '*parakalein* is one of the elements of the eschatological hope' and 'the appropriateness

7 F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Basingstoke: Pickering & Inglis, 1983), 301.

8 J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: OUP, 1961).

9 W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel of John* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), 276, his italics. On 'the use and abuse of word studies in theology' alluded to here, see further P. Cotterell and M. Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), 106-28.

10 J.G. Davies, 'The Primary Meaning of Παράκλητος', *JTS* 4 (1953), 35-38.

therefore of using *paraklētos* of the eschatological Spirit is evident from this LXX usage of the verb'.¹¹

However, the role of the Paraclete is best understood not by highlighting the semantic range of *parakalein* (which does not even occur in John's gospel), but by noting the verbs which *are* ascribed to the Paraclete. It seems fallacious to rely heavily on the use of a cognate verb to define the sense of its noun, when verb and noun may well have gone their separate ways. Moreover, 'Comforter' (at least, according to popular modern parlance) does not really make sense in the context of John 14-16 anyway. The need of consolation for sorrow would surely quickly vanish after the resurrection (cf. John 16:22). Even if 'Comforter' is taken with the sense of 'to make strong' or 'to fortify', in what way does the Spirit as *this type of comforter*, teach all things and remind the disciples of everything Jesus said (14:26), witness (15:26), and convict the world (16:7-8)?

Kenneth Grayston concludes that *paraklētos* 'did not derive its meaning from legal activity but was a more general term, sometimes used in legal contexts, meaning supporter or sponsor'.¹²

Eskil Franck maintains that it is methodologically unsound to ascribe *one* meaning for the functions of the Paraclete in John 14-16.¹³ He attempts to trace three different semantic fields for *paraklētos*: (1) forensic, (2) comforting, and (3) didactic.¹⁴ After an analysis of the

11 Davies, 'Primary Meaning', 37. See also N.H. Snaith, 'The Meaning of "The Paraclete"', *ExpT* 57 (1945-46), 47-50. C.K. Barrett adopts a slightly modified form of this position, suggesting an interpretation based upon Christian *paraklēsis*: 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel', *JTS* 1 (1950), 1-15; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1978 2nd edn), 462. A recent proponent of this view is J. Wijngaards, *The Spirit in John* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1988), 55-60 (though he has further sections on the Paraclete as 'Counsel for the Defence' [61-65], 'Successor to Jesus' [66-72], and 'Teacher and Interpreter' [73-78]).

12 K. Grayston, 'The Primary Meaning of PARAKLETOS', *JSNT* 13 (1981), 67. For recent support of this position, see M. Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*, *JSNTS* 69 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 119. We would contend, however, that Grayston misconstrues the evidence of usage: his first example is from silence (70); in the second and fourth examples, he himself admits that the word appears in legal settings (71); other examples occur in 'courtroom' settings, though this is not noted (74-78). Moreover, to support his view, Grayston has to do severe violence to the text of the Fourth Gospel. In his treatment of 16:8-11 he suggests the author used a Paraclete saying 'originally limited to verses 8 and 11a' (81). Such speculative theories are untenable and indeed unnecessary if a solution can be found which does justice to the text as it stands.

13 Franck, *Revelation*, 10.

14 Franck, *Revelation*, 17-36.

Paraclete sayings in the gospel, he concludes that, although all three aspects are present in the passages, it is the *didactic* dimension which dominates.¹⁵

The formative background for the concept of the Paraclete has been sought in many areas.¹⁶ A major problem with all such studies is that they almost inevitably indulge in 'parallelomania'; and other searches based on hypotheses (largely assumed rather than proved) concerning the Johannine community, are too conjectural to be useful.¹⁷

The most fruitful approaches, we contend, are those which consider Old Testament and intertestamental background as primary,¹⁸ though even here opinions vary.¹⁹ Burge suggests a background of advocacy, which went through a radical development; in the Fourth Gospel, the Paraclete becomes the *Christus praesens* in the Johannine community.²⁰

In fact, in spite of diverse opinions on fine details, the vast majority of studies drive us back to a primary forensic context for *paraklētos*. J. Behm's conclusion, for example, is worth noting:

The history of the term in the whole sphere of known Greek and Hellenistic usage outside the NT yields the clear picture of a legal adviser or helper or advocate in the relevant court. The passive form does not rule out the idea of the *paraklētos* as an active speaker 'on behalf of

15 Franck, *Revelation*, 37-77. In fact, it could be said that Franck's own analysis is finally reductionistic in the way he situates the 'didactic' dimension of the Paraclete's work.

16 For summaries, see J. Behm, 'παράκλητος', in *TDNT*, Vol. V, 806-12; Brown, 'Paraclete', 119-26; Burge, *Anointed*, 10-31; Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 80-118; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:144-50.

17 E.g. M.E. Boring, 'The Influence of Christian Prophecy on the Johannine Portrayal of the Paraclete and Jesus', *NTS* 25 (1979), 113-23; W.R. Domeris, 'The Paraclete as an Ideological Construct: A Study in the Farewell Discourse', *JTSA* 67 (1989), 17-23. For a variation on a theme, Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 119-46, proposes that the Spirit is designated 'Paraclete' (1) to repress a movement which was giving prominence to angelic intercessors, such as Michael; Jesus is superior to all such intercessors; (2) to identify the power shown by leaders in the community with the Spirit; Christ is present in power in the church.

18 So Burge, *Anointed*, 28-29.

19 For a sampling, see e.g. B. Vawter, 'Ezekiel and John', *CBQ* 26 (1964), 450-58; I. de la Potterie, 'Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas: Reports on Noordwijkerhout Seminars: "L'Esprit Saint dans L'Évangile de Jean"', *NTS* 18 (1971-72), 448-51 (reporting on H. Riesenfeld); A. Lacomara, 'Deuteronomy and the Farewell Discourse (Jn 13:31-16:22)', *CBQ* 36 (1974), 65-84.

20 Burge, *Anointed*, 41.

someone before someone,' nor is there any need of recourse to the active of *parakaleō* in this connection.²¹

We must not, of course, impose these findings on to the text of John's gospel (as Behm himself notes). There is the danger of transferring the meaning of a word in one particular context to another where it may not have the same nuance. Nonetheless, as we have already indicated, a *forensic* setting does emerge in 1 John 2:1, John 15:26 and 16:7-11, and, at least for the moment, we can give a broad forensic sense to *paraklētos*.²²

Thus, our conclusions at this juncture are provisional, subject to further enquiry; to understand the 'Paraclete' in the Fourth Gospel, we are driven back, first and foremost, to a consideration of the *texts* themselves. How does John describe the Paraclete's nature and work? Very rarely, whether in theory or practice, consciously or unconsciously, are we interested in words as separate entities; a spoken or written word may have different meanings depending on cotext and context. But a *discourse*, the environment in which words exist (which may stretch to the entire work), imposes limitations on the choice of meanings, and thus tends to sharpen and de-limit interpretive options. Hence, it is necessary to understand the *structures of units of language* rather than the individual word (or even sentence).²³

In the next section, we propose to do this in a cursory manner with the Fourth Gospel. What can we conclude when we look at the role of the Paraclete within the larger context of John's gospel as a whole?

3. John: The Gospel Set in a Courtroom

Stephen Smalley has judged that the 'trial' motif 'dominates John's presentation'.²⁴ Two decades ago, A.E. Harvey's book, *Jesus on Trial*, was devoted to a treatment of this aspect of John's gospel, so no new

21 Behm, 'παράκλητος', 803.

22 Cotterell, *Mission*, 118.

23 See Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics, passim*.

24 S.S. Smalley, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 193. For discussions, see e.g. Ashton, *Fourth Gospel*, 226-32, 523-27; Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life*, 61-63; A.A. Trites, *The New Testament Concept of Witness*, SNTSMS 31 (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), 78-124; more concisely on 'witness' in the New Testament: A.A. Trites and L. Coenen, 'Witness, Testimony', in C. Brown (ed.), *NIDNTT*, Vol. 3 (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978), 1038-51.

trail is here being blazed!²⁵ Our aim is the modest one of sketching the larger picture with only a few colours using a broad brush, in the hope that we will be able to make better sense of some of the finer details in the finished portrait.

(a) *Cultural and Religious Background*

Legal proceedings in the Palestine of Jesus' day were very different from court scenes familiar to most people in the west today. Charges were brought by witnesses who were anything but impartial; their intent was to prove the person wrong (or right). A judge might act as a witness in a case. Nor would the defendant sit quietly. The aim of the proceedings was as much to convince the witnesses on the other side as it was the judges. If one side of witnesses were unanswerable and their opponents were reduced to silence, the case was won by default.²⁶

The formative *religious background* for John's presentation of the trial between Jesus and the world may well be in the lawsuits between God and his people, or God and the world, described in the prophets (e.g. Mic. 1:2; Zeph. 3:8; Mal. 3:5), especially prominent in Isaiah 40-55, which presents an extended section of law-court metaphor.²⁷ God summons into court the nations and their gods. Witnesses are appealed to (e.g. Israel, Isa. 43:10, 12); questions are asked; challenges are made. Can the nations and their gods show that they prophesied things which came to pass? The pagan gods remain silent when they are challenged to state their case (41:21-23; 43:9; 44:7); they cannot predict future events (41:22-24, 26-29). Their silence is an acknowledgement that the Lord has won the case.²⁸ The prophetic form is a powerful way of saying that God is totally reliable and the nations are powerless before him.

25 A.E. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial: A Study in the Fourth Gospel* (London: SPCK, 1976). Harvey argues that the Fourth Gospel as a whole can be seen as a 'presentation of the claims of Jesus in the form of an extended "trial"' (17).

26 See e.g. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 46-66, esp. 46-49; Trites, *Witness*, 20-24. Harvey contends that Jewish law (unlike Greek or Roman) did not decide cases on 'evidence' or 'facts', but on the testimony of reliable witnesses, even (in some cases) the witness of a single character of high standing.

27 Sometimes between the Lord and Israel (Isa. 42:18-25; 43:22-28; 50:1-3), sometimes between the Lord and the nations (Isa. 41:1-5; 41:21-29; 43:8-13; 44:6-8; 45:18-25). On 'lawsuit' imagery in Isaiah 40-55, see esp. Trites, *Witness*, 35-47.

28 Trites, *Witness*, 36-46, 84. For a recent re-statement of these themes with respect to the 'trial' motif in the Fourth Gospel, see A.T. Lincoln, 'Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel', *JSNT* 56 (1994), 20-24.

(b) Courtroom Terminology in the Fourth Gospel

The use of courtroom terminology in John is well known, and has been thoroughly documented elsewhere.²⁹ *Martus* ('witness') and its cognates appear over 200 times in the New Testament, the bulk (83 occurrences) of the references appearing in John, 1-3 John, and Revelation.³⁰ Moreover, in John, the *judicial* character of witness is prominent.³¹

The theme of witness has been related to the notion of a self-disclosing God by J.M. Boice and J.C. Hindley.³² According to Boice, for example, the Spirit supplies the 'internal witness' which makes it possible to embrace God's revelation.³³ Preiss connects the witness motif more within the context of law.³⁴ Pancaro, likewise, interprets the confrontation between Jesus and the 'Jews' in the Fourth Gospel in terms of a 'trial', with the law as a hermeneutical key to much that John has to say about Christ's person and work.³⁵

More recently, L.L. Johns and D.B. Miller have argued that throughout John's gospel, Jesus' works and signs function as 'witnesses' in the argument; the miracles make the case for Jesus' identity (e.g. 5:20, 36; 15:24).³⁶ Andrew Lincoln has also shown how the metaphor of cosmic trial in John's gospel can be further illuminated by literary analysis (he confines himself primarily to plot and intertextuality).³⁷

29 E.g. Trites, *Witness*, 79-81, S. Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John*, NovTSup 42 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975), 194-208; T. Preiss, 'Justification in Johannine Thought', in *Life in Christ*, SBT 13 (London: SCM, 1954), 9-31.

30 Trites, *Witness*, 66-77.

31 'Witness' language in John has been explored at length by J. Beutler, *Martyria: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnisthema bei Johannes*, Frankfurter Theologische Studien 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1972). He concludes that the noun *marturia* occurs mainly in Greek judicial language and serves as an important proof of the forensic context of John's terminology.

32 J.M. Boice, *Witness and Revelation in the Gospel of John* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1970); J.C. Hindley, 'Witness in the Fourth Gospel', *SJT* 18 (1965), 319-37.

33 Boice, *Witness*, 120-22, 143-45.

34 Preiss, 'Justification', 15.

35 Pancaro, *Law*, *passim*.

36 L.L. Johns and D.B. Miller, 'The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence', *CBQ* 56, 3 (1994), 519-35.

37 Lincoln, 'Trials', 3-30.

(c) *Trial and Judgment in Jesus' Ministry*

According to Trites, John, like Isaiah 40-55, 'presents a sustained use of the juridical metaphor'.³⁸ The Fourth Gospel has a case to present: the issue under debate is the Messiahship and divine Sonship of Jesus. Trites further suggests that although the sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are frequently described as 'discourses', they are more like judicial debate.³⁹

John thus presents the ministry of Jesus (and what lies beyond Jesus' ministry in the witness of the church) as a trial. Jesus is portrayed as engaged in conflict with the world. Each side presents its witnesses, offers evidence and pleads its case. A judgment is in process and we follow it stage by stage to the climax. The Christ who has come demands a decision, and thereby provokes division (e.g. 1:11-12; 6:66; 7:30-32, 43; ch. 9; 10:19; 11:45-46). The story groups itself around this motif of the sifting out of men and women effected by Christ's coming, an aspect which Stephen Travis summarises helpfully:

John's message... is that during his ministry Jesus was no apocalyptic judge such as was expected at the end time. His purpose was the positive one of bringing salvation. But in fact his presence caused people to take sides for or against him, and so to bring judgment on themselves.⁴⁰

Although Jesus has not come for judgment (3:17; cf. 8:15; 12:47), 9:39 indicates that his coming has, in fact, brought judgment! There is no real contradiction, for 3:17-21 outlines how the one who refuses to respond to Jesus condemns himself or herself. Jesus' very presence sets up a process of self-judgment: men and women are separated by their attitude to him; and decisions carry *immediate results*. They must decide whether to receive his witness or not. 'It is not so much Jesus who is on trial as those to whom he has been sent, those who are acting as his judges.'⁴¹

Numerous witnesses take the stand in John's drama of sifting and judgment. We offer comment on some cameo scenes.⁴²

38 Trites, *Witness*, 78.

39 Trites, *Witness*, 79. The parties 'interrogate one another, questioning each other's explanations' (82).

40 S.H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: Divine Retribution in the New Testament* (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986), 155-56.

41 Lincoln, 'Trials', 8. On judgment in John, see further Ashton, *Fourth Gospel*, 220-26; Travis, *Judgment*, 155-65.

42 For further comment, see Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 18-45; Lincoln, 'Trials', 4-12; Trites, *Witness*, 90-113.

First, John 1:19-34. John the Baptist has been called the 'prime witness' by one scholar who has endeavoured to show that his climactic testimony serves as a 'foundation' upon which the rest of the gospel is built.⁴³ This probably claims more than is warranted for John the Baptist, but he is introduced early in the Prologue (1:6) and has his role summed up in the fact that he came 'as a witness to bear witness to the light' (1:7-8). His testimony is repeated in 3:26-30, a reiteration which has the effect of validating Jesus' own ministry.

Second, John 5:31-40. Here, Jesus appeals to the testimony of several 'witnesses'. John the Baptist's testimony is recalled for the part it might play in the salvation of some (5:34-35), but there is even greater testimony than his (5:36). Christ's works constitute a high testimony (5:36, cf. 4:34; 5:20; 17:4) as does the Father himself (5:37-38) and the Scriptures (5:39). Moses is cited as a prosecuting witness (5:45-46); he could give evidence from the very writings Jesus' opponents claim to honour.

Third, chapter 8. In 8:12-20, Jesus appears to act against the principle he adhered to in 5:31-32, but as Harvey points out, this is a case where only the claimant has access to the relevant facts.⁴⁴ The knowledge of his divine origin and destination gives him the right to bear witness to himself. Nonetheless, Jesus does restore the 'rules' in 8:17-18, claiming the presence of *two* witnesses. When asked to produce the second witness, Jesus replies that they are unable to know him. In its blindness concerning the nature of Jesus, the world is blind concerning the nature of God (8:19), and precisely because it is blind with respect to God, it rejects his Christ.

J.H. Neyrey has studied the *forensic process* in 8:21-59,⁴⁵ noting particularly the ambiguity of 8:30: 'Even as he spoke many put their faith in him' (NIV, cf. 2:23-24). Jesus speaks to the Jews who had believed him (8:31) through the discourse of 8:31-59 with a series of tests each of which serves to prove the charges already made in 8:21-29. Their assertion of belief is shown to be false, for in the process they bear testimony against themselves, proving that they are liars. They misunderstand Jesus, dispute his claims and make false claims for themselves. Furthermore, as Neyrey remarks, 'in forensic

43 J.D. Charles, "'Will the Court Please Call in the Prime Witness?': John 1:29-34 and the "Witness" Motif', *TrinJ* 10 (1989), 83. On John the Baptist as 'witness', see also Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life*, 63-64; Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 18-33; Trites, *Witness*, 91-92, 97-98. On the other 'witnesses' in John 1, see R.F. Collins, *John and His Witness* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1991).

44 Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 57.

45 J.H. Neyrey, 'Jesus the Judge: Forensic Process in John 8:21-59', *Bib* 68 (1987), 509-41.

proceedings this is considered to be the best testimony at a trial, to have unwilling witnesses testify against themselves.⁴⁶

Urban C. Von Wahlde has sought to show a similar content and structural feature in each of the three discourses of 6:31-59, 8:13-59, and 10:22-29.⁴⁷ In each there is an exchange between Jesus and Jews in which believers and Jews are contrasted; the passages function 'to present the grounds for belief in Jesus'.⁴⁸

(d) *The Farewell Discourse: The Trial Continues*

If John 1-12 outlines how Jesus was not received generally (cf. 1:11), in John 13 and the Farewell Discourse that follows, Jesus prepares those who did believe for what lies ahead: his own imminent departure, the coming of the Paraclete, their witness.

What happens when Jesus departs? The trial with the world cannot cease, the witness cannot fall silent, for then his case will be lost by default. After Jesus' departure, the trial continues between the disciples and the hostile world (see e.g. 15:18-16:11). Throughout the Farewell Discourse, Jesus teaches them that his time of 'advocacy' is coming to an end; he is handing it over to them to continue the work. It will not be easy, they are warned; they will encounter intense opposition as Jesus did. How will they be able to face the daunting task? This provides the context for the Paraclete sayings. The disciples will not be left on their own; Jesus will send to them the 'Paraclete' (14:16) who will aid them in the cosmic struggle already begun between Jesus and the world.⁴⁹

Moreover, as Lincoln has pointed out, Jesus' preparation of the disciples for witness is recorded before his own final trial. One possible effect of this is that it 'enables readers to see Jesus under interrogation and on trial as a paradigm for believers in similar

46 Neyrey, 'Jesus the Judge', 536. In a later essay Neyrey looked at John 10:1-39, again focusing on the forensic process, the claims made by Jesus, and the deflection of false judgment by the 'judges' in the case: "'I Said: You are Gods": Psalm 82:6 and John 10', *JBL* 108 (1989), 647-63.

47 U.C. Von Wahlde, 'Literary Structure and Theological Argument in Three Discourses with the Jews in the Fourth Gospel', *JBL* 103 (1984), 575-84.

48 Von Wahlde, 'Literary Structure', 581. Elsewhere ('The Witnesses to Jesus in John 5:31-40 and Belief in the Fourth Gospel', *CBQ* 43 [1981], 385-404), less successfully, he has attempted to demonstrate that these discourses are an elaboration of the three main witnesses described in 5:31-40: 6:31-59 focuses on *Scripture* as witness; 8:13-59 on the *word* of Jesus; 10:22-39 on the *works* of Jesus. This is difficult to adopt in detail, but in its general outline, it points to a combination of several of our noted themes.

49 See Burge, *Anointed*, 36-38, 41, 204-205; Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 105; Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 50-52; Lincoln, 'Trials', 10-11; Trites, *Witness*, 116-20.

situations'.⁵⁰ As Jesus has borne witness to the world, so now the disciples (and the Paraclete) continue that witness.

(e) *Back to the Paraclete*

Now, having sketched in the larger picture, when we come to (for example) John 16:7-11, we can study it from the perspective of the broad themes delineated from the rest of the gospel. The reason why the Spirit is designated a 'Paraclete' is best explained in terms of John's portrayal of Jesus' ministry with the extended metaphor of a trial. Jesus' case will not be reduced to silence. The Paraclete will witness (15:26), and convict the world (16:7-11).

Harvey points out that there was no place for an 'advocate' in a Jewish court.⁵¹ When rabbinic literature begins to mention the work of an 'advocate', it borrows the word from Greek; even then (according to Harvey) it did not mean 'advocate' in a strict sense, but 'a man who would appear in court to lend the weight of his influence and prestige to the case of his friend... and to seek to secure a favourable verdict'.⁵²

D.E. Holwerda attempts to show that all the functions of the Paraclete can be construed as forensic, and as conducted on behalf of the disciples who would be otherwise left as 'orphans'.⁵³ He outlines the theme of witness in the Fourth Gospel, and argues that after

50 Lincoln, 'Trials', 11. Note also that the account juxtaposes Jesus' faithful witness (18:19-24; 18:28-19:16a) with episodes of Peter's denials (18:15-18; 18:25-27). The trial of Jesus and the 'trial' of Peter take place at the same time. We might add that Peter is later reinstated and told that he will witness by suffering a martyr's death (21:18-19; cf. 13:27-28) – 'the failed witness who nevertheless is enabled to become a true witness' (Lincoln, 'Trials', 12).

51 Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 108-109.

52 Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 109. Such a person would not only speak to the judge to persuade him of the innocence of his friend, he would also address the accuser, and perhaps even the friend, encouraging him to live worthily of the defence being made (110). According to Trites, *Witness*, 120, the Spirit 'has a dual legal function... he is a witness as well as an advocate'.

53 Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 38-48. This is a key point in Holwerda's discussion and, generally speaking, has not been taken up by later writers. He maintains that 'orphan' (*orphanos*) in the Old Testament has forensic overtones; God's righteousness is concerned with defending the marginalised and oppressed against injustice, a concern which carries over into the New Testament conception of the Kingdom. Jesus assures the disciples that he will not leave them helpless in the face of the world's opposition; they would have a defender in the judicial process, and judgment would be granted in their favour.

Jesus' departure, the Spirit will work through the disciples as witness against the world.⁵⁴

Thus, against those who might say that the Paraclete's *revelation* to the disciples (e.g. 14:16-17, 26; 16:13) is not a 'forensic' function, Holwerda says that since the disciples bear witness to Jesus, the revelatory function of the Paraclete is part and parcel of the broader canvas. As Max Turner summarises: 'Revelation of the significance of Jesus for the community (and of his direction to the same) is juridical, in so far as it provides part of the folio delivered at the ongoing assize.'⁵⁵

Beasley-Murray and Burge also reconcile the *revelatory* and *teaching* role of the Paraclete with his forensic function through John's presentation of Jesus' life as a trial.⁵⁶

This context of juridical trial and persecution presents us with the most likely catalyst for John's introduction of the term *ho paraklētos*. In fact, it is the comprehensive activity of the Spirit as a forensic witness that best explains the varied tasks of the Paraclete in the Farewell Discourses. Christ was still on trial before the world, and the Johannine church regarded its existence vicariously: it was on trial for Christ. Hence the Paraclete as an advocate implored and persuaded the opposition concerning the truth; and as a witness the Paraclete brought forward evidence establishing the cases for Christ (and his church).⁵⁷

In sum, then, we maintain that the gospel can be analysed as a presentation of Jesus' claims in the form of an extended trial, one which gives credence to witnesses, charges, defence, prosecution, and verdict. The Paraclete takes his place, alongside the disciples, in this trial. To the specific functions of the Paraclete we can now turn.

4. Witness against the World (John 16:7-11; 15:26-27)

Virtually every word in 16:8-11 is surrounded by exegetical conundrums.⁵⁸ What is clear is that the Paraclete is on the attack,

54 Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 48-64. See also C.F.D. Moule, *The Phenomenon of the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Implications of Certain Features of the New Testament*, SBT 2nd Series (London: SCM, 1967), 91: "[P]araclete" in the Fourth Gospel is best interpreted if we take its primary connotation to be uniformly that of *Advocate*.'

55 Turner, 'Receiving', 28.

56 Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life*, 72; Burge, *Anointed*, 38, 204-21.

57 Burge, *Anointed*, 205.

58 For an excellent overview and critique of various proposals, see D.A. Carson, 'The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11', *JBL* 98/4 (1979), 547-66;

acting as prosecuting council; the direction of his work is toward the world. The Paraclete does not merely *reassure the disciples* that the world is wrong. The world itself is told that it is wrong.⁵⁹

(a) 'Convict', 'Convince', 'Expose'...? (16:8)

Disagreements among commentators as to the precise nuance of the verb *elegchein* demonstrate the difficulty of pinning down any one meaning. The more common options include 'to convict', 'to convince', 'to expose', and 'to prove wrong about'. Barrett chooses 'to convict', referring to its use by Philo of the conscience, and considers it 'accordingly natural in the present passage to see in the work of the Paraclete an operation upon the conscience of the world'.⁶⁰ Carson, likewise, holds that the verb is best taken as 'to convict of' or 'to convince of' (in that the world is convinced of its guilt). The world, he maintains, is brought to self-conscious conviction of sin and recognition of guilt.⁶¹ Carson seems to go too far, however, in maintaining that *elegchein peri* is always followed by some evil, thus giving it a negative character (Luke 3:19; John 8:46; Jude 15).⁶² This interpretation virtually obliges him to take all three items (sin, righteousness, judgment) as 'wrongs' of the world itself of which it is convicted (which appears forced for the middle element).⁶³

The use of the verb elsewhere in John's gospel may give an important clue. In fact, Schnackenburg suggests that the word is 'more narrowly defined in Johannine linguistic usage' and that it

more briefly, D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), 534-39.

59 Burge, *Anointed*, 210, against some (e.g. I. de la Potterie) who have suggested that the direction of the Paraclete's work in these verses is towards the disciples rather than the world. For further discussion, see Carson, 'Paraclete', 551-54.

60 Barrett, *John*, 486-87.

61 Carson, 'Paraclete', 558. Cf. Trites, *Witness*, 118.

62 Carson, 'Paraclete', 555-56.

63 Other suggestions have not been lacking. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 113, maintains that 'convict' is not correct here; the Paraclete is not judging, but *accusing*. Brown, *John*, 2:705, opts for a translation in terms of 'exposing the guilt of the world in regard to the three elements' as 'better able to catch the broadness of the concept'. G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 281, however, probably takes this too far when he comments that 'the Paraclete is to *expose* the world and *demonstrate its error* with reference to sin, righteousness, and judgment' (his italics). It is not merely that the world has wrong notions about these things (sin, righteousness, judgment) which are in need of being corrected. The world is itself convicted.

'acquires forensic overtones' (see 3:20; 8:46).⁶⁴ Jesus has been involved in a legal battle with the world in which the world has judged him guilty; but now the situation is to be reversed. It might be best, then, to translate with something like: 'He will bring conviction about...' Whatever the precise word or phrase adopted, one thing is clear: the word used is at least broadly forensic, and thus fits in with the larger context of the Fourth Gospel.

We might also note in passing that the verb has given birth in missiology to the concept of 'elencitics', 'in which we seek both to disclose the inadequacies and falsities of non-Christian religion and to demonstrate the adequacy and truth, absoluteness and finality of the Lord Jesus Christ.'⁶⁵

(b) 'In regard to sin...' (16:9)

The Paraclete convicts the world of sin because those in the world do not believe in Jesus. Although Jesus has been declared a sinner and condemned to death as a sinner by the world, the situation is now reversed. The accuser has become the accused; the world is on trial. The refusal to believe in Jesus has been a theme of his ministry (e.g. 1:11; 3:19; 12:37). No excuse is given: sin is culpable (9:39-41; 15:22-24), and unbelief brings condemnation (3:18, 36; 5:24; 8:24).

Discussion rages on the meaning of *hoti* ('in that' or 'because') in the three lines. If the three phrases in 16:8-11 are *explicative*, they explain the nature of sin, righteousness and judgment. If they are *causal*, they provide the basis by which the world is (or can be) convicted. So, with respect to the first clause, for example, on the first view, the Paraclete convicts the world with respect to sin, by showing that disbelief in Jesus is of the essence of sin. On the second view, the world is convicted of sin *because* it did not believe in Jesus.⁶⁶ We maintain that the latter makes better sense in the context of the gospel, and thus stand with Barrett who states concisely:

64 Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:128.

65 Stott, *Mission*, 69; see Cotterell, *Eleventh Commandment*, 16-18; Cotterell, *Mission*, 117-20.

66 Those who hold the *hoti* in each case is not to indicate cause but to explicate the statement ('in that') include: Beasley-Murray, *John*, 281; Brown, *John*, 2:706; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:129; also Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 113-14; Turner, 'Holy Spirit', 350; JB; NEB. Those who maintain that the *hoti* should be taken as causal ('because') include: Barrett, *John*, 487-88; Carson, 'Paraclete', 561-63; E.C. Hoskyns, ed. F.N. Davey, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 484; B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCBC (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1972), 501-502; J.N. Sanders and B.A. Mastin, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, BNTC (London: A&C Black, 1968), 351. Also Burge, *Anointed*, 209-10; Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 56; NIV. Interestingly, the issue is not

John seems to be giving the fundamental ground of conviction of sin (and righteousness and judgement) rather than stating the content of sin (and righteousness and judgement).⁶⁷

On this interpretation, the *hoti* clause is taken as the *reason* for the conviction, and not as a *definition* of the sin. The world is convicted of sin *because* it failed to believe in Jesus, an aspect of the Spirit's work which is a continuation of Jesus' ministry.⁶⁸

(c) 'In regard to righteousness...' (16:10)

The second of the three clauses has been subjected to most debate and requires slightly more detailed comment. Various interpretations have been offered as to the precise sense of *dikaïosunē* ('righteousness', 'justice') here. Some have taken it to refer to the lifestyle of Christ, and, consequently, of true discipleship.⁶⁹ Others have understood it to refer to the righteousness which has been established by Christ's work, now available for the world.⁷⁰

even discussed by Newman and Nida in their *Helps for Translators* on John: B.M. Newman and E.A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1980). In their treatment of 16:8-11, *hoti* is translated 'because' uniformly throughout, without explanation.

⁶⁷ Barrett, *John*, 488.

⁶⁸ E.g. Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 56.

⁶⁹ E.g. A.W. Wotherspoon, 'Note on St. John 16:10', *ExpT* 33 (1921-22), 521-22; Roy Clements, *Introducing Jesus* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986), 185.

⁷⁰ E.g. J.H. Bernard, *The Gospel According to St. John*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), Vol. 2, 507; J.M. Boice, *The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*. Vol. 4, *John 13:1-17:26* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 293; Morris, *John*, 698-99; see also Sanders and Mastin, *John*, 351. Lindars has proposed a modified interpretation of this latter position (B. Lindars, 'ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ in John 16:8 and 10', in A. Descamps and R.P.A. de Halleux (eds.), *Mélanges Bibliques en hommage au R.P. Béda Rigaux* [Belgium: Duclot, 1970], 275-85). He suggests that the Paraclete will expose the world for 'a verdict of guilty' ('sin'), 'a verdict of innocence' ('righteousness'), 'a verdict one way or the other' ('judgment'). He recognises that a first reading of 16:8 would indicate that all three nouns are related to *elegxei ton kosmon* in the same way, and that there is a difficulty with 16:10. To overcome the difficulty, he takes *elegchein peri* in a neutral sense of 'passing a verdict'; *hamartia* and *dikaïosunē* are understood as opposites, with *dikaïosunē* being very close to the Pauline doctrine of justification, while *krisis* (again taken neutrally) refers to both the preceding alternatives simultaneously (279-84). However, Lindars himself admits that the phrase *elegchein peri dikaïosunēs* is 'scarcely good Greek' (285), and his translation entails giving *kosmos* a positive sense, a view which hardly stands in this context, or when evidence from the Fourth Gospel as a whole is examined. For further discussion, see Carson, 'Paraclete', 555-58.

Carson is concerned to show that all three nouns (sin, righteousness, judgment) are to be read in reference to the world. On Carson's reading, however, *dikaiosunē* is understood 'in an ironic sense to mean, not genuine righteousness, but the righteousness one might expect from the *kosmos*'.⁷¹ His view has not enjoyed any support from the world of Johannine scholarship. What, then, shall we say to these things?

A better interpretation understands the Paraclete to 'show that all that Jesus said and did was right, because He will have been vindicated by the Father'.⁷² This view takes account of the phrase, 'because I am going to the Father'. Jesus was regarded as a blasphemer and a sinner (5:18; 7:12; 9:24; 10:33) and sentenced to death as such (18:30; 19:7), but now God's 'justice'⁷³ is shown in Jesus' exaltation. Jesus' departure to the Father was a reversal of the verdict of the world against him. 'The justification of Jesus thus is the vindication of his righteousness in life and his entrance upon *righteousness in glory* with the Father (cf. 12:23; 13:31-32; 17:1, 5; and 1 Tim. 3:16).'⁷⁴

Further evidence for this interpretation can be adduced from a study by C.F.D. Moule.⁷⁵ In a discussion which focuses primarily on Daniel's Son of Man figure, Moule attempts 'to establish that the figure of the one who is rejected but is ultimately vindicated is even more widely used in the biblical presentation of the Gospel than is sometimes recognized'.⁷⁶ He notes, almost in passing, the importance this might have for the interpretation of the Paraclete passages in the Fourth Gospel:

The exaltation of the Son of Man declared in the trial scene of the Synoptic Gospels is... closely to be related to the era of the Paraclete – that

71 Carson, 'Paraclete', 558.

72 R.V.G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Leicester: IVP, 1960), 180. An aspect of Carson's view might still stand logically: since Jesus is shown to have been in the 'right', the world is shown to be in the wrong. Cf. Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 57: 'By convicting the world of this righteousness [of Christ] the Paraclete is at the same time convicting the world of its own unrighteousness. Because the world has condemned and rejected the Righteous One it stands in the position of rejecting that which God has approved as righteous.'

73 Cf. Brown, *John*, 2:706, 712-13.

74 Beasley-Murray, *John*, 282, his italics; cf. J. Marsh, *The Gospel of St. John*, Pelican New Testament Commentary (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 536.

75 Moule, *Phenomenon*, 82-99.

76 Moule, *Phenomenon*, 82.

is, the period when the early Christian community was vindicated against its opponents and detractors by the signal witness of the Spirit within it.⁷⁷

This interpretation also fits with the rest of the gospel. The broad motifs of Jesus' going to the Father (via the cross) and exaltation are constantly intertwined (see 2:19-21; 3:14-15; 4:34; 7:39; 10:17-18; 12:27-33; 13:1, 31-33; 14:2, 29-31; 16:28; 17:1, 4-5).

It may also be worth pointing out that while we have no other reference in John's gospel to *dikaioSunē* apart from here, we might be able to appeal to his use of the root elsewhere – *adikia* (7:18), *dikaioS* (5:30; 7:24; 17:25) – which *might* throw some light on to chapter 16. Moreover, Christ is described in 1 John as 'the righteous one' (*ho dikaioS*, 1:9; 2:1, 29; 3:7).⁷⁸ Martin Hengel makes reference to this root and states that it serves to show that 'the return to the Father "justifies" (cf. 1 Tim. 3:16) the Jesus who was executed as a blasphemer of God and as a transgressor of the law (John 5:18; 10:31, 33; 19:7, etc.).'⁷⁹

The world considered Jesus as justly executed. But his death was rather his exaltation to the Father's side. The world thinks that Jesus' death shows he has been justly executed, whereas the Paraclete will show that in Jesus' death he has been vindicated.⁸⁰

(d) 'In regard to judgment...' (16:11)

Carson holds that the judgment referred to here is the world's spiritual blindness and 'its assessment of all things spiritual'.⁸¹ We suggest, however, that in the light of themes developed in the gospel, a different option is more viable. 12:31 offers the strongest parallel to the use of *krisis* ('judgment') in 16:11. Judgment *has* taken place (*kekritai*), and 12:31-32 shows that this happened at the very time Jesus was exalted. The condemnation of Satan is due to the death of Christ, and it is *on this basis* that men and women are convinced of judgment. It is because Jesus overcame Satan in his death and exaltation that the Paraclete can convict of judgment (cf. 16:33; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 12:10). Just as Jesus warned of a present judgment, so the Paraclete continues that work.

77 Moule, *Phenomenon*, 92.

78 Cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:131.

79 M. Hengel, *The Johannine Question* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 64.

80 Burge, *Anointed*, 210.

81 Carson, 'Paraclete', 561.

(e) Concluding Comments on 16:7-11

The death and exaltation of Jesus connect the three clauses together and are at least implicit in the context (16:7). The world is convicted of sin, because its unbelief reached a climax in the crucifixion of the Son of God; of righteousness, because his victory (through the cross) is his vindication; and of judgment, because it was through the cross that the ruler of the world was defeated. It does not seem necessary, with Carson, to translate tightly, '*its sin, its righteousness, its judgment*'.⁸² It is equally congruous (and gives a certain symmetry) to maintain that the world is convicted with respect to *its own sin*, with respect to the *righteousness of Christ*, and with respect to the *judgment of God* on Satan.

In any case, the whole passage has a forensic character, and thus is deeply rooted in the judicial framework of the gospel as a whole. The conflict between Jesus and the world is conceived in forensic terms and portrayed as a trial in process; the ministry of witnessing is continued after Jesus' departure through the Paraclete. The switch of functions in the Paraclete from defence lawyer to prosecuting lawyer shouldn't be surprising when we consider that the interchange has already been established in the ministry of Jesus. In the trial, the accused is really the accuser, the condemned is really the justified, while those judging are themselves judged in their very act of judgment. The Paraclete continues this courtroom contest, both defending the disciples and attacking the unbelieving world.

(f) The Paraclete and the Disciples Witness to Jesus (15:26-27)

J.H. Bernard was careful to note that these verses follow the rebuke pronounced on Jesus' enemies (15:22-25),⁸³ and this forms a fitting introduction to the function of the Paraclete as described in 16:8-11. The world will treat the disciples the way it treated Jesus (16:1-4), because they and the Spirit, like him, will testify to its evil. Similar references – the witness of the disciples standing with the witness of the Spirit in a forensic context against the hostile world – may be found in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12).⁸⁴

It is thus difficult to maintain with de la Potterie that the witness of the Spirit is only *inner*, in the disciples' hearts.⁸⁵ It is clear that the

82 So Carson, 'Paraclete', 560, his italics.

83 Bernard, *John*, 2:498; cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:119.

84 For discussion of tradition-critical issues, see e.g. Burge, *Anointed*, 205-208.

85 I. de la Potterie, 'The Truth in Saint John', in J. Ashton (ed.), *The Interpretation of John* (London: SPCK/Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 61.

Paraclete is engaging the world through the mission of the disciples, as Jesus did before his departure to the Father.

The Paraclete's witness is reliable because he comes from God. The disciples' witness is reliable, for they have been with Jesus 'from the beginning'. Moreover, 'the witnessing tasks of the Paraclete and the disciples coalesce in the mission of the church.'⁸⁶ The Paraclete's work is not independent of their witness. John does not teach a witness by the Spirit that is not also a witness *through the believing community*. The promised witness of the Paraclete can never be an excuse for believers not to be involved in witness. As Peter Cotterell has pointed out:

Although it is clear that biblical elenctics result from the operation of the Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is the proper subject of the verb *elenchein* where it is applied to the sinner, this must not be allowed to lead us into the view that the Church is exempted from any responsibility for the elenctic process.⁸⁷

5. Instruction for the Disciples (John 14:16-17, 25-26)

Of course, just because a word has a particular connotation in one place doesn't imply it automatically has that same connotation in every place. Nevertheless, the most *natural* meaning of *paraklētos* points to a forensic function; and given that the content, language and structure of the Fourth Gospel is cast in forensic terms, not forgetting that the Paraclete is performing a legal function in 16:7-11 (irrespective of the fine details!), what can be said about the other sayings?

(a) *The Spirit as 'another Paraclete' (14:16-17)*

That the Spirit is introduced as 'another' Paraclete (*allon paraklēton*) should alert us to the implication that Jesus has performed the role of a *paraklētos* during his ministry. He will ask the Father to send another Paraclete 'to perform a like ministry for his disciples'.⁸⁸ If this is the case, we might expect a clear continuity between Jesus and the Paraclete (although there are discontinuities as well).⁸⁹ If we accept the 'trial' motif running through the gospel, it is not too difficult to see that the task assigned to the Spirit is essentially the

⁸⁶ Burge, *Anointed*, 204. See also Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 51-52; Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:117-18.

⁸⁷ Cotterell, *Mission*, 119.

⁸⁸ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 105.

⁸⁹ The parallels between Jesus and the Paraclete have been helpfully outlined by Brown, 'Paraclete', 126-28; see also Turner, 'Receiving', 26-27.

same as that of Jesus: confrontation with the hostile world.⁹⁰ Since the roles of the two 'Paracletes' are continuous, 'it is conceivable that the roles of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in relation to the "trial" of the Lord and his disciples are also in view'.⁹¹

Without Jesus, and left on their own, the disciples would be 'orphans' (14:18). Like orphans they would be defenceless and unable to stand up in court and plead their case. They would not have their advocate for the cause with which they had identified themselves. But Jesus promises that he would not leave them as orphans.

It is important to note that Jesus' request in 14:16 is given no content, but it may be legitimate to see, with Painter, the prayer of chapter 17 as indicating 'the nature of Jesus' request to which the Father responds by sending the Paraclete'.⁹² The prayer articulates the on-going mission and witness to the world which is made actual in the lives of believers through the presence of the Spirit. Furthermore, David Wenham has sought to demonstrate that 17:3 and 14:15-24 share themes, especially in the reception of the Spirit and eternal life.⁹³ The reception of the Spirit finds its primary focus in mission to the world through the agents of the disciples, which we might well expect, since Jesus, the agent *par excellence*, was likewise commissioned (17:18, 23; 20:21-23).⁹⁴

(b) *The Paraclete as Teacher and Revealer (14:25-26)*

The Paraclete will both defend the disciples' case and prosecute it against their opponents. He does this, we are told, primarily by *reminding* them of the revelation Jesus brought, and by drawing out its significance. It's as their revealer and teacher that the Spirit is also their advocate.⁹⁵ It's precisely because he reveals the significance of

90 Cf. Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 114: 'If Jesus were still to be with his disciples when they came under attack, they would obviously have a stupendous advocate; but he will not be present; instead, they will have another *paraclete*, the Spirit.'

91 Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life*, 73.

92 J. Painter, *John: Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1975), 69.

93 D. Wenham, 'Spirit and Life: Some Reflections on Johannine Theology', *Themelios* 6, 1 (1980), 4-8.

94 Limitations of space forbid us to look more closely at the vital related topic of 'agency' in the Fourth Gospel. See C. Mercer, 'Jesus the Apostle: "Sending" and the Theology of John', *JETS* 35/4 (1992), 457-62. Also Burge, *Anointed*, 199-204; Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 88-92, 106-107, 115-17; Trites, *Witness*, 86-88, and from a missiological perspective, Senior and Stuhlmüller, *Mission*, 283-84.

95 Burge, *Anointed*, 210-21.

the Christ-event that they are able to press Jesus' case. Since the disciples are witnesses of Christ to the world, 'they must know the meaning of that to which they are witnessing'.⁹⁶

Once more, it's worth noticing that the Paraclete and Jesus are here closely related. The Spirit brings no *new* revelation; he points to that which *Jesus* taught and enables the disciples to understand it. This passage can also be read in conjunction with 16:13-15. 'The revealing work of the Paraclete is entirely dependent on Jesus: it is christocentric in that there can be no departure from what Jesus has already revealed.'⁹⁷

We can point to occasions in John's gospel where John records the disciples later recalling the significance of something that occurred during the ministry of Jesus (2:22; 12:16; cf. 20:9). With the coming of the Paraclete, they would be able to understand that which they did not at that point fully understand (14:25-26; 16:12-15, 25-28; cf. 13:7; 14:20; 21:18-19). The Spirit would bring understanding of what Jesus had already taught them, and illuminate the significance of Jesus' ministry, death and exaltation.

6. Some Concluding Reflections

Here then we pause, though much more could be said. For now, we conclude with some reflections on possible implications of this study.

(1) *Some implications arise for wider study of the Fourth Gospel itself.* Two aspects can be noted, however briefly. First, the 'witness' motif underscores the importance of the historical foundations of the Christian faith (men and women were eye-witnesses of the events of salvation) and may at the same time be seen as a key to the *drama* or *story* which the gospel tells.

Harvey, for example, concludes that even though the author has arranged the literary form of the gospel after the manner of a lawsuit, this does not mean that what is recorded is 'altogether unhistorical, either in outline or in detail'.⁹⁸ John has not written an exhaustive historical account of the life of Jesus (cf. 20:30; 21:25); he has shaped his narrative on a deliberate artistic plan. Scholarly separation of 'historical' and 'literary' aspects of gospel criticism would more than likely bemuse the author of the Fourth Gospel. His

⁹⁶ Holwerda, *Holy Spirit*, 63-64.

⁹⁷ Burge, *Anointed*, 213. Cf. Barrett, *John*, 467: in recalling all the things Jesus said to the disciples, 'the Paraclete... recreates and perpetuates the situation and judgement and decision that marked the ministry of Jesus.'

⁹⁸ Harvey, *Jesus on Trial*, 127; for discussion, see 124-28.

'witness' element both provides the drama by which the plot can be read, and functions as part of its vital historical reference.

The notion of 'witnessing tradition' as a model for Scripture has recently been explored by John Goldingay.⁹⁹ 'Witnessing tradition' is especially characteristic of narrative portions of Scripture with their concern to transmit testimony of the history of Israel, Jesus and the early church. 'Witness' points to actual saving events in space-time history, 'tradition' to the passing on accounts of those events for the benefit of future generations. 'Witnessing tradition', according to Goldingay, reflects both *historical* and *literary* concerns.¹⁰⁰

The second implication follows from the first. The gospel record itself becomes a means of testifying to Jesus so that men and women might 'see' and believe (20:29-31). That John has himself provided a declaration of his purpose for writing is important, and must be taken seriously.¹⁰¹ This would benefit from further study, especially as 20:30-31 is connected by similar concerns to 19:35 ('he testifies so that you also may believe'), and the latter provides a useful bridge to the 'courtroom' motif of the gospel. The work of the written gospel is described as a 'testimony' (19:35; 21:24). 'Now even the writing down of the narrative itself plays an integral role in the continuation of the lawsuit in history.'¹⁰²

Martin Warner points out that the words of John 20:30-31 indicate that 'the work's main purpose is persuasive'.¹⁰³ Whichever textual variant is adopted in 20:31,¹⁰⁴ it is clear that the gospel's first objective is to encourage faith in Christ. The story is told in such a way that will involve *us* in it. As readers we are forced to come to an orientation on Jesus. The Fourth Gospel seeks to persuade *us*, not by offering itself for close analysis and scrutiny; it is rather we who are being analysed and called to respond. 'The Gospel itself is a form of witness... The reader is thus drawn into this trial, and on similar terms to those who encountered Jesus.'¹⁰⁵ The reader has to make up his or her own mind whether Jesus is the life-giving Christ and Son of God.

99 See J. Goldingay, *Models for Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), Part 1: 'Scripture as Witnessing Tradition' (19-82).

100 Goldingay, *Models*, 16.

101 See D.A. Carson, 'The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: John 20:31 Reconsidered', *JBL* 106 (1987), 639-51.

102 Lincoln, 'Trials', 26.

103 M. Warner, 'The Fourth Gospel's Art of Rational Persuasion', in M. Warner (ed.), *The Bible as Rhetoric: Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility* (London: Routledge, 1990), 153.

104 See Carson, 'Purpose', 640-41; Brown, *John*, 2:1056.

105 Warner, 'Rational Persuasion', 165.

(2) *The Paraclete sayings reflect God's purposes in salvation history being worked out, and coming down to us today.* In the Farewell Discourse, the giving of the Spirit assumes the departure of Jesus. The spotlight is on Jesus: his death, and what will happen *after* it with the coming of the Spirit. What will happen in the post-resurrection, post-giving-of-the-Paraclete period will be different from before. The focus is *salvation-historical*.¹⁰⁶ The question is then sometimes raised, Are the Paraclete promises only for the original disciples, or do they apply to all believers today? A few comments are in order.

There is a sense in which the promises do apply only to the disciples; only they have been with Jesus 'from the beginning' (15:27). But this does not mean they have no relevance or application for later Christians. John is not simply recording bare chronicle for its own sake without keeping an eye open to the needs of those to whom he writes; neither is he jumping immediately from the 'there and then' of the closing stages of Jesus' ministry (and instruction to the historical disciples) to the present situation of his readers telling them how to live, and assuming no difference between them and the first recipients of Jesus' words.¹⁰⁷

Thus, we have to acknowledge the (salvation-) historical situation of the first disciples; but we recognise that they also function as representatives of the believing community. Christian believers, like them, will experience opposition from the world; Christian believers, like them, must witness to Christ in the face of hostility.¹⁰⁸

We must nonetheless exercise caution in the way we apply the Paraclete promises. For us, as for the first disciples, the control is 'the original revelation of the historical Christ'.¹⁰⁹ The Paraclete's work is entirely christocentric, and rooted in the prior teaching and Christ-event. The testimony of the disciples (and the church since) has historical moorings in the crucial events of salvation history; it is the task of each generation of witnesses to proclaim the significance of those events to the world. This will inevitably require interpretation, application and contextualisation (and some might say special 'words' from God); but it will not abandon the focus on Christ.¹¹⁰

In this way, Johannine theology of the Spirit may have much to teach those on various sides of the 'charismatic' divide. No clear

¹⁰⁶ Carson, *John*, 481.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Carson, *John*, 530.

¹⁰⁸ Note also the 'anointing' attributed to all believers in 1 John 2:20, which 'teaches' them about 'all things' (2:27).

¹⁰⁹ Burge, *Anointed*, 215.

¹¹⁰ See Burge, *Anointed*, 216-17.

reference is made to the more obvious miraculous manifestations (though see 14:12), but the notion of the Paraclete assigns an important place to God's *present* and *vital* activity among his people and in the world; without forfeiting the significance of the saving events of history.

(3) *We may note, finally, some specific implications for the mission of the church today.* First, witnesses speak because they must speak. The Paraclete works through the proclamation and witness of the church.¹¹¹ The Fourth Gospel gives us the responsibility to witness to Christ before the world (and we are accountable for the truthfulness of our testimony). We are to be passionately involved in the case we present, as ones who have been apprehended by it and want to persuade others. We must not be found silent. If we fail to present evidence for Christ, we will be conceding defeat to opponents.

Second, witnesses direct attention to Christ. The Spirit works through the church to champion the case of Christ against the world, destroying obstacles to the knowledge of God (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). As soon as believers in Christ become inward-looking only, and seek the Spirit's blessing only for themselves, then the world's 'verdict' will have been proved true. According to the Fourth Gospel, the Spirit has not been given solely for our personal blessing, but to proclaim Christ to the world.

Third, faithful witness may well involve suffering (cf. Rev. 1:9).¹¹² The world will be hostile, and may not accept the message. Once again, Christ is the model. Just as he bore witness to the truth in the face of hostility, so his followers must likewise testify. As we have seen, such witnesses are promised help; they do not offer testimony in their own strength. This serves both as a challenge for us to be faithful in hostile circumstances, as well as an encouragement to press on.

Fourth, the love of disciples for one another will be a witness to the world (John 13:35). The main theme of Jesus' prayer in John 17 is unity. Believers should live together in a unity which reflects the oneness of love between the Father and Son. Disciples are called to *demonstrate* this unity, which the Father and Son enjoy, and which

111 Cotterell, *Eleventh Commandment*, 17.

112 D.J. Bosch gives to *marturia* the particular nuance of suffering: *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1980), 71-74; also 'Reflections on Biblical Models of Mission', in J.M. Phillips and R.T. Coote (eds.), *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission: Essays in Honor of Gerald H. Anderson* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 182-83; For further reflections on suffering and mission, see J. Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 71-112.

will one day be fully and finally displayed (cf. Eph. 1:9-10). Jesus prays for the unity of the church because such unity will show that in Christ God is reconciling the divisions of the world.

Finally, fundamental advances in mission will not be made because of our education, planning, committees, or church growth conferences, but because of God's own determination to work through his people by the power of the Spirit-Paraclete. The Paraclete sayings offer tremendous encouragement for all witnesses, because they promise (without taking responsibility from us) help from God. It would be pointless to be involved in witness and evangelism and training people for ministry if we were not convinced that Christ is building his church, and that the Spirit is working to convict the world. Alone we have no confidence; but we are not alone. We are the instruments of the Spirit-Paraclete through whom he performs his ministry in the world.¹¹³

113 The substance of this essay began life some years back as an undergraduate paper submitted to Peter Cotterell. His wisdom and help then, and more recently his support and friendship as College Principal and colleague, have been greatly appreciated. This essay is dedicated back to him with heartfelt thanks.