

The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete in our Ecclesial Life

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Abstract: This study attempts to explain, through the different Paraclete sayings (John 14: 17, 26; 15:26; 16: 13), how the Paraclete continues to reveal the message of salvation brought about by Jesus. The Paraclete's task is seen to guide the community in (re)interpreting and understanding Jesus' revelation in new circumstances and through the passing of time. The Paraclete's prophetic function is thus shown to be in teaching the disciples about the world that rejects the Spirit (14:17), confirming the rightness of their commitment while showing the world to be wrong about sin, justice and judgment (16:8-11). This is the function of Christian prophecy, and the prophetic function of the Paraclete who will convict the world of its sin and expose its guilt (16:8-11).

Keywords: Paraclete, Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, ekklesia, prophecy

Introduction

The Paraclete sayings in the farewell discourse (John 14-17) reveal a remarkably Johannine understanding of the Spirit and the church. Despite the various studies done by scholars on the Paraclete sayings with regard to the meaning of the Paraclete, its religious background, and its *Sitz im Leben*, there is still a dearth of literature on the Paraclete in relation to prophecy within the Church. One may presuppose that the most important

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characteristic of the Paraclete sayings is their Christological focus.¹ However, they also reveal the Johannine understanding of the church.²

The idea of the Paraclete's teaching was already introduced in John 14:26: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."³

However, in John 16:12-15, the teaching of the Paraclete no longer talks about remembrance of things past (ὑπομνήσει), but points toward the future (καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν). The author of the Fourth Gospel affirms that the Paraclete does not only interpret the old revelation (the earthly Jesus) but also disclose the "things to come," providing direction for the community in its work of witnessing.

It is our hope that this research would facilitate our reflection on the prophetic role of the Paraclete in the churches today. Ecclesial life reflects an assembly of persons gathered around the person of Jesus who invites us to take active part in raising prophetic voices in dealing with present-day issues: extrajudicial killings, hostilities in war torn areas, divisions between political groups, corruption, injustices, poverty, ecological disaster, etc. We believe that the *parakletos* with its prophetic presence in the churches will work in us, guide and direct us to a future that is full of hope.

¹Crinisor Stefan, "The Paraclete and Prophecy in the Johannine Community," in *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 27/2 (Fall 2005), 41.

²Dongsoo Kim, "The Paraclete the Spirit of the Church," in *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 5/2 (2002), 255-270.

³Scriptural texts are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

The Johannine Textual Platform of the Paraclete

In John 14:15-17 Jesus promises his disciples that he will send them “another Paraclete”:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and is in you.

The text suggests that the disciples who love Jesus must continue to keep his commandments; it is promised that they will receive the Paraclete. Hence, the disciples will not be without that which they had in Jesus.⁴ This Paraclete is understood as the “Spirit of Truth,” a title used by the Fourth Evangelist to mean “the Spirit who communicates truth.”⁵

The meaning of the term *Paraclete* (Paraklētos) is debated.⁶ The difficulty lies in the lack of linguistic background in either Hebrew or Aramaic. Thus its analysis can only depend on its Greek provenance and the translations that grew from it.⁷ Major translations

⁴David J. Hawkin, *The Johannine World: Reflections on the Theology of the Fourth Gospel and Contemporary Society* (New York: State University, 1996), 73.

⁵Ibid.

⁶George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 329. Bennema would refer to the complexity of the term itself as a difficult enterprise to explore. See Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*, WUNT 2. 148 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 216.

⁷However, later Rabbinic Judaism used פָּרַחֵלֶּט as a loan-word for παράκλητος. See Raymond. E. Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 13 (1967), 115-116, Gary M. Burge, *The Anointed Community: The Holy Spirit in the Johannine Tradition* ((Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,

of παράκλητος include: 'Intercessor/Spokesman/ Mediator,'⁸ 'Helper,'⁹ 'Representative,'¹⁰ supporter/ Sponsor,'¹¹ 'Exhorter/Comforter/Consoler,'¹² Counsellor,'¹³ 'Teacher/ Preacher,'¹⁴ 'Paraclete,'¹⁵ 'Advocate.'¹⁶ Given the con-

1987), 7.

⁸Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. AB 29A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966 and 1970), 117.

⁹Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 569. Bultmann argued on the basis of forced linguistic and conceptual association with the multiple 'helpers' that he discovered in Mandaean sources. Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1952), 1:164-183; 2: 1-92. However, Turner challenges Bultmann's position along this point with the following arguments: 1) that John speaks of but one Paraclete (on earth with the disciples), not a plurality of them; 2) the term *yawar*, which Bultmann translated from the Mandaean sources as 'helper,' rather 'bearers of (heavenly) light,' and 3) these figures have no forensic (legal) functions in the Mandaean literature. Max Turner, *The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Gifts – Then and Now* (Carlisle: Paternoster Hendrickson), 78. Also refer to M. E. Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit: A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (Heythrop Monographs 1; Huddersfield: Charlesworth, 1976), 95; Barclay Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of John* (New York: UBS, 1980), 466-467.

¹⁰G. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, SNTSMS (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 87, 120.

¹¹Kenneth Grayston, 'The Meaning of PARAKLĒTOS,' *JSNT* 13 (1981) 67-82:67, 75.

¹²John G. Davies, 'The Primary Meaning of PARAKLHTOS,' *JThS* 4 (1953) 35-38:35-38; Barrett, 'Spirit,' 1-15.

¹³James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, vol 1 of *Christianity in the Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 350; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 468, 478. This term is considered to be an adopted translation of the RSV and NIV, and could find some basis in e.g. Philo, *On Creation*, 23, where the writer speaks of God – without any *paraklētos* (for there was none beside him; God was alone) making the decision to confer benefits on the creation he was about to bring into being. Turner, *The Holy Spirit*, 78.

¹⁴E. Franck, *Revelation Taught: The Paraclete in the Gospel of John* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1985), 36.

cepts associated with it, παράκλητος primarily carries a legal role.¹⁷ In John 14-16, the *Paraclete* becomes a counsel for the persecuted (16:7-11); the only defense he makes is of Jesus, by witnessing to him rather than at any point coming to the aid of the disciples themselves (15:26).¹⁸

The actual ministry of the *Paraclete*, according to John, is exercised in connection with the world as well as with the church.¹⁹ This is shown in the following manner: 1) in the church the *Paraclete* indwells the disciples (John 14:16-17; cf. Ezek 2:2); 2) the *Paraclete* teaches the disciples and makes them recall the instruction of Jesus himself (John 14:26); 3) the *Paraclete* also bears witness to Jesus and reveals the true nature of their Lord to his followers (15:6); and 4) as the Spirit of truth the *Paraclete* guides the church prophetically “into all the truth” (16: 13-15).²⁰ It is “the Spirit of Truth,” “the Spirit who communicates truth.”²¹ Significantly, the function of the “Spirit who communicates truth” is to continue the work of revelation in the community.²²

The Prophetic Features of the Paraclete

A number of Johannine scholars acknowledge the

¹⁵Brown, ‘Paraclete,’ 119; Burge, *Community*, 9; Ridderbos, *Gospel*, 500-504.

¹⁶Brown, ‘Paraclete,’ 116; Turner, *Spirit*, 77.

¹⁷Stephen S. Smalley, “The Paraclete”: Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse.” In *Exploring the Gospel of John in Honor of D. Moody Smith* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996), 291. Further, the Paraclete’s role in the courtroom is that the Paraclete acts for the defense, as an advocate.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 76.

²²Ibid.

significance of prophecy in the Johannine community. From the vantage point of revelation, Burge opines that interest in the Paraclete has taken a significant turn for those who raise the point if the Paraclete is actually a disguised prophetic figure in John's community.²³ Johnston understands the Paraclete this way: "the Spirit Paraclete is the Spirit of God...an active divine power that becomes embodied in certain outstanding leaders within the Catholic Church."²⁴ The specific attributes of the Paraclete are thus present in the prophets, pastors, and church leaders in the Johannine church.²⁵

One contention here is that in the Johannine community all believers were considered potential prophets. They, in fact had similar anointing; the same Spirit that rested (Gk. μένειν, μένειν or remain) on Jesus, the Prophet, remained in them as well.²⁶ The Fourth Gospel seems to give the impression that prophecy was too important to be left to the prophets alone.²⁷ The Johannine community was a charismatic community in which the exalted Christ was still speaking through the Paraclete to the believers.²⁸ Significantly to John, the Paraclete will not only continue Jesus' revelatory work but will complete it.²⁹

²³Burge, *The Anointed Community*, 38.

²⁴Johnston, *Spirit-Paraclete*, 119.

²⁵Burge, 22.

²⁶See Stefan, "The Paraclete and Prophecy in the Johannine Community," 273-296.

²⁷Ibid., 274. Stefan further clarifies that usually scholars have been content to mention briefly that there may have been some prophets in the Johannine community, but they have not attempted to point out *who* these prophets were, *what* they did, and *how* they did it.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

The Sending of the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit

¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.... ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (John 14:17, 26)

At the beginning of the narrative in chapter 14, Jesus comforted his disciples with the pledge that his departure was not a final bereavement—that this will be to their advantage, for then the Spirit will be sent in his place.³⁰ The Spirit (14:15-18) is thus the distinguishing feature of this promise.³¹ When Jesus has ascended, God's purpose will be made apparent through his followers as they will be living in the age of the Spirit.³² Likewise, the emphasis on Jesus' promise is on the fact that the fragile followers of Jesus will have authority to imitate him.³³

Paraclete and its Associated Terms

In terms of the identification, the Paraclete is distinguishable by four names: paraclete (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), by "another paraclete" (14:16), as "the Spirit of Truth" (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and "the Holy Spirit" (14:26). These titles are thus found in the following: 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 16:13.

³⁰Keith Warrington, *The Message of the Holy Spirit: The Spirit of Encounter* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 99.

³¹*Ibid.*, 100.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*

14:16	<i>I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you always.</i>
14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit <i>whom the Father will send in my name</i> , will instruct you in everything, and remind you of all that I told you.
15:26	When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of Truth <i>who comes from the Father</i> and <i>whom I myself will send from the Father</i> he will bear witness on my behalf.
16:7	Yet I tell you the sober truth: It is much better for you that I go. If I fail to go, the Paraclete will never come to you. Whereas if I go, <i>I will send him to you.</i>

The above passages shows “[t]he same origin from Father and Son is implicit in the statement that everything the Father has belongs to the Son and it can, therefore be said that all the Paraclete teaches he takes from the Son (16:15).”³⁴ Moloney argues that “this insistence that the Paraclete comes from the Father (14:16, 26), even though Jesus now involves himself in the sending of the Spirit of Truth (14:7), points to the identity of the origin of the former Paraclete (Jesus) and the other Paraclete (Holy Spirit) in 14:16.”³⁵

Paraclete as Teacher

One of the roles and functions of the Paraclete, as far as the disciples are concerned, is that of a teacher. Here, the Paraclete is the teacher who will complete the message.³⁶ Thus:

³⁴John Wijngaards, MHM, *The Spirit in John* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1988), 52-53.

³⁵Francis J. Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor: Reading John 13-21* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1998), 71 n. 43.

³⁶Ibid.

14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, <i>will instruct you in everything</i> , and remind you of all that I told you.
16:13	When he comes, however, being the Spirit of Truth , <i>he will guide you to all truth.</i>
16:13	He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears, <i>and will announce to you the things to come.</i>

Likewise, the Paraclete will draw on Jesus' own image presented in the following:

14:26	The Paraclete , the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you in everything, <i>and remind you of all that I told you.</i>
16:13	When he comes, however, being the Spirit of Truth , he will guide you to all truth. <i>He will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears</i> , and will announce to you the things to come.
16:14	In doing this <i>he will give glory to me, because he will have received from me what he will announce to you.</i>

Central to all these passages is the figure of the Paraclete. It is apparent that the term Paraclete must have been used for a special theological reason.³⁷ What we can gather here is that “the gospel in its present form presents the Paraclete as the realization of the Spirit.”³⁸

³⁷Ibid. 54.

³⁸Ibid.

This is the Spirit of Truth. (v. 17)

Why is the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of truth? As it is claimed, the identity of the other Paraclete is now made clear: he is the Spirit of truth as presented in John 4:23-24³⁹ For Morris, this is an unusual expression, found nowhere else in the New Testament and not even common in Jewish writings.⁴⁰ Rather, it is found in the Qumran scrolls.⁴¹ The Paraclete is emphatically and repeatedly identified with 'the Spirit of Truth,' "The Father will give you another paraclete, who will be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth..." (14:16-17). In the context of chapter 14, Jesus has just been characterized as "the truth" (14:6), in keeping with statements already made in the prologue (1:14, 7).⁴² In all the dimensions, the Spirit is involved: in the truth regarding Jesus; as the eschatological gift of God; in imparting true knowledge of God; operative in both worship and sanctification; and pointing people to the person of Jesus.⁴³ In John's perspective, truth means revelation, and Jesus Christ is both the act and the

³⁹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 500.

⁴⁰Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William Eerdmans, 1995), 154.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁴²Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Encountering John: The Gospel in Historical, Literary and Theological Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), 438. Presents the concept of truth as depicted in the Fourth Gospel which encompasses the following features: a) Firstly, truthfulness as against falsehood: "to speak the truth" means to make a true rather than false statement; b) Secondly, truth in its certainty as compared to previous, preliminary expressions: this is its eschatological dimension; c) Thirdly, truth as a distinguishable body of knowledge with actual propositional content; d) Fourthly, truth as a sphere of operation, be it worship or sanctification; and e) Lastly, truth as relational fidelity.

⁴³*Ibid.*

content of that revelation, “I am the truth” (14:6).⁴⁴ As Wijngaards argues, the truth stands for everything that came to light in Jesus Christ.⁴⁵

T. G. Brown claims that ‘truth’ plays a role in delineating between the world and the realm of God elsewhere in the Gospel, and it is the Gospel’s dualistic context that best accounts for the description of the Paraclete-Spirit as ‘of Truth,’ or as ‘the true Spirit.’⁴⁶ In John 8:43-47 truth and falsehood are used to divide those who are from God and those who are from the devil:

Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.

The passage itself shows that Jesus’ word is truth because he speaks the words of God, while the words of the devil are lies.⁴⁷ And it is in this context where we should understand the Evangelist’s use of the title ‘Spirit of truth.’ Describing the Paraclete as the “Spirit of Truth” establishes a “competitive claim, characterizing the Paraclete as a representative of the God-realm against the spiritual representatives of ‘the ruler of the

⁴⁴Ibid., Wijngaards, 74.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Tricia Gates Brown, “Spirit in the Writings of John: Johannine Pneumatology in Social Scientific Perspective,” in *JSNT* Sup 253 (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 200.

⁴⁷Ibid.

world.”⁴⁸ Hence, the Spirit of Truth is the *good* Paraclete, in comparison to the false ones of the world, who are unable to provide access to truth because they are not of Divine origin.

In John 14:17, this Paraclete is the “Spirit of Truth,” an expression that was current in Judaism.⁴⁹ Montague clarifies that truth here does not mean abstract or philosophical truth, neither does it signify the moral virtue of veracity.⁵⁰ The term suggests something more akin to the view of the Qumran covenanters, for whom it meant God’s revealed way of life triumphant in the final battle over all enemies of God.⁵¹ As understood, the “spirit of truth” is a messenger helping the sons of light in their struggle against the powers of darkness led by the spirit of falsehood.⁵²

Moreover, as stated in 16:13, the Spirit of Truth will accompany the disciples ‘into all the truth’ (16:13). The Paraclete is called the Spirit of Truth not only because the Paraclete represents truth in opposition to the false spirits of the world, but because the Paraclete provides believers with access to ‘truth.’ So, verse 17 affirms that this Spirit abides within the lives of believers.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Köstenberger, *John*, 438.

⁵⁰George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth in the Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 351.

⁵¹Ibid. The Qumran literature affirms that God placed within humankind “two spirits so that he would walk with them until the moment of his visitation; they are the spirits of truth and deceit.” However, these parallels are merely those of language, not thought. See Köstenberger, *John*, 438.

⁵²Ibid.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything. (v. 26)

We have seen that the statement of Jesus tells us that the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth (14:17), and that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit (14:26). Here, the Paraclete is described: a) First, the Holy Spirit will be sent by the Father in Jesus' name; b) Second, the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples all things; and c) Third, the Holy Spirit will bring to the disciples' remembrance all that Jesus has said.⁵³ As discussed, the titles "Holy Spirit" and "Paraclete" are interchangeable.⁵⁴ The task of the Paraclete in this passage (vv. 25-26) goes beyond what is said of him in vv. 16-17.

In the Fourth Gospel the disciples are presented to have failed throughout the ministry of Jesus, especially in their understanding of Jesus.⁵⁵ Thus, one of the Spirit's principal tasks is to remind the disciples of Jesus' teaching and thus, in the new situation after the resurrection, to help them grasp its significance. Hence, to teach them what it meant.⁵⁶ The promise articulated in v. 26 has in view the Spirit's role to the first generation of disciples—for them to have full understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ Carson is clear in saying that "the Spirit's ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself."⁵⁸

Admittedly, the Paraclete theme is rather complex. However, a closer look at the declaration of Jesus

⁵³Niceta M. Vargas, *Word and Witness: An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2013), 321.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Carson, *John*, 505.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

regarding the sending of the Spirit-Paraclete reveals the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete. Barrett presents significant points: First, in the early pages of the gospel, the references to the Spirit were most closely connected with the church's worship. Second, in the Farewell Discourses, the Paraclete is the direct equivalent of the Spirit of truth.⁵⁹ Franck adds that the Paraclete is connected with the Spirit. He argues that the Paraclete is a divine, but abstract power. Hence, he notes "[t]he Spirit is the power, which renews, gives life and strength (3:5f; 6:63; 20:22). True worship is done in the Spirit (14:23)."⁶⁰ With the arguments presented, it is clear the word 'Paraclete' is applied to the Holy Spirit/the Spirit of Truth. Likewise, John 14:26 does actually identify the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit.

In the Fourth Gospel, a group of five passages refer to the Holy Spirit as "Paraclete" or "Spirit of truth" (14:16, 17, 25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7–11, 13–15). Besides their distinct terminologies, what sets these passages apart from others is that first, it all happens in the "Farewell

⁵⁹C. K. Barrett, 'The Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel,' in *JTS NS* 1 (1950), 1-15:12. In the same note, for Dunn 'in Spirit' must imply 'by inspiration of the Spirit' – that is, charismatic worship – for in the immediate context, worship in Spirit is set in pointed contrast to worship in temple and sacred place. J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians as Reflected in the New Testament* (NTL) (London: SCM, 1975), 353.

⁶⁰Franck, *Revelation Taught*, 125. However, Johnston clarifies that the identification between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit was made in order to refute the heretical claims about angelic intercessors. Johnston, *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*, 119. In the same manner, R. E. Brown admits that the functions of the Paraclete are not *prima facie* those of the Spirit. See R. E. Brown, 'The Paraclete,' 113n. Smalley, *John*, 261. He reminds by saying that we shall not be mistaken if we identify the Johannine Paraclete with the Spirit himself.

Discourses” (chaps. 14–17); second, they refer to the coming of the Spirit; and; third, they describe functions completely different from the ones found in the Gospel’s narrative sections (chaps. 1–13, 18–21). While in those sections the Holy Spirit is mostly a life-giving power through which God regenerates and transforms God’s believers (3:3, 5, 6; 6:63; 7:37, 38), the predominant idea in the Farewell Discourses features that of an Instructor, a Witness, and a Guide—concepts that go way beyond the impression of an impersonal power. In fact, those five passages “provide the strongest evidence for conceiving of the Spirit as a distinct figure, an independent agent or actor.”⁶¹

In 14:15-17 Jesus promises his disciples that he will send them “another paraclete.” This implies, though, that a *Paraclete* already exists. Given the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit, one must grant that the first Paraclete was believed to be Jesus himself.⁶² However, there are different views along this point: first, there is a view that considers the idea that Jesus and the Spirit can be linked under the concept of Paraclete;⁶³ second, others consider the Paraclete to be distinct from Jesus while others see the Paraclete as the Presence of the Risen Christ in the community; third,

⁶¹Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 149.

⁶²J.D. Dunn, *The Christ and the Spirit*, vol. 2: *Pneumatology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 17; D. Lamont, *Studies in the Johannine Writings* (London: James Clark, 1956), 118-119. But, Brown mentions of another interpretation of ‘another *Paraclete*’ as he says” ‘The Father will give you another, a Paraclete,’ thus ruling out any allusion to a previous *Paraclete*; however, this translation is not generally received. Brown, ‘Paraclete,’ 114n. Also refer to the studies of J. C. Meagher, ‘John: 1:14 and the New Temple,’ in *JBL* 88 (1969), 65-66.

⁶³Morris, “The Jesus of St. John,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 147.

still others consider Jesus and the Paraclete as identical.⁶⁴ We argue that although there is a glimpse of functional similarity between Jesus (other Paraclete) and the Paraclete, however, these two characters are not identical.⁶⁵

Ultimately the fundamental role of the Paraclete is expressed by the phrase in v. 16, “he might be with you forever.” As Jesus’ presence itself has been crucial for the group identity of the disciples, so the presence of the Paraclete in the future community of believers is of crucial importance for keeping its self-identity. This

⁶⁴Anandaraj argues that Jesus is the heavenly *Paraclete*, since the *Paraclete* is the one to remain on earth with the disciples and their followers. He further pointed out that Spirit-*Paraclete* and Jesus are not assimilated into each other. Therefore, they cannot be identical. See F. Anandaraj, ‘Johannine Understanding of the *Paraclete*,’ in *Living Word* 86 (1980), 267-286:270. According to Olsson, for John, Jesus is the Word, the Life, the Light and God, but not the Spirit. B. Olsson, ‘Deus semper maior? On God in the Johannine Writings’ in *New Readings in John: Literary and Theological Perspectives: Essays from the Scandinavian Conference on the Fourth Gospel – Århus 1997*, eds. J. Nissen and S. Pedersen, JSNTSS 182 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1999), 143-171: 159. Dunn says, ‘The lengthening time gap between John and the historical Jesus, and the continuing delay of the parousia do not mean a steadily increasing distance between each generation of Christians and Christ. On the contrary, each generation is as close to Jesus as the last – and the first – because the *Paraclete* is the immediate link between Jesus and his disciples in every generation.’ See Dunn, *Jesus*, 351. Here, Dunn views the *Paraclete* only as a link between Jesus and the Church. In the same manner for U. Schnelle the work of the *Paraclete* cannot be understood simply as a fully equivalent continuation of the life of Jesus. See Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John*, trans. L. McMaloney (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 27. From the different arguments presented, scholars differ regarding the exact relationship between Jesus and the *Paraclete*.

⁶⁵Mirasol C. Navidad, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (*John 20:22*) as the Fulfillment of Johannine Pneumatological Expectation, unpublished Doctoral Dissertation (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 2016), 198.

presence of the Paraclete in the community is described more concretely in v.17: “he abides with you, and he will be with you.” In short, the function of the Paraclete is indwelling the community of disciples. Thus the various functions of the Paraclete in the farewell discourse originate from this basic function, which is indwelling in or among the disciples.⁶⁶

In the light of verse 26, “...and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you...,” the Spirit’s role is to bring to remembrance the words of the earthly Jesus. In this verse the new revelation what the Spirit-Paraclete brings is in fact a continuation of the revelation brought by the first Paraclete (Jesus); Jesus in his exalted state continues to speak to the believers through the Spirit. As Betz rightly puts it, “on earth the ever abiding paraclete works side by side with the exalted Lord Christ who is in heaven.”⁶⁷ The Paraclete is the only one who “reveals the mind of Christ” to the community.⁶⁸ Therefore, Christ in his exalted state will continue to speak giving direction to the church (*ekklesia*). Since during his earthly ministry Jesus’ words included predictive prophecies (John 12:32; 13:19; 16:4), it is only natural to assert that he will continue to predict things (through the Paraclete) even after his exaltation.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Kim, 264.

⁶⁷Otto Betz, *Der Paraklet* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 149.

⁶⁸Bruce Vawter, “John’s Doctrine of the Spirit: A Summary of his Eschatology,” in *A Companion to John* (New York: Alba House, 1977), 179. It may be difficult to point out the content of the “new revelation” brought by the Paraclete, some scholars believe that it is similar to other examples mentioned in some New Testament books and other Second Temple Jewish writings. Cf. Stefan, “Pneuma,” 284.

⁶⁹See further discussion on Jesus’ predictive words in the work of Adele Reinhartz, “Jesus as Prophet: Predictive Prolepses in the Fourth Gospel,” *JSNT* 36 (1989): 3-16.

The Spirit of Truth who Testifies

But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me. (John 15:26)

In this particular Paraclete saying, the Paraclete is introduced as the one who will bear witness to Jesus. The Christocentric function is obvious in that if Jesus came to glorify the Father, the Paraclete will come to glorify Jesus. The Paraclete is the Spirit who bears witness to the Truth, that is Jesus. The word μαρτυρήσει (bear witness; testify) reflects the setting of the post-Easter community of mission. Significantly, the disciples representing the future Christian community, will also participate in the missionary work of the Paraclete. The witness of the Paraclete and the witness of disciples are not in contradiction. They are, in fact co-existent.⁷⁰ In terms of the Spirit being sent to believers, we see a movement that in John 14:16, Jesus is described as requesting the Father to give the Spirit to his followers.⁷¹ However, in John 15:26 Jesus declares that he will send the Spirit from the Father, while in 14:26 John declares that the Father will send the Spirit in the name of Jesus.⁷² And in 6:13 he simply announces that the Spirit will come.⁷³ Warrington clarifies that “the sending of the Spirit is not a unilateral act on the part of Jesus or the Father but part of the divine plan to take care of believers in the physical absence of Jesus.”⁷⁴

John 15:26-27 features the idea that Jesus’ mission

⁷⁰Kim, 266.

⁷¹Warrington, *The Message of the Holy Spirit*, 104.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

parallels that of the Paraclete:

8:42	Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.
13:3	Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God...
16:27	...for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.
17:8	...for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

In fact, R. E. Brown shows very clearly how the functions of the Paraclete, formally identified as the Holy Spirit (14:26) and the Spirit of Truth (14:17; 15:26; cf. 16:13), are copied from those of Jesus himself.⁷⁵

14:26	When he has departed the Paraclete will teach (διδάπάντα) and remind (ὑπομνήσει) the disciples of all that he has said to them.
15:26	He will also bear witness to Jesus (μαρτυρήσει).
16:13	He will speak what he hears (ὅσα ἀκούσει λαλήσει) and expound the things to come (τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ).
16:14	Jesus declares, 'he will take from what is me and expound it to you' (ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν).

This point is further reinforced by the clause, 'who comes from the Father,' which refers to the mission of

⁷⁵R. E. Brown, *John*, 1141 ff.

the Spirit, in analogy with the mission of the Son.⁷⁶ Here, we see clearly that the Paraclete can be seen as having the same function as Jesus in his words and works on earth.⁷⁷ He is Jesus' witness.⁷⁸ That in the midst of the hatred described by Jesus in 15:18-21, the Paraclete sent from the Father will continue to bear witness to Jesus.⁷⁹ Moreover, the other Paraclete, the Spirit of truth whom Jesus will send from the Father and who proceeds from the Father, continues this revelation (15.26), along with the disciples, who have been with Jesus from the beginning hearing his word and seeing his works⁸⁰ although the Paraclete cannot speak to the world directly, but has to make use of the disciples to do this.⁸¹

With this in mind, Hawkin sees its importance in preparing the reader for the next Paraclete passage in chapter 16 where we have a forensic description of his work.⁸² Further, the Paraclete, who will be with Jesus' followers will "dwell" with them (14:16-17), whose task it is to "teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (14:26), is the only assurance of their consolation amidst the hatred of the world.⁸³ It is emphasized that since the Revealer must return to the Father who sent him, it is the Paraclete, "even the Spirit of truth," who assures the permanence of the revelation in the world by continuing to bear

⁷⁶Carson, *John*, 529.

⁷⁷Schnackenburg, *John*, 117.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

⁷⁹Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 70.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*Ibid.*

⁸²Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 74.

⁸³Stanley B. Marrow, *The Gospel of John* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995), 285.

witness to the Revealer in the community of those who believe in him.⁸⁴

This particular passage is situated in a setting which highlights the world's rejection of Jesus and his disciples: 'If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also' (15:21). So, the world's rejection of Christ (15:22 and 15:24) establishes its guilt. Thus, the repeated references to conflict, guilt, and witness establish the forensic character of the passage.⁸⁵ The forensic function of the Paraclete is explicit in 15:26, that of a witness.⁸⁶ One significance of 15:26 is an illumination why the Spirit is called an 'Advocate.' The context of our passage, John 15:26 presents a litigation between God/Jesus and the world, and the matter in question is about the debate on Messianism and divine Sonship of Jesus.⁸⁷ Specifically, the dispute between Jesus and the world is

⁸⁴Ibid. It is likewise noted in this verse 1) First, that the Spirit, sent by the Son "from the Father," "proceeds from the Father" (cf. "I will send him to you"); 2) Second, in spite of the fact that the Paraclete who "will bear witness to me" here (15:26), the evangelist will later claim the same task to himself: "He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe" (19:35); and "This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true (21:24). What is highlighted in this point is that the claim is not necessarily limited to the evangelist. Rather, it extends to all the proclaimers of the gospel down the ages, and, in doing so, lends even greater significance to the reminder that the Paraclete "will bear witness to me" (15:26).

⁸⁵Robert P. Menzies, "John and the Development of Early Christian Pneumatology," in *The Spirit and Spirituality: Essays in Honour of Russell P. Spittler* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 46.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Andrew T. Lincoln, 'Trials, Plots and the Narrative of the Fourth Gospel,' in *JSNT* 56 (1994), 3-30. Also refer to Felix Porsch, *Pneuma und Wort: Ein Exegetischer Beitrag zur Pneumatologie des Johannesevangeliums* (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1974), 222-227; J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 220-232, 523-527.

about Jesus' claims to have life in himself, to make life available to people and to have an intimate relationship with God.⁸⁸ In the farewell discourse, Jesus prepares his disciples for what will happen; the legal proceedings with the world will not end and the witness will not be tight-lipped, because then the case would be lost by default.⁸⁹

Whom I will send to you from the Father. (v.16:26a)

What calls our attention of this phrase is the emphatic use of the pronoun Ἐγώ (Ego), which emphasizes Christ's active role in the process of sending the Holy Spirit. This point is affirmed by Newman and Nida as they say, "The locational relations in the clause 'I will send Him to you from the Father' are rather complex; and since the role of Jesus as the agent is primarily causative, it may be necessary to translate this clause 'I will cause him to go from the Father and to come to you.'"⁹⁰

As to the time of the sending of the Spirit, Hendriksen argues, "[t]he sending of the Spirit was a matter of the future. Pentecost had not yet arrived. Hence, the future tense is used – 'I will send.'"⁹¹ In the same way Godet comments that "[i]n saying: whom I will send, Jesus is necessarily thinking of his approaching reinstatement in the divine condition; and in adding from the Father, He acknowledges His subor-

⁸⁸See, Turner, *Spirit*, 85-86.

⁸⁹Allen Billington, 'The Paraclete and Mission in the Fourth Gospel,' in *Mission and Meaning: Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell*, eds. A. Billington, T. Lane and M. Turner (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1995), 90-115: 100.

⁹⁰Barclay, *A Translator's Handbook*, 497.

⁹¹William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953), 317.

dination to the Father, even when He shall have recovered that condition.”⁹² Morris likewise explains the time of the Spirit’s coming. He says,

Jesus is surely saying that, when he leaves this earth to go to be with his Father, he will send the Spirit to them, the Spirit who is with the Father. There appears to be some emphasis on the fact that, even though it is Jesus who will send the Spirit, it is from the Father that he will send him. Indeed, it can be said that it is from the Father that the Spirit proceeds.⁹³

Evident here is the fact that just as the first phrase of John 15:26 highlights the active role of the Spirit in coming, the second phrase emphasizes the active role of Jesus in sending the Spirit. Bernard expresses the different ways in which the sending of the Spirit is highlighted: “So also at 16:7, the promise is that Jesus will send the Paraclete; but at 14:16 He is to be given by the Father in response to the prayer of Jesus, and at 14:26 the Father is to send Him in the name of Jesus.”⁹⁴

Admittedly, this passage contains some exegetical difficulty.⁹⁵ Menzies identifies significant factors along this point: a) that its rejection (unbelief) of Christ is the essence of its sin; b) that although the world crucified Jesus as a criminal, his death, resurrection, and exaltation vindicate him as the Righteous One; c) Jesus’ vindication establishes that those who oppose him

⁹²Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1893), 304.

⁹³Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986), 533.

⁹⁴John Henry Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 498.

⁹⁵Menzies, “John and the Development of Early Christian Pneumatology,” 46.

already stand condemned.⁹⁶ In this context, the Paraclete, then will bear witness against the world.⁹⁷

When Jesus departs, the cosmic trial continues through the Paraclete and the disciples, and Jesus will pass his 'advocacy' to the Spirit.⁹⁸ With their relationship with Jesus, the disciples now have become identified with Jesus, and also with the trial. So, the conflict between Jesus and 'the Jews' is paradigmatic for the trial between the believers (guided by the Paraclete) and the world.⁹⁹ We see in John 14:18 that Jesus reassures the disciples that he would not leave them ὀρφανούς or helpless in the face of the world's persecution. Jesus would come to them; for they would have an advocate in the legal process.¹⁰⁰

What exactly are the forensic functions of the Paraclete? John 15:26 stresses the Paraclete's role as witness in a world that would hate and persecute the disciples (15:18-16:4). John does not offer any explanation in what way the Spirit bears witness.¹⁰¹ However, it would seem that it is in the way the Spirit dwells in believers and leads them in the right way.¹⁰² As the Spirit leads and directs them, so they are led into fuller understanding of who and what Jesus was and to a firmer commitment to his cause.¹⁰³

⁹⁶Ibid., 46-47.

⁹⁷Ibid., 47.

⁹⁸Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, 234.

⁹⁹Porsch, *Pneuma*, 224.

¹⁰⁰David Earl Holwerda, *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in the Gospel of John: A Critique of Rudolf Bultmann's Present Eschatology* (Kampen: Kok, 1959), 43-48. Ridderbos refuses to accept the idea of the Paraclete acting as Advocate in a cosmic trial taking place before God as prosecutor or public defender in a trial that is still undecided. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 531-532

¹⁰¹Morris, *Jesus*, 161.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

Windisch is convinced that the witness of the Paraclete is independent of the disciples.¹⁰⁴ De la Potterie highlights that the Paraclete's witness is formally distinguished from the disciples' witness; the Paraclete's witness is a completely interior one, directed, not to the world, but to the conscience of the disciples to enlighten and strengthen them in times of persecution.¹⁰⁵ But, Windisch and de la Potterie seem to separate the witness of the Paraclete and that of the disciples. Bennema however argues that there are perhaps not two distinct kinds of witness but instead two modes of witness, i.e. coordination instead of separation.¹⁰⁶ With this proposal the Paraclete is viewed as one who bears witness to Jesus in and through (the witness of) the disciples. And that the central object of the Paraclete's witness is to the world, "[a]nd when he comes he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment..." (Jn 16:8). The Paraclete engages the world through the mission of the disciples.¹⁰⁷

Further, the phrase ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ is the first mention of direct witness of the Spirit himself (15:26). The verb μαρτυρῶ is also used in the first explicit instruction for the disciples to be witnesses. (15:27). Here, the seeming continuity between Jesus as Paraclete and the Spirit as Paraclete is seen in the similarity between the bases for their legitimacy as witnesses to the truth. Therefore, the qualification of

¹⁰⁴Hans Windisch, 'Jesus and the Spirit in the Gospel of John' in *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel* ed. J. Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 27-38: 9.

¹⁰⁵De la Potterie, "The Truth in Saint John," *The Interpretation of John*. (London: SPCK, 1986), 60-61; 'Paraclete,' 133, 135.

¹⁰⁶Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom*, 234.

¹⁰⁷Billington, "The Paraclete and Mission, 108-109.

the Spirit as a witness is based on his being sent by Jesus and his coming from the Father (15:26).

The Spirit of Truth who Comes from the Father. (v. 15:26b)

In our previous discussion we see that the Spirit is characterized by the quality of truth. Lange argues how this revelation is built upon a previous statement of his qualities. He says that “[H]e is first promised as the Spirit of faith and of the living knowledge of Christ (14:16). Here He is promised as the Spirit of steadfast testimony for Christ.”¹⁰⁸ So this sense of the true testimony to be given by the Spirit is certainly evident in this phrase, but there is also something more profound that reflects the very nature or character of the Spirit, as Bernards cites his opinion in saying that,

In this Last Discourse, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας is but another name for the Paraclete who is to be sent after Jesus has been withdrawn from the sight of men [sic]. The spirit of truth is the Spirit which brings truth and impresses it on the conscience of the world. In this passage the leading thought is of the witness to Jesus, infallibly true, however perverted the opinion of the world about Him may be. The phrase τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας has a double meaning. It basically 1) is the Spirit which brings truth and gives true testimony, but 2) this is the case because the Spirit has truth as the essential characteristic of His being. So, also the Logos is πλήρης ἀληθείας (1:14), and Jesus says, later in the discourse, Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ ὁδὸς καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια (14:6).¹⁰⁹

Not only is the Spirit the One who acts and testifies truly, but He is also the One who is truth as the essence or core of His existence. The Spirit of truth, then, is a

¹⁰⁸John P. Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan publishing House, 1987), 469.

¹⁰⁹Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 499.

significant expansion on the meaning of the noun *Paraclete* that is introduced in the first phrase of this verse. In a way this allows us to equate the *Paraclete* and the Spirit.

Moreover, what we notice from our passage, Jn 15:26, is the shifting of attention from persecution to the role of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit bears witness to Jesus and the Paraclete's witness is directed toward the world.¹¹⁰ Morris reiterated this point by saying that the particular function of the Spirit is that of witness, and specifically of witness to Christ.¹¹¹ Noticeably, the synonym, Spirit of Truth, used here for the Paraclete functions differently from its usage elsewhere.¹¹² So, in John 15:26, the Spirit of Truth bears witness about Jesus to the world.¹¹³

What is significant here is that the disciples who represent the future Christian community, will also engage in the missionary work of the Paraclete. And that the witness of the Paraclete and the witness of disciples are not after all separate; however, they are in fact co-existent.¹¹⁴ The Paraclete will do his work through the believing community. Noticeably, the second person plural ὑμεῖς [hūmeis or you] in 15:27 not only includes the disciples from the period of Jesus' earthly life, but also all believers for all time.

¹¹⁰Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1994), 216.

¹¹¹Morris, *John*, 683.

¹¹²Ibid. For instance, in T. Judah 20:1, 3, 5, "So understand, my children, that two spirits await an opportunity with humanity: the spirit of truth and the spirit of error...the things of truth and the things of error are written in the affections of man[sic]."

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Kim, 'The Paraclete,' 266.

The Spirit who Speaks only what is Heard

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (John 16:13)

This passage is still part of the Paraclete passage as it is evident from the use of “the Spirit of Truth” in v. 13. Here, for the third time the Paraclete is called “the Spirit of truth” (14:17, 15:26). The focus here is upon the Paraclete’s relation not to the external world but to the disciples.¹¹⁵ We note that this is the last passage concerning the action of the Spirit with regard to the truth, in the context of the coming of the Spirit of truth.¹¹⁶ “He will guide you into all the truth”¹¹⁷ brings us back to what the Psalmist says in reference to the true knowledge of God that believers desire of him so as to be able to “walk” in its light (e.g. Ps 25:5; 86:11). In that truth the Spirit will from now on guide the disciples and in fullness (“all truth”).¹¹⁸

We note here that the Paraclete *will guide you in* (Gk. *en* is the best reading; *eis*, ‘into,’ as in NIV, is secondary) all truth. Carson commented that “if there is a distinction between ‘*in* all truth’ and ‘*into* all truth,’ it is that the latter hints at the truth that the disciples have not yet in any sense penetrated, while ‘*in* all truth’ suggests an exploration of truth already principally

¹¹⁵Montague, *The Holy Spirit*, 359-360.

¹¹⁶Ridderbos, *John*, 535.

¹¹⁷Michaels notes that the phrase “in all the truth” is *not* the scientific or philosophical truth about the natural world, not the things humans can learn on their own by rational inquiry or observation. Rather, as Jesus will quickly point out, it is *his* truth, in the sense of the truth the Father has given him to make known, the “still much more” that is left to say (v. 12). See Michaels, *John*, 836.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*

disclosed.¹¹⁹ Carson further expounds his point, “Jesus himself is the truth (14:6); now the Spirit of truth leads the disciples into all the implications of the truth, the revelation, intrinsically bound up with Jesus Christ. There is no other locus of truth; this is *all truth*.¹²⁰

Morris comments that “there are vistas of truth set before them which they cannot as yet enter, but they will enter when the Spirit comes.”¹²¹ So, as the days go by the Spirit will lead them deeper and deeper into a knowledge of truth.¹²²

It is worth investigating the formula “guide you into all the truth” with the following expressions:

...speak whatever he hears...

It is expressed that the Paraclete ‘will not speak on his own,’ but will speak whatever he hears.’ In other words, the Paraclete will say the same as Jesus says, as revealer on earth, of his relationship with the Father who sent him.¹²³ Schnackenburg is convinced that if this idea of mission is extended, “this emphasis ought to bring the connection between the Paraclete and Jesus and the continuity of Jesus’ revelation into prominence in the present saying about the Paraclete (v. 14).”¹²⁴ With this phrase the reader is being reminded that the

¹¹⁹Carson, *John*, 539. He also pointed out that if a distinction is to be maintained between the two prepositions, the one suggested above seems much more likely than the alternative suggestion, that *eis* (‘into’) is original and here means ‘into the very heart of the truth’ – an instance of a rather periphrastic reading. Cf. *Ibid.*, n. 1.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 539-540.

¹²¹Morris, *John*, 699.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 700.

¹²³See John 7:17f; 8:28; 14:10; also refer to 5:19, 30; 8:42.

¹²⁴Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 135.

period of the Spirit is still an in-between time.¹²⁵ In fact R. E. Brown asserts:

We find no evidence that Johannine theology ever abandoned the hope of the final return of Jesus in visible glory, although the Gospel clearly puts more emphasis on all the eschatological features that have already been realized in Jesus' first coming. The question is not one of the presence of Jesus in and through the Paraclete as opposed to the coming of Jesus in glory, but one of the relative importance to be given to each.¹²⁶

From the text we see that the author insists there are things "yet to come". That "the revealing task of the Paraclete points toward these things that are yet to come (v. 13b). Some scholars have noticed that prophecy might include the prediction of the future, a disclosure of the things to come.¹²⁷ Moloney argues that the gift of the Spirit does not mark the end of the story but signals a new stage after the departure and glorification of

¹²⁵Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 87.

¹²⁶R.E. Brown, "The Paraclete," 113.

¹²⁷Scholars who noticed prophecy in this regard includes: David E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 89; Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and its Hellenistic Environment* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), 222-29; C. M. Robeck, "The Gift of Prophecy in Acts and Paul," in *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 5 (1975): 50. Stefan in his article further clarifies the predictive function of Christian prophecy with the following points: 1) That it was the general view that the Old Testament prophets had been predictors of the future. Hence, in the Pentateuch Moses is presented as prophesying about the future coming of a great prophet (Deut. 18:15-18 cf. John 4:19). 2) That Moses also established that the criterion for knowing the true prophets was the fulfillment of their predictions (Deut. 18:21-22). 3) The prophet Jeremiah predicted that Israel would suffer military defeat and exile (Jer. 3:12-14) and would also return to the land (Jer. 3:18; see also Jer 23: 8; Ezek 11:17; Hos 1:11; Mic 2:12; Zec 10:6-10. See Stefan, "The Paraclete," 275.

Jesus, the period of the Spirit-filled community of worshipping disciples.¹²⁸

This is seen as the only occurrence in the New Testament where this verb (λαλειν, to speak) is used to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit.¹²⁹ De La Potterie believes that by using the verb λαλειν, John may probably want to suggest that the action of the Spirit is in view of a continuation of that of Jesus, which was a revelation (expressed with the words λογος and λαλειν).¹³⁰ Given that Jesus proclaims that he is the way and the truth (14:6), it seems evident that he is telling the disciples that the Spirit of truth will also replace Jesus in this function.¹³¹ So, just as Jesus expressed that he speaks only what he heard from his Father (8:28; 12:49), so the Spirit of truth will speak what that one had heard.¹³² In this context, the Spirit will not bring new revelation, or disclose new mysteries; rather, in the proclamation effected by him, the word that Jesus spoke continues to be efficacious.¹³³ So, the phrase ‘whatever he hears he will speak...’ signifies that the action of the Spirit involves repeating in the Church the words spoken by Jesus.

¹²⁸Moloney, *Glory Not Dishonor*, 88.

¹²⁹De La Potterie, “The Truth in Saint John,” 76.

¹³⁰Ibid., 76-77. De La Potterie clarifies that the difference between the revelation of Christ and that of the Spirit is that “the first was still veiled, in parables, whereas the second will be open, in the full light of day: in this second phase of revelation the role of the Spirit will not be to bring a new revelation, but to display in a clear light the words of revelation of Jesus.” Ibid. This was actually the essence of what 14:26 means, “the Paraclete/Advocate...will remind you of all that I have said to you.” This explains further that the Paraclete will let them understand the true essence and bearing of the words of Jesus.

¹³¹Wes Howard-Brook, *Becoming Children of God: John's Gospel and Radical Discipleship* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 347.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ridderbos, *John*, 536.

It is now the task of the Spirit of truth to guide the community of believers “into all the truth” (16:13a). Thus, Jesus goes on to remind his disciples that the Spirit of truth “will not speak on his own authority (16:13).¹³⁴ The Paraclete is the Spirit of truth whom Jesus will send after his departure from this world (“I will send them to you...” 16:7). The task which the Paraclete performs is the “preservation of the revelation in its entirety, integrally: ‘whatever he hears he will speak’ in 16:13.”¹³⁵

He will declare to you... (ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν)

This passage, “he will declare to you the things that are to come,” cannot be claimed as a completely new pronouncement extending beyond Jesus’ revelation, but rather a new disclosure of future events.¹³⁶ In other words, the Spirit does not offer a new revelation independent of Christ.¹³⁷ What is attributed to the Paraclete here is that he will guide the community into the future and make clear to it what is coming.¹³⁸ Here, the Evangelist draws the reader’s attention to the predictive function of the Paraclete, a function materialized through the prophetic utterances of the Johannine believers. Stefan clarifies that in the Johannine community all believers were potential prophets, whose prophecies might include prediction of future events.¹³⁹

De La Potterie compared this expression to a reprise and it constitutes the most important element of the

¹³⁴Marrow, *John*, 293.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Schnackenburg, *John*, 135.

¹³⁷Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Stefan, “The Paraclete,” 276.

promise.¹⁴⁰ This compound verb *anangellein* should be understood not just simply to “announce,” but rather it is best understood as “to announce or reveal something which up to now has been unknown or secret.”¹⁴¹ As noted, this word occurs frequently in LXX of Isaiah and Jeremiah (Is. 40:1-11; Jer. 18:2, 50:2), as well as in the apocalyptic literature in the special sense of “revealing the hidden meaning of a dream or mystery.”¹⁴² This brings us to the insight that the role of the Spirit-Paraclete is significant—to interpret, through the Church, the revelation of Jesus, which is still not fully understood; and that “he will have to reveal to them its true meaning and all that it implies.”¹⁴³ In other words, the Church has the promise of the Spirit of truth to guide it into the “truth-as-a-whole” (v. 13), which can only be fully revealed at the end, when “the things that are to come” have fully come.¹⁴⁴

That the Spirit will “declare to you the things that are to come” (16:13) serves as a reminder to the believers that the eschatological nature of the revelation is not a promise of apocalyptic spectacles.¹⁴⁵ Marrow further comments,

With the advent of the Revealer into the world, the “end” is already here; and because it is already here, the future of the believers is secure and lies open before them. The security and assurance about the future that is genuinely theirs is the constant task of the Paraclete: “to be with you for ever (14:16).”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 77.

¹⁴¹Cf. Zorell, *Lexicon graecum Novi Testamenti*, s.v.

¹⁴²De La Potterie, ‘The Truth,’ 77 n.27.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Newbigin, *The Light Has Come*, 217.

¹⁴⁵Marrow, *John*, 293.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

This phrase points to the following: 1) first, the hour that is coming, that is, the time of Jesus' glorification; 2) second, the significance of Jesus' teaching for the time of the church after Jesus' glorification; or 3) third, the ultimate future.¹⁴⁷

In this verse we are led to understand the Paraclete as the one who guides the disciples to the full truth of what Jesus has said. The Paraclete's role as a guide traces back to the Old Testament background, concretely in LXX of Isaiah Lxiii 14 where we read: "The spirit came down from the Lord and guided them along the way." But for Brown the "spirit," "way," and "truth" have a meaning in Johannine thought that goes beyond the OT.¹⁴⁸ It involves a way of life in conformity with Jesus' teaching.¹⁴⁹ So, the Paraclete is to guide men [sic] *along the way of all truth*.¹⁵⁰

Isaiah 41:21-29, on the other hand offers an insight about what was expected of prophecy in antiquity. In this particular narrative Yahweh challenges the idols of the nations to present their case by uttering true prophecy. This means two things: 1) it tells us the former things that we may know; 2) it declares to us things to come that we may know.¹⁵¹ Hence, prophecy was understood to include both an interpretation of the past and a prediction of the future.¹⁵² Applying this to our text, John 16:13-15 ascribes to the Spirit of prophecy - He will take what belongs to the past, that is, Jesus' revelation on earth, and interpret it for a new situation.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹⁴⁸R. E. Brown, *John*, 715.

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Talbert, *Reading John*, 219.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

In this final Paraclete saying of the Farewell Discourse, we decipher common characteristics of the Paraclete sayings. It presented clearly a Christocentric function of the Paraclete. The Paraclete does not reveal anything except for what he hears from the Son (and the Father).¹⁵⁴ Hence, the Spirit of Truth, the title of the Paraclete, also implicitly shows the christocentricity of the Paraclete.¹⁵⁵ That if Jesus is the Truth (14:6), the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth (Jesus). This goes to say that there is no independent revelation through the Paraclete, but by carrying on Christ's work the Paraclete ensures that the revelation does not die out with Jesus' departure.¹⁵⁶

The Paraclete, like Jesus, will not speak "from himself, or on his own, but whatever he hears (Jn 5:19, 30; 8:26, 28, 40; 14:10); in the same manner in which Jesus speaks for the Father, so the Paraclete speaks for Jesus. Whereas Jesus speaks what he hears from the Father, the impression the Evangelist gives to the reader is not that each of Jesus' utterances is a repetition of something he just heard *from* the Father, but rather that Jesus speaks *on behalf* of the Father. Hence, it is logical to assert that the Paraclete does not necessarily speak what he hears *from* the exalted Christ, but rather he speaks *for* Christ.¹⁵⁷

The other significant point in this Paraclete saying is that it is directed to the community of believers. The Paraclete's function of declaring "the things that are to come" points to the function in the post-Easter community (v. 13). The notion that the Paraclete will declare things to come does not mean that he will reveal

¹⁵⁴Kin, "The Paraclete," 267.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Hawkin, *The Johannine World*, 74.

¹⁵⁷Stefan, "The Paraclete," 287.

anything fresh from Jesus' revelation.¹⁵⁸ Rather, it shows that the Paraclete will guide the Christian community in the future time.

The Prophetic Function of the Paraclete

Three passages in our exploration identify the Spirit as the Paraclete (14:17, 26; 15:26; 16:13). These sayings speak of the time of the Paraclete, that is, the time of the future community of believers. And that it is directed to the community of believers in the post-Easter period.¹⁵⁹ Here, the functions or tasks of the Paraclete are multivalent.¹⁶⁰ It remains with the disciples (14:17), teaches them (14:26; 16:14), reminding them of Jesus' teaching (14:26; see 2:22; 12:16), announces the future (16:13), and glorifies Jesus (16:14). In these tasks the Paraclete is seen to guide the community in (re)interpreting and understanding Jesus' revelation in new circumstances and through the passing of time.¹⁶¹ The Paraclete's prophetic function is to teach disciples the world that rejects the Spirit (14:17), confirming the rightness of their commitment while showing the world to be wrong about sin, justice and judgment (16:8-11). The Paraclete will convict the world of its sin and expose its guilt (16:8-11). This is the

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹S. S. Smalley, "The Paraclete": Pneumatology in the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*, eds. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1996), 289-300. As far as Smalley is concerned, Johannine pneumatology is viewed in two aspects: individual and corporate. The Paraclete sayings in the farewell discourse are connected to the community, i.e. the church. The Paraclete is "given to the church at large, to sustain the common life of believers after the resurrection, as promised Paraclete."

¹⁶⁰Warren Carter, *John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2006), 211.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

function of Christian prophecy,¹⁶² and the prophetic function of the Paraclete. The Paraclete completes the revelation that was begun in the historical Jesus.¹⁶³ From John's perspective truth means revelation, and that Jesus is both the act and the content of that revelation, "I am the truth (14:6)." Hence, the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth who is the only one who reveals the mind of Christ to the community.

Conclusion

Like the prophet, the Paraclete teaches, reminding the Johannine disciples of the sayings of Jesus and bearing witness to Jesus through them. And through indwelling, the Paraclete can have a relationship with the disciples (14:7), reveal the identity of Jesus (14:20), teach and remind them of Jesus' sayings (14:25-26), bear witness to Jesus (15:26), reprimand the world (16:8-11) and lead the disciples in all truth (16:13).

In the texts explored, it is revealed that Jesus continued to communicate with the disciples and with the coming generations of believers. This communication is mediated by the Spirit-Paraclete, who will reveal new things to the community.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶²Boring, "The Influence," 119.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴As Painter says, "[t]he role of the Spirit is set out in terms of the significance of Jesus for future generations. His task is to glorify Jesus. That does not change. But the teaching does, as it is made relevant to the ever-changing situations. In the new and bewildering situations the Spirit would guide the way, bound to Jesus but not bound to the past. Thus the truth of eternity is to be unveiled as the situations arise for which it is relevant. The new is bound to Jesus because, he asserts, 'All that the Father has in mine.' In this, however, there is no harking back to a fossilized tradition, rather there is the ministry of a living voice which speaks anew to each generation and situation." John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 432. Similar argument is supported by

Even if Jesus will go to the Father, his voice will remain audible through the Paraclete.¹⁶⁵ Hence, he will continue to teach succeeding generations of believers. As Jesus prophesied during his earthly ministry, he will continue to do so through the Paraclete. The Paraclete may reveal the future prophetically, but the prophecy itself comes from the exalted Christ whose words are Spirit and Life, conveying eternal life to those who receive his words¹⁶⁶ and believe in him (John 20:31). This is a worthy reminder for us as an ecclesial community—so relevant for our times.

Stefan, "The Paraclete," 294.

¹⁶⁵Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah*, 294.

¹⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 296.