

THE SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE SPIRIT/PARACLETE IN THE FAREWELL DISCOURSES IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

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ABSTRACT

The Paraclete in John is examined from the perspective of the sociology of sects and new religious movements. Introversionist sects emerge in colonial situations, following the failure of revolutionary liberation movements. Strong separatist community provides stable and reliable parameters in cultural crisis and normative breakdown. Its success depends on identity transformation and world view reconstruction, which in turn depends on strong inner-group interaction and boundary maintenance against 'the world'. The Paraclete functions as boundary maintenance against a hostile social environment. Linguistic observations from the Dead Sea Scrolls support this thesis, as does detailed examination of the Farewell Discourses.

1 INTRODUCTION

The figure of the Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel remains one of the most puzzling features of that enigmatic writing, despite numerous attempts to clarify it. The problems are compounded by a lack of agreement concerning sources in the Farewell Discourses of 13:31-17:26, as a whole. Attempts to re-arrange the text have remained unconvincing, largely because they raise as many problems as they solve. There is a corresponding lack of agreement on the origin of the Greek word παράκλητος and its background in the history of religions. Obvious parallels with the *Manual of Discipline* and the *Testament of Judah* have not solved the matter, since these documents have themselves been a matter of disputed interpretation. A more general reference to Gnostic redeemer figures or to the Jewish concept of forerunner and successor, have also failed to carry the day.

This paper is an attempt to break out of the log-jam by raising the question of the sociological function of the Paraclete in the Farewell Discourses, without discarding the help which literary and history of religions approaches can offer. In particular, the *Manual of Discipline* can serve as a point of comparison, because of the close linguistic and cultural parallels, without necessarily implying that there is any literary contact between the writings.

I choose the sociological method because, like Lombard (1991), I believe in

the importance of the context of the interpreter. However, I choose to read the text not from the whirly-gig of individual subjectivity of the academic in her/his study, but from the perspective of a community, indeed from the specific community of the poor and oppressed majority in South Africa. A communal location for the interpretation already suggests a sociological approach as an appropriate tool, since it begins with the analysis of social groups and their interaction, and the power relations between them.

2 SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

The obvious starting point for an examination of the sociological function of the Paraclete in the Farewell Discourses, is the fact that it concerns the *departure of Jesus*. A consideration of the death of the charismatic founder of a religious movement would suggest three possible social locations for the discourses. I will briefly outline these possibilities and why I consider the first two to be inappropriate, before indicating the particular line which this investigation will take.

Firstly, the death of the charismatic founder raises the question of the *succession of charisma* in the community s/he founded. This has, of course, been the subject of extensive debate since the epoch-making theory of Max Weber. According to Weber's theory, we should expect a rapid institutionalisation of charisma in the community, together with the creation of a settled hierarchical professional leadership. This assumption has, I believe, undergirded much of the recent discussion of the relation between the Paraclete and leadership struggles in the Johannine community.

A second question raised by the departure of the founder of the religious community, concerns the feasibility of its continuance in the face of the hostile reaction of surrounding society. The crucifixion of the charismatic leader seems, at first sight, as a defeat, as the failure of his message and mission. The response of the community to this threat of failure is the heightening of the status of the dead founder to the level of God himself, and a turning to the task of convincing others of the truth of the good news. This *cognitive dissonance* theory has also been much canvassed in New Testament studies, since John Gager (1975). In the case of John's Gospel, the more the surrounding society rejected and ridiculed Jesus, the more his status was emphasised.

A third factor, related to the last in this sociological setting of the departure of the charismatic leader has, perhaps, received less attention. This is the fact that the Johannine community represents a new religious movement / sect, and that there is the threat of dissolution within the community, in the face of hostility and persecution, and indeed personal and communal failure to keep the high standards of the community. This factor relates to the status of the newly emerging religious community as a *sect* over against Judaism. Here we can take the defini-

tion of B R Wilson — ignoring the sexist language, for the moment:

Sects are movements of religious protest. Their members separate themselves from other men in respect of their religious beliefs, practices and institutions, and often in many other departments of their lives. They reject the authority of orthodox religious leaders, and often, also, of the secular government. Allegiance to a sect is voluntary, but individuals are admitted only on proof of conviction, or by some other test of merit: continuing affiliation rests on sustained evidence of commitment to sect beliefs and practices. Sectarians put their faith first: they order their lives in accordance with it. The orthodox, in contrast, compromise faith with other interests, and their religion accommodates the demands of the secular culture (1970:7).

This connection between John's community and the sociological profile of a sect has been observed several times before, for example by Meeks (1972/1986:141-173), Martyn (1979:90-121) and Rensberger (1988) with regard to the Gospel as a whole. However, its consequences for the Farewell Discourses do not seem to me to have been fully explored. Their work depends largely on the sociology of sects as developed by Troeltsch (1931), Niebuhr (1929) and Brian R Wilson (1959).

3 WEBER AND LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES IN THE JOHANNINE COMMUNITY

The influence of Weber has led some scholars to link the Paraclete in some way with the Beloved Disciple and understand the 'tandem relationship' between Jesus and the Paraclete, which can be illustrated from the history of religions (e.g. Best 1963), to flow over into a 'tandem relationship' between the Beloved Disciple and the present leadership of the community — perhaps the evangelist himself. This idea was suggested by Johnston (1970:119-146), who argues that 'For John the unseen Spirit of Christ is the reality behind the appearance of inspired teachers in the congregations of Christians' (:128). This is the line taken also by Domeris (1989:17-23), and Du Rand (1991). On this view, the real function of the Farewell Discourses as a whole, and the Paraclete in particular, would be that of legitimation of institutional leadership, along the lines of Weber.

The problem with this reasoning is that it has no primary evidence in the text itself. The Beloved Disciple is never brought into connection with the Paraclete by the author her/himself. If the author was indeed seeking to establish a *caliphate*, then it is likely that s/he would have been less reserved about the connection. The literary form of the *testament* in late Judaism usually involves the explicit transfer of authority from the departing sage to her/his successor. Elements of this form certainly have influenced the evangelist, as Müller has shown

(1974:31-77). However, when Jesus explicitly confers such authority in this Gospel, it is not to a specific figure, but to the whole group of the disciples (20:19-23; cf Schnelle 1991:44-46). This would tend to suggest a collective and not a hierarchical understanding of leadership in the Johannine community.

Wilckens (1980:185-203) comes a bit closer to the function of the Beloved Disciple, I believe, in suggesting that he represents the retrojected presence of the post-Easter community with the earthly Jesus (Ibid 199-201): The Disciple whom Jesus loved represents the post-Easter community in such a way that they are newly constituted by the coming of the Paraclete and always abide on the foundation of the work of the Spirit, and yet remain recognisable in the picture of the pre-Easter community. So there is a functional connection but not an identity between the Paraclete and the Beloved Disciple.

This thought of Wilckens with regard to the 'succession problem' in the Johannine community could be further developed. At every point at which the disciples are mentioned in the Farewell Discourses, it is to emphasise their equality and mutual responsibility to love. If we are to use the Weberian model at all, at this point, we would have to look beyond the initial succession crisis after the death of the charismatic founder to a much later time, where Weber speaks of two modes of rationalisation of charisma in terms *ascetic* and *mystic virtuosi*. The ascetic is primarily oriented to activity within the world and presupposes that even as the ascetic rejects the world s/he retains 'at least the negative inner relationship with it which is presupposed in the struggle against it' (1978:544-545). The mystic, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with union with the divine, an experienced knowledge which is other than rational and a belief that s/he is a vessel rather than a tool of God. Love and community and retreat from the world mark the mystic *virtuoso* or the community of such *virtuosi*.

All that I wish to draw out of this glance at Weber, is the observation that the use of Weberian categories to support the assumption of a leadership struggle reflected behind the Farewell Discourses in general and the Paraclete in particular (e g Domeris 1989:19, 23) is illegitimate. If Weber were to be used at all, it would be on the assumption that what we see in the Johannine community is an advanced stage of the routinisation of charisma. What is emphasised in these discourses is mutuality and community. Brown (1979) may be right in his depiction of leadership battles reflected in the Johannine Epistles, and perhaps in 6:66-71 (Schnelle 1991:45), but they must then reflect a subsequent stage of the development of the tradition, perhaps a stage implied by the death of the Beloved Disciple (John 21).

4 SOCIOLOGY OF SECTS

4.1 Introduction

Gager's theory of cognitive dissonance has not, to my knowledge, been specifically applied to the Farewell Discourses. Clearly the death and apparent failure of Jesus and the rejection of the Johannine community by the Jewish community is an important dynamism in the Gospel. It has led to a heightened Christology (Rensberger 1987). Jesus is identified with the Divine Logos by whom the world was created and has continued to be sustained. He existed before Abraham and is greater than him. He is, indeed in the Father and the Father in him. All that the one is and has, the other is and has. This aspect of Gager's theory holds true for John. On the other hand, mission to the world in the conventional sense, posited by his theory, does not seem to be emphasised (as this dominates Luke or Paul). The mission which is described seems to involve kinship ties (Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathaniel) or local community (the Samaritan village). Witnessing (μαρτυρία) rather than preaching (κήρυγμα) receives the emphasis, and this is a passive rather than an outward-reaching strategy. Hence Gager's model does not seem helpful in examining the sociological role of the Paraclete.

The retreat from an aggressive mission outwards towards the world into an inward-looking community seen in John is, however, characteristic of one form of religious sect as this is described by B R Wilson (1959:3-15; cf Troeltsch 1931; Niebuhr 1929), the introversionist sect. As Wilson describes it, the *introversionist* sect rejects the world's values and turns inward to higher inner values:

Although all sects separate from the orthodox and, at least in some respects, from the wider society, introversionist sects make this pattern of action their overriding concern, the issue on which salvation is to be realised. Being in the safety of the community becomes the symbol, and sometimes more than merely the symbol, of being in the safety of God (1970:118).

The introversionist sect withdraws from the world into community and cultivates inner resources and the possession of the Holy Spirit. It claims inner illumination and ethical insight for an enlightened elect. It has little emphasis on eschatology or evangelism, but has a strong in-group morality. Activity in the world is permitted only for conscience sake. It has no professional ministers and is indifferent to other religious movements.

Another of the sects described by Wilson has similarities with the Johannine writing, namely the *gnostic (manipulationist)* sect. This type of sect claims esoteric knowledge, often revolving around a new or revived interpretation of the religious tradition. Christ is wayshower or exemplar of truth rather than saviour. Cosmology, utility of gnosis for living, gradually unfolded enlightenment,

characterise this kind of sect. Its members do not usually withdraw from the world, whose cultural standards may be accepted, but they use their enlightenment to advantage of a movement or for personal well-being. It regards other religious groupings as ignorant or backward. Special instruction is for private benefit only, there is little sense of community and little interest in worship. Despite certain 'gnostic' features of John's community, which have led Bultmann (1955:15-32), Käsemann (1968) and Schottroff (1970) to see John as a gnostic text, the sectarian formation described by Wilson which is closest is clearly the introversionist sect. One should bear in mind that there is no such thing as a 'pure example' of a sociological category — it is not the function of sociology to discover 'laws', but to generalise from particulars:

Ideal types are not substitutes for historical and sociological investigations; they are not even a short cut to firm conclusions; and least of all are they devices by which the uninformed can catch truth by the forelock (Wilson 1982:113).

4.2. Emergence of introversionist sects

In a later book applying the sociology of sects to tribal and third-world peoples, Wilson observes that introversionist sects frequently emerge after the failure of revolutionary movements. At a time of cataclysmic failure of movements promising freedom from colonial domination, on the basis of religious prophecy, there may be a response of withdrawal from the wider society into a separatist sect. Wilson remarks: 'Its participants withdraw from the world in resignation, but such withdrawal is effectively possible only if those who participate can create a viable basis for a new withdrawn community (whether such withdrawal is vicinally or only socially effected)' (1973:387). There is a need for caution in suggesting a purely *political* connection between political oppression and the emergence of new religious movements among colonised indigenous peoples, at least in Africa (Bijtenhijs 1976:37; cf Ranger 1986:1-5). The destruction of traditional socio-cultural norms is as likely to lead to new religious movements as political oppression. On the other hand, an over-rigid distinction between what is political and what is socio-cultural is also a false distinction, particularly in first century Judaism, where Torah embraces all facets of life.

In an analysis of the emergence of modern new religious movements, Hunter (1981:1-19) has come to much the same conclusion concerning the circumstances favourable for the emergence of sects¹: 'Normative breakdown, value dissensus, and the resulting moral ambiguity are causal factors in the upsurge of the new religions because there is an anthropological requirement of stable and reliable parameters for individual existence....There is a quest for community, not simply

¹ In this paper, no distinction is made between the use of the terms 'sect' and 'new religious movement'.

for unnamed "needs", but because of the anthropologically grounded fact of human sociality' (:15).

Wilson's observations on the emergence of an introversionist sect in a colonial situation are probably more significant in a writing springing out of first century Jewish society, than more detailed observations which are based on post-Christian sects. There is always the danger of circular reasoning in using the latter as a basis for defining a biblical community! (Wilson 1990:3; cf 1982:113).

Indeed the whole process of extending sociological observations to historical situations has sometimes been challenged. Nevertheless the reverse impulse is also evident among some modern sociologists of religion. Robbins, in a recent work on New Religious Movements, has argued (citing Hall:1987), that 'Perhaps the dynamics of the present ferment cannot be grasped if the latter is viewed in conceptual isolation from other historical episodes' (1988:62). He would extend the retrospective analysis back to the first century. Thus the work of analysing the sociological dynamics of the Johannine community is regarded as a legitimate enterprise by at least some sociologists of religion, and it has already proved its worth.

I would like to extend the model of B R Wilson, which we have reviewed, by the addition of insights from the work of Greil and Rudy (1984a:306-23; 1984b:260-278) on the formation of new religious movements, based on an examination of ten new religious movements.

4.3 The Greil & Rudy model of conversion

The formation of a successful new religious movement entails 'conversion', namely extensive *identity transformation* and *world view reconstruction*. Not only the present, but also the past, must be re-interpreted and reconstructed to fit the contours of the new community. In a certain sense, the conversion experience is itself 'constructed' by the new convert, so that testimonies begin to fall into a clearly defined pattern of 'I once was lost but now I'm found'. The past life-history of the convert is now given an interpretation which is only now 'discovered'.

The success or failure of the new religious movement depends on the extent to which it can succeed in this process of identity transformation. Such success will depend on two factors: *intensive interaction* and *boundary control*.

The process of intensive interaction is the 'key to understanding conversion' (Snow & Phillips, cited in Robbins 1988:83), in which the new convert comes to see her/himself as a particular reference group sees her/him: 'to see that reality is what one's friends say it is' (Greil & Rudy 1984a:318). Such identity re-construction is only possible where the structure of the new community facilitates intensive interaction between group members.

On the other hand, the success of the process also depends on the extent to

which interference from outside the new community can be minimised. There must be a neutralisation of extra-group bonds as part of a strategy of boundary control. Ties between the new member and the wider society outside must be gradually severed at the same time as ties within the community are fostered. This has been described as a process of *encapsulation*, which promotes intra-group interaction and limits the potential effects of interaction between members and non-members. In what Wilson describes as an *introversionist* or world-rejecting sect, this process becomes especially crucial. It often has led to introversionist sects seeking vicinal isolation to underpin their social isolation (e.g. Quakers, Brethren, Menonites and Amish).

5 THE SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF THE PARACLETE IN JOHN

5.1 The social setting

There has been increasing agreement about the approximate dating of the Fourth Gospel in recent years, at least in its final form. While it may contain early tradition, stemming from before 70 AD, it is now widely held that the final form of the Gospel was attained between 80 and 100 AD. It reflects both a continuing kinship with the synagogue, as the parent body, and also bitter alienation and conflict with 'the Jews' who had begun routinely to excommunicate those Jews who publicly expressed faith in Jesus as the Christ. It shows an extensive and accurate acquaintance with the geography and traditions of Palestine, and yet displays a thoroughgoing tendency to spiritualise Jewish temple, cult and practice, in which 'true worship' is 'neither here nor in Jerusalem'.

While we should not read back data from sociological theory into the first century, equally we can acknowledge that the conditions for the formation of a Jewish introversionist sect were ideal in the years after the failure of the revolutionary religious solutions of the sixties AD. In a post-revolutionary colonial setting, as suggested by the work of Wilson in *Magic and the Millenium*, we would expect, on the one hand, that the native intellectuals would attempt to make a deal with the conquerors. In fact, the emerging Rabbinic authorities represent exactly this response. They became actively engaged in administration on behalf of the Romans, and carried through a pro-Roman reform to remove what was objectionable to them in the native religion. On the other hand, we could accept that there would emerge many native introversionist responses, which began to seek a partial, unconscious, accommodation with the dominant colonial religion and culture around a native messianic figure, as happened among the American Indian tribes and the New Zealand Moaris (Wilson 1973). If non-Jewish converts were accepted in such a new movement, in the case of the Johannine community, they are still understood as sheep 'of another fold', who are gathered

in to Israel when the eschatological 'Sign of the Son of Man' is raised to draw the nations in.

The accession of non-Jewish converts into the new sect would tend to exaggerate existing tensions with other Jewish communities. It would threaten the status of the native collaborators and would also not find favour with the conquerors, for whom it would represent a subversion of their accepted religious and cultural norms.

5.2 Mechanisms for the successful formation of the Johannine Community as a new religious movement

5.2.1 *World view reconstruction*

The extraordinary nature of the Johannine narration has long been observed, the kind of repetition and interwoven fabric, the oblique, ironic manner of establishing theological insights, the limited number of events which lead to extended discourses. This method has been sensitively described and explained by O'Day in her short book on irony in John as a 'revelatory dynamic' (1988: esp 104-109). The simultaneous presence and perception of two different levels of 'reality' simultaneously to the reader, leads her/him progressively to a re-interpretation of her/his own 'reality'. What this method amounts to in sociological terms, is *world view reconstruction*. People are brought to see reality in a new kind of way, to see themselves in a new light. They come to re-interpret their old religious traditions in terms of a newly constructed reality, which has the figure of Jesus at the centre. All the old understandings and rituals of the Jewish religion and national life are now re-interpreted on the basis of Jesus. This process matches what has been described as the 'replacement' theme in John (Brown 1966: cxliii).

5.2.2 *Intensive interaction*

This newly constructed world view can only be successfully transferred and maintained by mechanisms which ensure *intensive interaction* between members of the community. It was already observed by Wilckens (1980:185-203) and more recently by Schnelle (1989:64-79, esp 78-79; 1991:37-50, esp 45-46), that the key to the understanding the Farewell Discourses is the recognition of their ecclesiology. This is another way of saying that their concern is with the maintenance of the community. This is, indeed, given by the theme of the Departure of the Exalted Christ. What is immediately apparent in any examination of the Farewell Discourses is the ἀγάπη theme, in which the unity and love between Father and Son, and between the Son and his own, now is extended to the love which members of the community have for one another (cf Schnelle 1991:45-46). This means that the numen of the holy is spread over the web of community interaction and given the highest possible legitimation and valuation.

To illustrate: the Discourses begin with the juxtaposition of the theme of Jesus' Departure (13:31-33) and the theme of mutual love within the community which mirrors Jesus love for them. This is given the status of the New Law, probably drawing on the idea of the new law written on the heart prophesied by Jeremiah 31:33 (13:34). This love is to be the hall-mark by which the true disciples of Jesus are to be recognised (13:35). The theme recurs in 14:20-24, where the unity between Father and Son is extended to the community (v20). Love for Jesus is demonstrated in keeping his commandments, which are none other than the command to love each other, and this becomes the pre-condition for the presence of Jesus (and the Father) in the community (v21-24). Once again in 15:9-17 the commandment to love within the community is extended to the idea of self-sacrificial love, just as Jesus' own love meant laying down his life. This is related to the concept of bearing fruit which has widely been understood as referring to Christian mission. If it does, then it is noteworthy that the 'abiding' (μένειν) of the fruit is linked to mutual love (group interaction).

Thus the sociological insight that the survival of new religious movements depends on intensive group interaction seems to be well understood within the Johannine community, and receives the highest emphasis.

5.2.3 *Boundary maintenance*

Interwoven with this theme of intensive group interaction, in the Farewell Discourses, lie the Paraclete passages (14:16-17; 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-13). The regular alternation of the two themes seems to suggest that they were closely identified in the understanding of the evangelist.

Working purely at the surface level, at present, it is noteworthy that on each occasion on which the Paraclete is mentioned, the κόσμος is also mentioned. Possession of the Paraclete differentiates the community from the world, which cannot receive him (14:17). The gift of the Paraclete brings the peace of Jesus, which is 'not as the world gives' (15:27), so that the community should not be troubled or be cowards. This fear is provoked by the imminent coming of the Ruler of the world (15:30). The gift of the Paraclete is mentioned again in 15:26-27, sandwiched between two passages on the hatred of the world, which will lead to the persecution of the community (15:18-25; 16:1-4). The excommunication from the synagogue and threats to life itself may lead community members to apostasise (σκανδαλισθῆτε), but Jesus' promise of the Paraclete will strengthen and maintain the community against the world. Finally, the task of the Paraclete is seen as confrontation with the world. The Paraclete will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (16:7-11).

The second obvious factor in the way the evangelist uses the Paraclete theme, is that he is equated with the Spirit of Truth. Truth is the indicator of the community's claim to exclusive possession of salvation. This is summarised in the

famous saying of Jesus: 'I am the way and the truth and the life: no-one comes to the Father except through me'. There is no salvation outside the sect. This is the characteristic mark of the introversionist sect. The exclusive claim to salvation is a technique of boundary maintenance. The Paraclete is specifically linked to this claim in 14:17; 17:26; indirectly in 16:7 and directly in 17:13. To be 'led into all Truth' (16:13) by the Paraclete is to see reality the way the community sees it and to see any other perspective as falsehood inspired by the Ruler of this world.

In other words, the sociological function of the Paraclete is boundary maintenance over against a hostile world. This assertion should now be tested against a closer exegetical investigation.

6 EXEGETICAL OBSERVATIONS

6.1 History of religions

Many observations from the New Testament environment concerning the Paraclete have already enriched the study of the Johannine text, though none of them seem to have settled the fundamental questions. The Dead Sea Scrolls have provided extensive parallels to the dualistic thought world of the Gospel (e.g. Charlesworth 1972:77-106), and some scholars have gone as far as attributing literary dependence of John on Qumran (e.g. Leaney 1972:38-61). Leaney was the first to relate the Johannine Paraclete to the Scrolls (1972:38-61):

The term Spirit of Truth is as naturally attached by the Fourth Gospel to the Paraclete as it was in Qumran to the spirit who maintains the faithfulness of the Qumran covenanters. In the former he is the revealer and preserver of all that Christians need in order to defend themselves against and ultimately to convince the world, in the latter he is the power which keeps them faithful to the already long-accepted Law (:58).

The problem with Leaney's description is that it assumes a uniform conception of the word רִיחַ in the Qumran Scrolls, something which cannot be demonstrated. It is also an over-simplification of the Qumran attitude to the Law.

The recent research of Sekki into רִיחַ in the Scrolls (1989) enables a far more accurate comparison of the Qumran evidence with John's Gospel. Sekki's first conclusion is that five distinct uses of רִיחַ can be discerned, with characteristic and consistent syntactical patterns: God's Spirit (רִיחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ), human spirit (usually feminine with a suffix), angel/demon (masculine, *nomen regens* in construct with the genitive, often with כּוֹל); wind (unqualified); breath (unqualified). The important result of this research is the provision of a tool with which to distinguish the 'Two Ways' teaching, which is essentially an ethical dualism of the human spirit and seemingly limited to 1QS 3:13-4:26, and the eschatological an-

gel/demon traditional teaching, which is common in the Scrolls, as also in Jewish literature of this period generally. The use of the masculine gender for the feminine noun רִיחַ is a decisive sign of eschatological cosmological dualism.

6.2 The Paraclete in John and cosmological dualism

The use of the masculine gender for the Paraclete, which clashes with the neuter gender of πνεῦμα in Greek, has been noticed before. Indeed, it was used by Domeris (1989:21-22) as an indicator of the closeness of the Paraclete to the masculine Jesus and as a further indicator that the real issue is the present leadership in the community:

The previously neuter Spirit of Truth is now masculine. The focus swings from teaching and preaching to active leadership in the community.

B Lindars sees the extent of 'personalization' represented by this masculine as a forerunner of the doctrine of the Trinity (1990:90). The research of Sekki provides evidence for a different understanding, namely that the use of the masculine for the Paraclete, which displaces the neuter of the word πνεῦμα with the masculine ἐκεῖνος (cf 16:14), derives from an underlying understanding of the Paraclete as an angelic being, over against the demonic being, ὁ τοῦ κόσμου ἄρχων of 14:30 (also described in the masculine gender).

In other words, the hostility of society outside the Johannine community is attributed to demonic agency, and the preservation of the community is the work of the angelic Paraclete. This bears striking similarity to the understanding of the *Manual of Discipline* at the point where the masculine gender is used to describe the Angel of Light and the Angel of Darkness and all his attendant beings:

All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness. The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light. But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth (מלאך אמת) will succor (עזר) all the sons of light (1QS 3:20-25). (Translated by G Vermes.)

The indications are then that the Paraclete is not related to ethical dualism within the Johannine community, but to its boundary maintenance over against the hostile world. The מלאך אמת, or Angel of Truth, is close to the Johannine concept of the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. It seems also that the Hebrew root עזר lies

behind the notoriously puzzling Greek word παράκλητος in John (cf also 1QpHab 5:11; 1QM 13:10; 1QH 2:34; 5:6; 7:23). This has been suggested before on the basis of Gnostic parallels discovered by Bultmann in Mandaism. The parallel from the *Manual of Discipline* offers a more convincing argument for the same conclusion.

6.3 The Paraclete in the Farewell Discourses

6.3.1 John 14:16-17

In this passage, the Paraclete is the gift of the Father at the request of Jesus. The emphasis is on the permanence of the gift: 'ἵνα μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ᾗ (v16); also ὅτι παρ' ὑμῶν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται (v17), where the emphasis falls on the idea of 'abiding', an important word in John. Nevertheless, there is a counterbalancing emphasis on the inability of the world to receive him, see him or know him, just as it is no longer able to see Jesus, even though believers can (v19). The presence of the Paraclete is a necessary re-assurance that the believers will not be left defenseless before a hostile world (οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς v18). The exclusivity of the community over against the world is maintained by the claim that the Spirit which indwells the community has the sole guardianship of the Truth.

6.3.2 John 14:25-26

The Paraclete is identified this time with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, and is sent by the Father, this time in the name of Jesus. This seems to present difficulties for the interpretation we have offered. The Sinaitic Syriac version omits τὸ ἅγιον, a few other manuscripts harmonise the other references by inserting τῆς ἀληθείας. Some critics have argued that the unqualified reference might be original, since it would explain the other readings (Johnston 1970:31; Leaney 1972:49), however this is tenuous given the paucity of evidence. Perhaps we should simply not expect consistency. On the other hand, the function of the Paraclete is less orientated against the world at this point, since he (ἐκεῖνος) has the function of teaching the community and reminding them of all which Jesus said to them. This teaching role might, at first sight, relate to inner-community parenthesis. However, what follows makes this unlikely, since the teaching is immediately qualified in terms of the community's need for peace, re-assurance and courage in the face of the persecution of the world.

6.3.3 John 15:26-27

This time the Paraclete is sent by Jesus from the Father. Indeed, as Spirit of Truth, he (ἐκεῖνος) proceeds from the Father (which is why, presumably, he can also be called 'Holy Spirit', as in the previous reference). His function is to bear witness concerning Jesus. This might, at first sight, be a reference to parenthesis

within the community, except that the witness concerning Jesus is paralleled by the witness of the community to the world, made emphatic by the *δέ* in *καὶ ὑμεῖς δὲ μαρτυρεῖτε* (v27). The witness of the Paraclete is required because the community is in danger of falling away in the face of excommunication and persecution. In that hour, the community remembers the promise of Jesus that he would send the Paraclete (16:4).

6.3.4 John 16:7-13

Turning now to the most extensive of the sayings on the Paraclete, we can observe that the passage probably belongs in the context 16:4b-30, but that it is itself a composite of many smaller units. Ernst Bammel (1973:199-217) has concluded, on the basis of source, form and history of religions observations, that an original saying attributed the role of teaching to the Paraclete, related, perhaps to the Trial of Jesus: *ἐκεῖνος [διδάξει] τὸν κόσμος περὶ ἁμαρτίας καὶ περὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ περὶ κρίσεως* (v8). This has been redacted by the substitution of the word *ἐλέγξει* at the time when a further traditional saying concerning the Spirit was added in vv9-11.

In our study, we will be working with the final form of the text, where the work of the Paraclete can most clearly be seen here to involve confrontation against the world. If this active function of the Paraclete is a secondary redaction, then this would foreground its significance for the community which inserted it.

In v7, Jesus describes his saying concerning the benefit of the coming of the Paraclete as *τὴν ἀλήθειαν*, a thought which is picked up in v13, where he is described as *τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάση*. This *inclusio* emphasises the dominant theme in this section. We have already observed that the concept of 'truth' relates to boundary maintenance between members and non-members of the community. The Paraclete is given the role of leading the community into the truth, because the disciples would not be able to bear it before the departure of Jesus (v12). This departure, in turn, conditions the triad of concepts: *ἁμαρτίας, δικαιοσύνης, κρίσεως* (for the history of religions background to this triad in Torah, see Bammel 1973:202-208). The world stands convicted by the Paraclete, who here takes the role of prosecutor. It is convicted of sin because it did not believe in Jesus, of true justice because he has now gone beyond its power of 'seeing' to the Father, and of judgment, because it and its ruler now stand condemned.

The final member of the triad shows that the concept of the angelic and demonic opponents is operative, which we have already observed to lie behind the Paraclete sayings generally. It confirms that the sociological role of these sayings concerns boundary maintenance between the community member and non-community members.

In the Scrolls, the conflict between angelic powers is an important expression

of the eschatological hope of the community. In this passage also, the Paraclete is given the task of announcing the things to come. These things must surely be seen as relating to the coming calamities which must follow if the 'ruler of this world has been cast down'. It is the Johannine counterpart of the Apocalypses of the synoptic gospels and the book of Revelation.

7 CONCLUSION

It would seem, then, that whatever the origin of the traditions concerning the Paraclete, a close analysis of their use in the Farewell Discourses confirms their function as boundary maintenance in a community which could be described as an introversionist sect. The Paraclete sayings serve to cut off the community member from the outside world, by giving society beyond the sect a negative valuation as the sphere of the operation of demonic forces. This, in turn, is linked with the strongest possible valuation of inner group interaction or love, which is characterised as the new commandment. Thus the Torah, focus of the highest valuation in the parent community, Judaism, is re-interpreted and transferred to signify the function of inner group relations. Ethics are collapsed into love of one's own community (Schottroff 1970:235). Eschatology, the focus of the highest hopes of the parent community, is transferred to the function of boundary maintenance. The judgment has already taken place, in that Jesus has come and the world preferred darkness to light.

If we are reading the Paraclete texts within the particular context of the community of the oppressed in South Africa, how does all this help? One can note that times of social collapse and failed revolution encourage the formation of sects and especially introversionist sects. Such sects may challenge non-sectarian Christian communities fundamentally. This may bring on them persecution from the rest of society. However, our examination of John's community shows that the radicalism of the sects or new religious movements may well be closer to our Christian roots than the measured 'good sense' of the denominations. We ignore what they have to say at our own peril.

Secondly, strong encapsulation of a sect by intense group interaction and boundary maintenance can lead to love within and hatred towards the outside. This was the pattern at Qumran. The same pattern often operates in sects in our own South African society today. The convicted mass murderer, Eugene Marais, who cold-bloodedly machine-gunned a fully laden bus full of Zulu people, claimed to have done what he did as a member of a far right religious sect. This sect claims that black people are animals and not humans, so that to kill them is not murder. Such a tendency could develop even within a sect in which great love is shown towards in-group members. If the tendency is latent in John's Gospel, with its hostility towards the κόσμος, it is offset by the dynamic of the incarnation. This is not merely accidental (*contra* Käsemann 1969:138-167;

1968). God so loved the κόσμος that he gave his only Son (3:16). Even the life of love within the Johannine community is directed towards the κόσμος in the positive sense of μαρτυρία. The function of the Paraclete may be boundary maintenance, but it is nevertheless a task directed towards the world.

A sect can have a positive or a negative social orientation. It may be the necessary way a Christian pressure group operates within a situation of oppression and violence. Our own South African society has shown how this can operate (Draper 1991). A sect can also lead to an evasion of social responsibility or even extreme anti-social behaviour. It is in itself an ambivalent entity. Its faithfulness to the originary Christian impulse must be measured against the extent to which love is the hall mark even of its opposition to the world.

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