

The Paraclete and Jesus in the Johannine Farewell Discourse

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Abstract: This article aims to show that the Paraclete is portrayed in the Johannine farewell discourse (chapters 14-16) as the successor to Jesus in his ministry in the world *and* as the mediator of Jesus' ongoing presence. Jesus and the Paraclete are functionally similar yet not identical in person; they are distinct yet united. Their intimacy is such that the Paraclete can be understood as one who makes the presence of Jesus felt in the period of Jesus' absence. Contrary to some tendencies in Johannine scholarship, the Paraclete is not to be described as Jesus returned in another "form". A close reading of the five Paraclete texts of the Johannine farewell discourse (14:16-17; 14:25-26; 15:26; 16:7-11; 16:13-15) shows that the Paraclete is Jesus' successor and the mediator of his presence. This implies that the two characters are distinct— and respects the sense of Jesus' impending death and absence — as well as implying that there is an inextricable intimacy between them.

THE FIGURE OF THE PARACLETE in chapters 14-16 of John's Gospel is often interpreted as one who enables the presence of Jesus to be felt or experienced in the Johannine community. This intimacy in relationship between the characters of Jesus and the Paraclete is expressed in different ways. The Paraclete has been called the one through whom Johannine Christians experience the "living presence of Jesus"¹ and the one through whom Jesus is primarily "present and active".² Jesus' "abiding" with the disciples has been said to "continue" through the Paraclete in the absence of Jesus because the Paraclete is the "channel of

1. Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple: The Life, Loves and Hates of an Individual Church in New Testament Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979) 88; cf. Raymond Brown, *The Gospel according to John XIII-XXI* (AB29A; Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1970) 1135.

2. Cf. Alan R. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 107.

the abiding-in-love of the Father and the Son".³ Similarly, the Paraclete makes present the absent Jesus;⁴ he "makes the presence of Jesus real",⁵ somehow "facilitating" Jesus' ongoing presence.⁶ It is the presence of the risen Jesus which is experienced in encountering the Spirit-Paraclete.⁷

This broad scholarly consensus on the intimacy of relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete is expressed in a somewhat more nuanced manner than other interpretations that overstate the case by arguing that the risen Jesus and the Paraclete are identical. While the above statements could be categorised as describing the Paraclete as the "mediator" of Jesus' presence, other statements have blurred the distinction between the two characters altogether. For instance, the Paraclete has been described as "none other than the glorified Christ";⁸ as "Jesus himself";⁹ Jesus has been said to have returned in the "form" of the Paraclete;¹⁰ the Paraclete has been described as "Christ in our midst";¹¹ or, Jesus returns to the community "as the Paraclete".¹² I intend to show that the Paraclete is *not* portrayed in John 14-16 as Jesus in another mode of existence – granted, due to the text's complexity it is not hard to see why this might be argued; but the Paraclete is a character distinct from Jesus while at the same time so intimately related to him as to mediate Jesus' ongoing presence.

It is important to distinguish between these two positions, namely, an interpretation of the Paraclete as one who "makes the presence of Jesus real"¹³ and as one who is simply Jesus in another guise so to speak. Both interpretations entail particular temporal and functional implications with regard to the relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete. For

3. Cf. Dorothy Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbol, Gender and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 2002) 92; for similar language see, Rhekha M. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006) 30, 84.

4. Lee, *Flesh and Glory*, 150.

5. Marianne M. Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2001) 182.

6. Cf. Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social Scientific Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 1998) 231.

7. Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1987) 41.

8. G. Borknamm, "Der Paraklet im Johannesevangelium", in *Geschichte und Glaube, Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 3 vols. (München: Kaiser, 1968) 3:68-89, cited in Burge, *Anointed Community*, 24; Borknamm calls the Paraclete "the same redeemer now returned".

9. Rudolf Bultmann, "The Eschatology of the Gospel of John", in R. W. Funk (ed.), *Faith and Understanding I* (London: SCM, 1969) 178, cited in Burge, *Anointed Community*, 36.

10. Cf. Bruce D. Woll, "The Departure of the Way: The First Farewell Discourse in the Gospel of John", *JBL* 99 (1980) 233-34.

11. Cf. Robert Kysar, *John* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg, 1986) 111; also, for Kysar, Jesus has returned in the "form of the Paraclete".

12. Brown, *John*, 2:1143.

13. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 182.

example, if Jesus and the Paraclete are understood as *identical* characters, that is, Jesus returns *in* or *as* the Paraclete, the promise voiced by Jesus to send ἄλλον παράκλητον (lit. “another Consoler”) to attenuate the disciples’ grief would hardly seem necessary. Such an interpretation would not do justice to the strong sense of Jesus’ impending absence from the lives of his disciples expressed in the farewell discourse (cf. 14:2b-3a, 12, 28). What is more, since the Paraclete is given to the disciples to fill the period of Jesus’ absence (cf. 14:25-26) he cannot be received until Jesus has departed (cf. 16:7). There is a clear temporal distinction between the periods in which Jesus and the Paraclete will function in the world, and the corollary of this is a distinction in character. On the other hand, if Jesus and the Paraclete are understood as distinct yet interrelated then the sense of Jesus’ absence is kept intact, as is the function that the Paraclete is to perform as Jesus’ successor, a role which *ipso facto* precludes identification of the two characters.

I would argue that there is a paradoxical tension in the way the relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete is portrayed in John 14-16. For while the Paraclete is presented as *other* than Jesus (his successor or “replacement”) he is also presented as something more than that: he is portrayed as the *mediator* of Jesus’ presence: there is a genuine presence-in-absence promised all throughout the text. This does complicate a reading of the temporal order of John 14-16: the Paraclete will come upon Jesus’ departure, suggesting that the characters are to be distinguished from each other, but when the Paraclete comes he will communicate the ongoing presence of Jesus, “overcoming Jesus’ absence”.¹⁴ This suggests the intimacy of an inextricable union between the two characters.

This intimacy between Jesus and the Paraclete is further highlighted by their marked similarities in character and function, something to be focused on in more depth below. At this point it is simply worth noting that the Paraclete stands in relation to Jesus as Jesus stands in relation to the Father. On a functional level, both the Paraclete and Jesus “teach” the disciples and both give “witness” – the Paraclete to Jesus and Jesus to the Father; likewise the Paraclete “glorifies” Jesus, speaking of what he “hears” from Jesus, just as Jesus glorified the Father and spoke what he heard from God. In performing these functions the Paraclete’s role is fundamentally revelatory and prophetic, paralleling Jesus’ work of revealing the Father. On the level of identity, both the Paraclete and Jesus are depicted as representing “truth” in the Gospel; both are “sent”

14. Cf. Francis J. Moloney, “The Gospel of John: A Story of Two Paracletes”, in Francis J. Moloney, *A Hard Saying: The Gospel and Culture* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2001) 158.

from the Father; neither has their identity known and “received” by the “world”, but both are known and “received” by the disciples – indeed both “remain” (μένω) with the disciples – and finally, the Paraclete is identified as ἄλλον παράκλητον (“another Paraclete”, 14:16), suggesting that Jesus was the first “Paraclete” (cf. 1 John 2:1).¹⁵

The correspondence of roles between the Paraclete and Jesus points to the ways in which the Paraclete continues the work of Jesus in the world, or really, *vis-à-vis* the world and with the disciples. But this similarity in both function and character between Jesus and the Paraclete is not sufficient reason to conclude that the Paraclete is merely the post-mortem Jesus. It cannot be overlooked that there are also significant points of difference between the two characters. For example, while Jesus has been with the disciples “all this time” (cf. 14:9), the Paraclete will remain with them “forever” (14:16). Jesus has been the Word-made-flesh (1:14), seen by the world, and “lifted up” on the cross (cf. 8:28; 19:17) but the Paraclete will be “unseen” by the world (14:16-17). In short, the Paraclete and Jesus are not so dissimilar as to be utterly independent of each other, nor does their likeness imply identification. Because Jesus will be absent, the Paraclete comes as Jesus’ successor; on the other hand the Paraclete brings Jesus’ *risen presence* to the community and so acts as a “successor-mediator”.

THE PRESENCE OF THE ABSENT ONE: A CLOSE READING OF THE PARACLETE TEXTS

The language of “mediation” is not explicitly used in John 14-16 to describe the Paraclete’s task of rendering the risen Jesus present to his disciples. I find the term particularly helpful because it expresses a balanced position in terms of the Jesus-Paraclete relationship; the word “mediate” suggests the manner in which the Paraclete communicates the presence of the living Jesus (14:16-17, 18-20) and the way he “declares” what is “from” Jesus (16:14), significantly in his role as “teacher” and “reminder” (14:26). My argument that the Paraclete thereby “mediates” Jesus’ ongoing presence on earth is to be understood as a more nuanced stance than arguing that the Paraclete *is* Jesus. The Paraclete is best understood as the “Spirit of truth” (cf. 14:16), given to the disciples as Jesus’ successor (16:7) in the interim period as they await Jesus’ final return (cf. 14:3). At the same time, Jesus’ presence is discernible in the Paraclete – Jesus’ “return” to his disciples (14:18) is in one sense accomplished upon the reception of the Paraclete by the community. I will discuss this latter point in more depth below.

15. On this suggestion see Moloney, “Story of Two Paracletes”, 154.

THE FIRST PARACLETE TEXT: 14:16-18

John 14:16-18 when read in its immediate context (14:15-20) is widely acknowledged as problematic and difficult to interpret. The reasons for this are two-fold. In the first instance there is well-known textual difficulty in v. 17b: Jesus states that the Paraclete both already “abides” (μένει) with the disciples *and* “will be” (ἔσται) among them (14:17b).¹⁶ Moloney’s interesting recommendation is to read the present μένει as referring to Jesus, the “Paraclete” who is currently with them and to read the future ἔσται as referring to the coming Spirit-Paraclete.¹⁷ While this certainly respects the distinction between Jesus and the Paraclete and takes into consideration how they are both called “Paracletes” (14:16; cf. 1 John 2:1) it is somewhat forced and raises the question as to why Jesus would suddenly speak of himself in the third person. The option of reading both verbs in the future tense to convey the sense of the Paraclete coming to dwell corporately with the disciples and indwelling them each personally is quite appealing.¹⁸

The second reason for the difficulty of interpreting 14:16-18 relates to the complexity of the wider unit of discourse (14:1-31). In this discourse Jesus’ “goings” (cf. 14:2-3a; 4; 12; 28) always stand in close proximity to his “comings” (cf. 14:3b; 18; 23b; 28b). To complicate the matter, the Paraclete’s “coming” coincides with Jesus’ own “coming” (14:16-17, 18; 26-27, 28). In the first text (14:16-17), the concept of the Paraclete as successor to Jesus is premised on Jesus’ absence, because as successor to Jesus, the Paraclete cannot *be* Jesus; yet in 14:18 Jesus promises to be present with the disciples himself. This juxtaposition of the Paraclete’s coming with Jesus’ own coming in the space of three verses has led to scholarly debate over the interpretation of this first Paraclete text. To cite an extreme example, this juxtaposition of the “comings” of Jesus and the

16. This reading is supported by p^{66c, 75vid} and various minuscules. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971) 245.

17. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina 4; Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1998) 402, 406-7.

18. This option, however, is not well attested (t^{aur} vg cop^{sa} p^{bo} ach²) but cf. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John, Vol. 3*, trans. D. Smith and G. A. Kon (New York: Crossroad, 1982) 76. The change of μένει to the future (μενεί) requires only a change of accent. On the other hand, the present for both verbs (μένει ἔσται) is attested by p⁶⁶ B D* W (C. K. Barrett, *John*, 2nd ed. [London: S.P.C.K., 1978] 463, accepts this latter reading). Possibly ἔσται was accepted as the *lectio difficilior* following two present tense verbs or is a scribal adjustment to avoid a literalist reading of ἔσται as suggesting that the Spirit was already present at the Last Supper; likewise the present μένει is probably a proleptic present, reflecting the Johannine community’s later experience of the Spirit (see Brown, *John*, 2:639).

Paraclete has appeared so incompatible that it has been admitted that excising the Paraclete texts from the discourse would facilitate a more intelligible reading.¹⁹

Approaching the issue of the relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete in 14:16-18 entails an understanding of what their respective “comings” refer to, particularly Jesus’ in 14:18. There is no general consensus in the literature as to what v.18 means precisely. It has been suggested that v.18 refers to Jesus’ resurrection appearances, a view supported by the use of the phrase ἐτιμικρόν ... ὑμεῖς δὲ θεωρεῖτέ με (v.19) together with the fact that θεωρεῖτέ is used in 20:14 to describe the witnessing of the risen Lord by Mary Magdalene.²⁰ Otherwise it has been thought that v.18 may refer to the Parousia on the strength of the verb ἐμφανίζειν being used in v.22, a verb used of Old Testament theophanies.²¹ Covering any other possible reference, Bultmann stated that the verse initially referred to the Parousia, but the evangelist “re-interpreted” this in light of his realised eschatology so that Jesus’ “coming” referred to the presence of Jesus in the Spirit.²²

Scholars have argued that Bultmann’s suggestion of a Spirit-mediated “coming” of Jesus in 14:18 is not explicit in the text.²³ This may be so, but it is not decidedly explicit whether v.18 refers to the resurrection or the Parousia exclusively either. That Jesus promises to come to his disciples in their “orphaned” state warrants interpretation of the text that accounts for a permanent presence, at least a more enduring abiding than would be suggested by the temporary resurrection appearances. There is, however, no suggestion in John’s Gospel that Jesus returns permanently in the post-Easter period; rather, he appears and then communicates the Spirit to his disciples (20:19-22). It is this Spirit-Paraclete that abides permanently – εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (14:16). Could one, therefore, interpret Jesus’ promise to come to the disciples (v. 18) in a way that would enduringly overcome their “orphaned” state in a

19 Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:77; cf. Hans Windisch, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel*, trans. James W. Cox (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968) 3.

20. Cf. Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriens (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1997) 505; George Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC; 2nd ed. (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999) 258; Barnabas Lindars, *John* (NCBC; London: Oliphants, 1972) 480; Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London: Faber & Faber, 1947) 457; Barrett, *John*, 464.

21. Cf. John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991) 462; cf. Chennattu, *Johannine Discipleship*, 108; cf. James Luther Mays, *John* (IC; Atlanta GA: John Knox, 1988) 183; Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1991) 501.

22. Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, trans. G. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971) 617-20; cf. 580; Burge agrees that John “refashioned” the futuristic expectation in this way, see *Anointed Community*, 138; cf. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1983) 303.

23. Cf. Ridderbos, *John*, 505; Beasley-Murray, *John*, 256-59; Carson, *John*, 501.

manner *compatible* with the promise of the Paraclete's coming (vv. 16-17)?

Various scholars would assent to this question, arguing that the text allows for such an interpretation, and this option has currently gained widespread support in the literature.²⁴ This approach – whether acknowledged or not – takes advantage of the “poetics” of the seeming contradiction within 14:16-18. In other words, the absence of a direct connection between the concepts expressed in v.16 and v.18 can be read as an “aporia” of the text. This “aporia” (or “gap”) – which is essentially in this instance an interpretive ambiguity created by a juxtaposition – functions to stimulate the reader's imagination to supply an *implicit* meaning or “implication”; in this case, the implication is that the parallel comings of Jesus and the Paraclete (v.16, 18) are to be understood in light of each other.²⁵ The textual coherence of 14:16-18 is thus fortified by the very “aporia” that appears to undermine it.

The strength of such an interpretive option lies in the way in which it surmounts the apparent incompatibility of the coming of both Jesus (v.18) and the Paraclete (vv.16-17) by reading the presence of the former as somehow being “facilitated” by the latter. Thus the Paraclete functions as a successor to Jesus (ἄλλον παράκλητον), substituting for his presence on earth, but he also acts as the *mediator* of Jesus' ongoing presence while the community awaits his final return.

It may indeed be correct to interpret the “little while” (ἔτι μικρὸν) that will pass before the disciples “see” Jesus again (v.19) as the period before his resurrection and thus read Jesus' “coming” (v.18) as referring to his resurrection appearances. But the resurrection appearances do not exhaust the meaning of v.18, standing as it does in the context of the coming of the Paraclete. Holloway is correct in stating that the resurrection initiates “Jesus' spiritual presence in the community, which presence continues until the Parousia”,²⁶ a view partially in accordance with Barrett's awareness of the Paraclete functioning as an “eschatological continuum” in the Gospel; thus the Paraclete makes operative

24. Cf. Thomas L. Brodie, *The Gospel of John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and others below.

25. See William S. Kurz, *Farewell Addresses in the New Testament* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 10-12 for the role of the implied reader in the “gap-filling” process; cf. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1987) 186-222; 243-247.

26. Paul Holloway, “Left Behind: Jesus' Consolation of His Disciples in John 13,31-17,26”, 2005, <http://217.169.41.219/extenza/loadPDF?objectIDValue=58550>. Accessed 8th July 2006 (originally published in *ZNW* 96 (2005): 1-34); cf. Schnackenburg, *John*, 3:78-79.

what Jesus effected on earth until the Parousia.²⁷ Likewise, Burge connects the resurrection event and the gift of the Spirit-Paraclete, arguing that whether v.18 refers to the resurrection or the presence of Jesus through the Spirit, in the end the two concepts “spill into one another”.²⁸ In other words, the risen Lord communicates the Spirit (cf. 20:22) and in turn the Spirit-Paraclete is the “vehicle” of the indwelling of Jesus within the believer and the believing community.²⁹

This close relationship between the Paraclete and Jesus is further accentuated by the parallels exhibited in 14:15-20 between the two characters. Brown has noted these as follows: the condition for receiving the Paraclete is to love Jesus and keep his commandments (14:15); likewise the same condition obtains for Jesus’ self-revelation to the disciples (cf. 14:21; 23). Both the Paraclete and Jesus will come to the disciples (vv.16-17; 18). The world will be unable to receive the Paraclete or “see” him (v.17a) and the world will no longer “see” Jesus (v.19). Unlike the world, the disciples “know” the Paraclete (v.17b) and unlike the world, the disciples will “see” Jesus (v.19b). Both the Paraclete and Jesus will “abide” with the disciples (v.17; 23).³⁰ The Paraclete is called the “Spirit of Truth” (14:16); Jesus personifies truth (14:6).

Accordingly, Brown considers it “no accident” that the coming of the Paraclete in vv.16-17 is followed immediately by Jesus’ promised coming in vv.18-20, arguing that “Jesus’ promises to dwell within his disciples are fulfilled in the Paraclete”.³¹ Brown then goes on to state that John’s realised eschatology is central to his portrayal of the Paraclete: “in a very real way Jesus has come back...in and through the Paraclete”; thus futuristic eschatological realities are to be found in the present, since “as the Paraclete Jesus is present within all believers”.³² Similarly, Woll argues for a “deliberate juxtaposition” of vv.16-17 and v.18 on the part of the evangelist, arguing that “for the author...it is in the form of the Spirit-Paraclete that the Son comes back to his disciples”.³³ In like manner, Watson argues that although vv.16-17 and v.18 seem to refer to contradictory realities they can, because of their

27. Cf. Barrett, *John* 90; Barrett’s perspective keeps a focus on Johannine future eschatology, but can still be read in tandem with the views of other scholars who argue that through the Paraclete Jesus is somehow present.

28. Burge, *Anointed Community*, 138.

29. Cf. Burge, *Anointed Community*, 139.

30. Cf. Brown, *John*, 2:1135-1136.

31. Brown, *John*, 2:1141.

32. Brown, *John*, 2:1143.

33. Woll, “The Departure of the Way”, 231; 233-34.

adjacent placing in the text, be read in light of each other. That is to say, the “return” of Jesus (v.18) is “realised in the Paraclete”.³⁴

Each of the above scholars reads the arrangement of vv.16-17 and v.18 as purposefully signalling a certain kind of intimacy between Jesus and the Paraclete which could be expressed as the Paraclete “mediating” Jesus’ presence. But there is always the danger of *identifying* Jesus and the Paraclete in discussing the relationship between them. For example, Brown’s aforementioned statement of Jesus being present “in and through” the Paraclete maintains the distinction between the two characters, and in Thompson’s words, “lends itself to the language of ‘mediation’”.³⁵ On the other hand, Brown’s second formulation quoted above, namely, that Jesus is present “as the Paraclete” identifies the two characters and so does not uphold the sense of Jesus’ impending absence so strongly reiterated in the text. Woll likewise collapses Jesus and the Paraclete in his formulation cited above which is redolent of a “modalism” of sorts. Even the usually cautious Burge argues that in the text of 14:16-18 “the identification is made explicit: *the indwelling Paraclete is the indwelling Jesus*”.³⁶

The argument I present in this article is that the Paraclete acts as both the successor to Jesus and the mediator of his presence. This means that the Paraclete is *differentiated* from Jesus but also that Jesus’ presence is discernible in and through the Paraclete. In my opinion, the absolute identification of the characters would deny altogether Jesus’ absence, divesting John 13-17 of any semblance of a *farewell* discourse and “over-realising” John’s eschatology. In short, such an appreciation of the Jesus-Paraclete relationship would not do justice to the text of 14:16-18 or to the context of the larger discourse.

Finally, the identification of Jesus and the Paraclete may ease the interpretive ambiguity of 14:15-20 but it does not accord with Johannine theology as a whole. For example, while the Paraclete is portrayed as one similar to Jesus in role and person he is not depicted *as* Jesus: he is the “other” Paraclete (cf. 14:16) and differs from Jesus in that he will not be “seen” (14:16-17) and that he will abide “forever” (14:16). This is a distinctiveness-in-unity that parallels the Father-Son relationship in the Gospel. So, while the λόγος is close to the Father’s side (1:1-2) he is not the Father. Likewise, as John the Baptist proclaims the Light he is not the Light (1:8). And just as the λόγος “mediated” or “revealed” (1:18) the Father, so too does the Paraclete “mediate” and “reveal” Jesus.³⁷

34. Nigel M. Watson, “Risen Christ and Spirit/Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel”, *ABR* 31 (1983) 83.

35. Cf. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 180.

36. Burge, *Anointed Community*, 139, his emphasis.

37. Cf. Thompson, *God of the Gospel of John*, 182.

To sum up, the first “Paraclete text” (14:16-17) of the Johannine farewell discourse presents the reader with a certain degree of complexity with regard to the Jesus-Paraclete relationship. The “successor motif” of the farewell discourse genre finds expression in this text: the Paraclete is depicted as a successor to Jesus, one who resembles Jesus but one who is *other* than Jesus. John’s employment of the successor motif gains a certain particularity, however, in that the Paraclete is presented as the one through whom the ongoing presence of Jesus becomes available to the Johannine community once more, if they love Jesus and keep his commandments (cf. 14:15, 20). In this way the Paraclete “mediates” Jesus’ presence, a concept quite different from the identification of the two characters. Exegetically, this intimate relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete can be read from the text based on an interpretation of the poetics of 14:16-18.

THE SECOND PARACLETE TEXT: 14:25-26

The second Paraclete text of the Johannine farewell discourse is situated close to the end of the unified discourse of 14:1-31. Like the first Paraclete text (14:16-17), this text (14:25-26) occurs in the wider literary context concerning the imminent departure of Jesus (cf. 14:1-14; 28). In this discourse the Paraclete has already been presented as the requisite consoler for the disciples in the grief that will beset them when Jesus departs (cf. vv. 16-18). Indeed, consolation is a theme that runs throughout 14:1-31: the discourse opens with the imperative admonition to trust God and not be troubled (μὴ ταρασσέσθω, 14:1) and this admonition is repeated in 14:27, bolstered by Jesus’ gift of peace to the disciples. Immediately before this gift of peace and the imperative to trust is given, the Paraclete is reintroduced (14:25-26). In this second text, the figure of the Paraclete thus stands in the context of Jesus’ provision for the disciples in his absence for the purpose of consoling his group. The fundamental way in which the Paraclete provides this consolation is that, as successor to Jesus, he ensures that the words of Jesus will not be forgotten when Jesus is gone (cf. 14:26).

In another sense, it can be argued that by ensuring that the memory of Jesus’ words lives on in the community, the Paraclete provides the ongoing revelation and “mediation” of Jesus’ presence. This will be considered below in light of the “cultic” hypotheses put forward by certain scholars to explain how the Paraclete mediates Jesus’ presence in the Johannine community. The Paraclete’s task of “reminding” the disciples of Jesus’ words (14:26) has been used to support these theories. Before attending to this issue, I will outline how 14:25-26 demonstrates firstly, distinct timeframes of activity for Jesus and the Paraclete,

suggesting a differentiation in character and secondly, a functional correspondence between Jesus and the Paraclete.

14:25-26 begins with Jesus telling his disciples that he has spoken to them “while still with” them, but that there will be a time when he will no longer be able to speak to them (14:25). When this time comes, the Paraclete will continue “speaking” to them (cf. 14:26). This clear temporal distinction indicates that the Paraclete comes to “teach and remind” them of Jesus’ words (v.26) in Jesus’ *absence*. The Paraclete therefore comes as the result of Jesus’ departure (cf. 14:12; 16:7; cf. 7:39) and is presented as a distinct character with his own timeframe of activity. In this way the Paraclete is given as Jesus’ successor, his replacement or substitute.

At the same time the pericope clearly shows that the tasks the Paraclete is to perform are nonetheless intimately related to Jesus’ own work. Indeed, the strong focus of this text is the close resemblance between the Paraclete and Jesus, primarily because of their functional correspondence. The Paraclete will “teach” the disciples just as Jesus taught them during the period of his ministry (7:14-15; 8:20). The Paraclete – here called the “holy spirit” – will be sent from the Father (v.25) as Jesus was (cf. 3:20). Far from implying identification between Jesus and the Paraclete however, this similarity in function and origin suggests difference and otherness: it is as *successor* to Jesus that the Paraclete performs his tasks which in many ways resemble Jesus’ because they are the continuation of Jesus’ work on earth.

The Paraclete’s work as “teacher” thus depends upon Jesus’ initiative of this “teaching” function. Nevertheless, there is one task that the Paraclete will perform that is distinctly his own: “reminding” the disciples of Jesus’ words (cf. 14:26). The word ὑπομνήσει (“remind”, from ὑπομιμνήσκω) occurs only here in the Gospel. The verb’s meaning includes the act of enabling another to “recall” or “remember” some thing, person or event.³⁸ The terminology for “remembering” also appears under two other related verbs in the Gospel: μιμνήσκομαι (2:12, 22; 12:16) and μνημονεύω (15:20; 16:4, 21) with the nuance of the disciples perceiving the deeper significance of Jesus’ words. The former examples indicate that in the process of composing the Gospel, the Paraclete’s task of “reminding” the disciples was already apparent. The latter examples – each situated in the farewell discourse – indicate the disciples’ acute need for reassurance and consolation. Here Jesus’ “prophetic” words (“I have said these things to you so that when the time comes, you may

38. Cf. “ὑπομιμνήσκω”, in T. Friberg, B. Friberg, and N. F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 2000) 392; cf. “ὑπομιμνήσκω” in BAGD, p. 1039.

remember that I told you") function to neutralise the negativity of the experiences that the disciples are undergoing at the time the Gospel was written.³⁹ This kind of prophetic utterance is a common motif in the farewell discourse literature of antiquity, notably in the testamentary material found in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha.

The Paraclete's task of "reminding" the disciples certainly had a consolatory function, but it also enabled a continuity of faith in Jesus, ensuring that such faith became something self-perpetuating. That is, the Paraclete's work of "reminding" the disciples carried with it an impetus that enabled the mission Jesus began to survive the transition of his death and take on a new shape in the post-resurrection era. One feature of this new "shape" was the fresh perception the disciples gained because of the enlightenment brought by the Paraclete. There is a sense in the farewell discourse that while Jesus was still on earth, the disciples' understanding of him was only inchoate (cf. 14:5, 9; 16:18). Burge correctly notes that the concept of "remembering" in the Gospel is linked to the misunderstanding of the disciples in John.⁴⁰ They really do require the new perspective that the Paraclete brings. Indeed, the Paraclete "interprets" the Johannine Jesus-tradition, a concept fully expressed by the extradiegetic narrational voice of John 7:39, and also in the well-known "aside" of 2:22.⁴¹ As "interpreter" of the Jesus tradition, the Paraclete can legitimately be understood as the one who continues the "ongoing revelation of God in the world".⁴²

For the same reason, Nils Dahl famously endorsed 14:26 as "a key to the Gospel of John".⁴³ The texts cited above demonstrate that the Paraclete essentially organises a coherent and authorised "memory" of Jesus in Jesus' absence. But exactly how "coherent" and "organised" was the memory of Jesus for this community? And did this commemoration take any specific shape? These questions have led certain scholars to consider the meaning of the anamnesis that the Paraclete brought in the early Johannine community. Significant to my argument is the fact that the focus of such considerations has been on the connection between the

39. Cf. John Painter, "Monotheism and Dualism: Reconsidering Predestination in John 12:40", in Rekha M. Chennattu and Mary L. Coloe (eds.), *Transcending Boundaries: Contemporary Readings of the New Testament in Honor of Francis J. Moloney* (Rome: L.A.S., 2005) 129.

40. Burge, *Anointed Community*, 212.

41. In literary criticism, the word "extradiegetic" describes the "voice" of the narrator as it intrudes into the text, providing commentary or opinion on the characters or plot.

42. Moloney, "Story of Two Paracletes", 155.

43. Nils Dahl, "Anamnesis: Memory and Commemoration in Early Christianity" in Nils Alstrup Dahl, *Jesus in the Memory of the Early Church: Essays* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg, 1976) 28.

anamnesis of the Paraclete and the way the Paraclete *mediates* Jesus' presence.

For some scholars who favour what could be called the *Sitz-im-Leben der Kirche* approach to the Paraclete texts, the "organised" memory of Jesus that the Paraclete facilitated found particular expression in the early Christian cult.⁴⁴ The "coming" of Jesus to the disciples (cf. 14:18, 23) thus assumed a specific shape through the Spirit-Paraclete's mediation of Jesus' risen presence in the context of communal worship. Recently Coloe has supported this community-cult hypothesis by elaborating on the sacramental allusions in the Gospel and their connection to the Spirit. Coloe points out the following references to the "Spirit" in John: 3:5-8 ("water" and "birth" in the "Spirit"); 4:23-24 ("worship" in "Spirit and truth" – or, read exegetically for Coloe, in "a spirit of truth", cf. 14:16); and 6:63 (the "bread of life" discourse and the life-giving "Spirit"). For Coloe, these texts "clearly" represent sacramental rituals, notably baptism (3:5-8) and eucharist (6:63), and in each text the Spirit is depicted as an agent who makes new birth (3:5-8), true worship (4:23-24) and life (6:63) possible. The encounter with the abiding Lord is therefore made possible by the sacramental agency of the Paraclete. This is particularly true of the anamnesis the Paraclete brings by his work of "reminding" the disciples (14:26) of Jesus' words. It is through this latter function that the "presence of Jesus is primarily mediate[d]".⁴⁵

The strength of these cultic hypotheses is that they account for the difference between Jesus and the Paraclete even while they maintain the sense of intimacy between the two characters. This intimacy is expressed in the language of "mediation" in a cultic setting. The hypotheses also explain how it is that the "world" – uninitiated in the Christian cult – will not "know" the Paraclete but the disciples will (cf. 14:17). On the other hand, these hypotheses have their weaknesses. Although they impressively attempt to connect the "Spirit" material of the Gospel with the Paraclete material of the farewell discourse, they also tend to restrict the experience of Jesus' presence to times of worship.⁴⁶ The Paraclete's mediation of Jesus' presence need not be reduced to one particular

44. David Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realised Eschatology in Early Christianity* (NovTSup 28, Leiden: Brill, 1972) 126-33, pioneered this line of thinking and it is still favourable with certain scholars today, cf. pp. 126-33, cited in Moloney, "Story of Two Paracletes", 158.

45. Coloe, *God Dwells With Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2001) 176.

46. Coloe, *God Dwells With Us*, 176; Coloe notes that times of worship are the "special times" of Jesus' presence. Nonetheless, Coloe also recognises that this cultic anamnesis has a sustaining effect beyond the moments of worship: the narratorial "intrusions" of post-resurrection insight (cf. 2:22, 7:39) discussed above indicate that the Paraclete constantly "teaches" and "reminds" the disciples about Jesus (cf. p. 177).

context. While these theories do give substance to the concept of “mediation” they do so at the risk of restricting that mediation to a single, particular situation.

John 14:25-26 presents the relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete in a variety of ways. The distinction between Jesus the “former” Paraclete and the “other” Paraclete (cf. 14:16) is maintained just as the interdependence between them is asserted. Both characters operate in different temporal modes, but they perform similar tasks – the Paraclete’s tasks being modelled on Jesus’ own. They also share a similar origin: both are “sent” from the Father. The Paraclete, however, uniquely “calls to memory” the “words” of Jesus for the disciples (14:26). In this way he continues the revelatory work that Jesus began, but also discloses and reveals the significance and meaning of Jesus himself, thereby mediating his presence in an ongoing way. Whether or not this anamnesis is understood as occurring in the context of cult, the Paraclete is presented in 14:25-26 as both successor to Jesus and mediator of Jesus’ presence.

THE REMAINING PARACLETE TEXTS: 15:26-27; 16:7-11; 16:13-15

I propose to discuss the remaining Paraclete texts of the farewell discourse somewhat briefly. Whereas the first two Paraclete texts – particularly 14:16-17 – are paradigmatic of the complex relationship between Jesus and the Paraclete, I find that the remaining Paraclete texts introduce other issues not touching upon the “mediation” of Jesus’ presence through the Paraclete with the same degree of subtlety. Nonetheless, each of the remaining texts focuses on the three key aspects of the Jesus-Paraclete relationship already mentioned, though not all of these texts express every aspect. These aspects are: firstly, a correspondence of roles between Jesus and the Paraclete; secondly, an intimacy in relationship best understood as one of “mediation”; and thirdly, a very real difference between them, specified by either a temporal distinction or an allusion to the Paraclete as the consequence of Jesus’ departure.

The third Paraclete text (15:26-27) portrays the Paraclete as the “Spirit of Truth” (cf. 14:16) who witnesses to Jesus with the disciples. Since Jesus himself is “truth” (14:6) and as such, by his own life, works and words witnessed to the Father, the Paraclete’s role as witness corresponds to that of Jesus’. This functional correspondence indicates an intimacy between Jesus and the Paraclete: the Paraclete witnesses on Jesus’ “behalf” (15:26). However, this text alludes also to the real difference between the Paraclete and Jesus, once more indicating that they are not identical. For example, the Paraclete comes to witness to

Jesus in Jesus' *absence* and in the context of the suffering and persecution that the disciples experience at the hands of the "world" as they also "witness" to Jesus (15:26). The Paraclete, by witnessing with the disciples *to* Jesus does what Jesus had not done during his ministry – indeed Jesus explicitly states that he does not witness to himself but only to the Father (cf. 8:28). So despite the functional correspondence evident in this text (both Jesus and the Paraclete "witness"), the Paraclete is presented as one quite distinct in character from Jesus. 15:26-27 therefore emphasises the Paraclete as Jesus' successor-replacement more so than as one who mediates the indwelling presence of Jesus (cf. 14:17).

The fourth and fifth Paraclete texts (16:7-11; 13-15) of the Johannine farewell discourse stand within the literary context of 16:4-15, a long section detailing the specific functions the Paraclete will perform vis-à-vis the world. This section follows closely on from Jesus' warnings about what the disciples will suffer as they witness to the departed Jesus with the "Spirit of truth" (15:26-27; 16:1-3). In 16:4-5 Jesus tells his disciples that he has thus warned them "while still with" them, "but now" he is going to the Father. As in 14:25, a clear temporal distinction is established between the periods of time when Jesus can and does speak to his disciples and when he cannot. It is in this latter period that the Paraclete will operate (16:7; cf. 14:27). Perhaps more than any of the other Paraclete texts, 16:7-11 depicts the Paraclete as the express consequence of Jesus' departure: "unless I go, he [the Paraclete] will not come to you" (16:7). The Paraclete's coming will overcome the disciple's present grief (cf. 16:6). In his role of successor-consoler, the Paraclete is presented as one distinct from Jesus.

This distinction is not so sharp as to imply that the Paraclete is totally independent of Jesus; rather, their intimacy is acknowledged in that Jesus *sends* the Paraclete to the disciples when he departs (16:7b). Neither does the distinction obscure the similarities between them; on the contrary, the Paraclete is presented in 16:8-11 as one who continues to perform the very work of Jesus: he "convicts" the world as Jesus did (cf. 3:19-20; 9:41; 15:22), and specifically on three counts: with regard to "sin", "judgement" and "righteousness", all of which were supposedly serious concerns for the disciples as they also witnessed in the face of a hostile world. By "convicting" the world, the Paraclete functions as successor to Jesus and continues the "critical and divisive presence of the revelation of God" in the world, formerly carried out by Jesus during his ministry.⁴⁷

47. Moloney, "Story of Two Paracletes", 163; cf. Moloney, *John*, 440-441. This text is renowned for its difficulty and there are disputed translations depending mainly on how $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota$ and $\delta\tau\iota$ are understood, as well as the polyvalent $\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\chi\omega$. These concerns are beyond

The final Paraclete text (16:13-15) immediately follows 16:7-11 discussed above. 16:12 bridges the fourth and fifth Paraclete texts; in this verse Jesus refrains from speaking more out of concern that his disciples could not “bear it”. However, as in 14:25-26, the Paraclete is introduced as one who will carry on speaking in the place of Jesus (16:13), thus acting as Jesus’ successor. The Paraclete is again referred to as the “Spirit of truth” (cf. 14:16; 15:26), and his proper task is to “guide” the disciples “into all truth” (16:13a). He will do this by “speaking” (v.13b) about what he “hears” (v.13c), and by “declaring” the “things to come” (τὰ ἐρχόμενα) to the disciples (v.13c). In this way, the Paraclete “glorifies” Jesus (v.14) and the Father (v.15).

In the fifth Paraclete text of the discourse, the Paraclete and Jesus are presented as different characters but as similar in the tasks they perform. They are different insofar as they operate in different time periods – the Paraclete is required to declare τὰ ἐρχόμενα, providing the continuation of divine revelation in the absence of Jesus. The Paraclete is also clearly different from Jesus in that it is *Jesus* he glorifies. This task, however, also indicates a functional correspondence between the characters: the Paraclete “glorifies” Jesus by speaking “not of his own” but only of what he “hears” from Jesus (cf. v.13) and by “declaring” what is “of” Jesus (16:14). He thus mirrors the prophetic character of Jesus’ speech, since Jesus spoke not of himself but only of what he heard from God (8:28). In both cases this work of glorification is revelatory in nature. It is interesting to note that the verb used in 16:13a of the “Spirit of truth” to reveal Jesus (ὀδηγήσει) plays on the verb used of Jesus to reveal the Father at the outset of the Gospel (ἐξηγήσατο, 1:18).

Finally, the revelation of Jesus that the “Spirit of truth” provides in 16:13-15 suggests an intimacy in relationship that goes beyond mere succession: by “glorifying” Jesus, the Paraclete “reveals” him, discloses him, “mediates” his presence so to speak. As Jesus disclosed and “mediated” the presence of the Father by “glorifying” the Father in his words, work – and especially in his being “lifted up” – so too does the Paraclete mediate the presence of Jesus in his revelatory work. In declaring the “things to come”, the Paraclete does not provide new revelation as such: he unfolds the significance of the words and work of Jesus (cf. 14:26). By revealing what is “of Jesus” and thereby “of the Father”, the Paraclete participates in the glorification of the exalted Jesus in an ongoing way that continues to reveal the presence and love of God in the world.

the scope of this study; for an in-depth discussion see Donald A. Carson, “The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11”, *JBL* 98 (1979) 547-60; on the “trial” motif of the Gospel evident in this passage, see Brown, *John* 2:711-14.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Jesus-Paraclete relationship is portrayed in John 14-16 as an intricate one. Despite a clear functional similarity, the two characters are not identical, nor is the Paraclete merely Jesus in another, enduring "mode" of existence. If this were the case, as some scholars insist, then Jesus' departure would be neither final nor definite, and his *absence* which is so central to understanding the text as a "farewell" discourse, would not be accounted for. On the other hand there is a decided sense of Jesus' ongoing *presence* in the text: a nuanced way of expressing this is in terms of the Paraclete "mediating" (in cultic mode or otherwise) the presence of the risen Jesus to his disciples. This way of reading the text manages to account for Jesus' departure (cf. 16:7) and for the very real differences between the two characters.