

to make the first move in salvation. Now, we might look at certain types of sinner and say, 'Well, I can see how it might be true of someone who is addicted to some particular substance or behaviour which they don't want to give up, but not me'. But maybe we too have our more respectable addictions – pride, perhaps, or material gain, or the right to run

our own lives and put our own interests first. Yet Jesus Christ came to free us from our addiction to sin, and to make us his people. And there's a wonderful phrase in the liturgy where we acknowledge that he is the one 'in whose service is perfect freedom'. Our whole life as believers is a response to God's amazing grace, grace that was at work to save us.

# Current Approaches to the Priority of John<sup>1</sup>

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Traditionally the Fourth Gospel is thought to offer little valuable or independent information about the earliest traditions about Jesus, primarily because of misconceptions or overstatements about John's nature and its relationship to the Synoptic Gospels. However, in recent years John has been getting a fresh look as an early and independent narrative about Jesus. This essay examines modern approaches to the priority of John, a term which includes approaches that value John as a historical document and/or an independent witness to early Jesus traditions.

How are we to assess the value of the Fourth Gospel, both as a contribution to an understanding of the historical Jesus and as a theological statement of the Christ? For a significant period of the critical study of John, the gospel has served as a stepchild, considered to be late and derivative. Its value as a source for historical information has been downplayed or ignored. And its theological perspective has been viewed as late, Hellenistic, and the result of situations arising within a particular community of Christians who may not be representative of early followers of the Jesus movement. This perspective of the Fourth Gospel still remains dominant today.

For some time, however, scholars have raised questions about the dominant paradigm. Questions about John's relationship to other gospels, its reliance on information about Jesus that might be independent of and possibly superior to the Synoptics, and even its relative date of origination have been raised and continue to be raised. This paper will attempt to survey some of the issues at stake in a reassessment of John and to summarise the approaches by various scholars who have questioned the dominant paradigm and

urge either a historical or literary priority for John. By its very nature a survey paper such as this can only sketch the major issues involved and point to some representative viewpoints. The 'priority of John' is itself a problematic term. For some this term means that material in John has a historical priority, that is, a historical value that is either equal or superior to the Synoptics.<sup>2</sup> For others the term is used to suggest a literary priority, arguing for at least John's independence.<sup>3</sup> Still others would assert an actual chronological priority, suggesting that John was the first of the gospels produced.<sup>4</sup> Every case which asserts the priority of John reveals a desire to question its role as only a secondary and late document in the catalogue of early church witnesses to Jesus.

## Critical Scholarship's Devaluation of John's Priority

The Fourth Gospel's relationship in the canon and critical inquiry has been a tenuous one. To be sure, much of this can be attributed to the unique nature of this gospel, especially when compared to the Synoptic Gospels. In the formative period of the canon, John's Gospel was the subject of severe criticism. We know that many were very uncertain about allowing John into the canon. An elder in the Roman church in the second century, Gaius, perhaps is most notable for his rejection of John, in part because of its stark difference from the other extant gospels.<sup>5</sup> For Gaius, and other groups, including the Alogoi (an early group of Christians that Epiphanius describes as opposed to the Fourth Gospel and other Johannine literature), the gospel of John represented a dangerous variant, one that was being used by heretical groups. It is probable that Irenaeus's strong support for the Fourth Gospel is a reaction to this opposition.<sup>6</sup>

Critical evaluation of John began in the nineteenth century with the approach of F. C. Baur and David Strauss. Strauss considered the Fourth Gospel's depiction of Jesus to be mythological and completely inferior to the Synoptics, and thus of no use for developing a history of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> Baur, in his examination of the four gospels, devalued John on the basis of four key issues:<sup>8</sup> 1) John is thoroughly theological; 2) John

is the product of a Hellenistic environment; 3) John is late and represents a long transmission or late use of sources; 4) John is dependent on the Synoptics.

The assessments of Baur and Strauss have either consciously or unconsciously become the basis for much of the scholarly views of the Fourth Gospel. While the various points are interrelated, they are all subject to a serious critique and are worth a brief review at this point.<sup>9</sup>

### *John is Thoroughly Theological*

Perhaps part of the view that John is particularly theological stems from Clement of Alexandria's early explanation of the origination of John, suggesting that John was the last of the gospels written and that it was a 'spiritual gospel'. The theological focus of the Fourth Gospel is certainly apparent. The prologue begins with the Word's origination in heaven and participation in the very creation of the world. This Word became flesh in the person of Jesus. And Jesus is then described in terms of performing signs and engaging in very self-referential dialogue with his interlocutors, all of which point to his very nature as the unique agent of God, the Word made flesh.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the narrator of John speaks from the perspective of the resurrection: the disciples understood Jesus' true nature after he was raised. Theologically laden terms, such as 'glorification' and 'his hour', not to mention the repeated 'I am' sayings, all make clear that the Fourth Gospel understands Jesus in very definitely theological terms. The entire life of Jesus is described and interpreted through the lens of this theological understanding of the person of Jesus.

What has become apparent in recent years, however, is that John is not unique in this perspective. All of the gospels are theological interpretations of Jesus. They all understand Jesus one way or the other to be God's special agent: his Messiah, his Son. The fact that Mark, Matthew and Luke do this through narratives that allow Jesus to display his divine nature more progressively does not take away from the thoroughly theological nature of these gospels. Both Matthew and Luke have birth narratives that focus on Jesus' unique and special conception and birth. Each of them in different ways portrays Jesus as uniquely fulfilling prophetic expectations. In both Luke and Matthew the resurrection of Jesus is confirmed by visits from the risen Jesus, who points forward to the importance of the church as his ongoing community, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Mark is perhaps a bit more circumspect in its narrative presentation of Jesus. But even here the dynamic of the disciples' interaction with Jesus, and the pregnant ending which points as vividly to the need to proclaim Jesus as God's Son, declare that this gospel was written as a thoroughly theological interpretation of Jesus' ministry.

To state, then, that John is thoroughly theological adds little to an assessment of its date or its relative value, either historically or literarily. One can simply say that John has a very striking way of presenting its theology.

It has been suggested that John's theology is late, the result of a long period of reflection and development. What is at issue here is the 'high christology' of John, which understands Jesus to be the preexistent Word who participated in creation and returns to God. But certainly this kind of the-

ology is represented in other early Christian documents, most particularly Paul's letter to the Philippians and the letter to the Colossians. Indeed, if the hymn in Philippians 2 is pre-Pauline, or if Colossians 1:15-20 is also a hymn that predates the letter, then we have evidence that this high christology dates back to the very earliest period of Christian reflection about the person of Jesus.

### *John is the Product of a Hellenistic Environment*

A standard of earlier analysis of John locates the gospel within a Hellenistic milieu.<sup>11</sup> Efforts to understand it against Greek religious or philosophical traditions have been frequent.<sup>12</sup> In particular, John has been interpreted in light of Platonism, especially with its dualities, particularly the separation of matter and spirit. One aspect of Platonism, that is the Jewish interpretation found in Philo, has been a common point of comparison with John.<sup>13</sup> The use of *logos* has suggested for others connections with Stoicism and its view of the *logos spermatikos*.

The Hellenistic environment has been particularly intriguing, given the Fourth Gospel's use by the early Gnostics.<sup>14</sup> Since Gnosticism seems to be a vibrant combination of Christianity and Hellenistic religious philosophy, the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to both Gnosticism and/or its progenitors has long attracted scholars of John. Bultmann in particular thought that the discourses in John are based on a pre-Christian Gnosticism.<sup>15</sup>

Much of this perspective has changed in the last 30 years, especially with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Recent research has shown us that Judaism during the time of Jesus was diverse in its perspective and that many of the ideas that had earlier been attributed to Hellenism fit comfortably within some aspects of Jewish thought.<sup>16</sup> In particular the dualistic features of the gospel are now more easily understood within a framework of Jewish thought. Even the prologue, with its emphasis on a pre-existent 'word' which participated in creation, is now understood more frequently as a development of ideas already seen within the wisdom tradition of Judaism. Indeed, it could well be said that John actually represents the most Jewish of all the gospels, as opposed to being Hellenistic in its framework.

### *John is Late and Represents a Long Transmission or Late Use of Sources*

The idea that John represents a long process of development is in part a byproduct of Baur's own Hegelian framework of theological development. Much of this thinking has been refuted in the intervening time. It is difficult to see strong support for the idea of a synthesis of opposing ideas present in John's gospel.

The idea of theological development has already been treated in the previous discussion on John's theology. If there is little evidence of Hellenistic influence on the shaping of the theological thought of the gospel, as previously discussed, then support for a long process of development is also undermined. Given the diversity of thought within Judaism in the time of Jesus, one need not imagine a long process of thought and development.

A significant group of scholars believe that the current gospel of John is the end product of multiple stages of com-

position. Various scholars, notably Bultmann, Fortna, von Wahlde, and Nicol have argued that the gospel in its final form was constructed using major sources, most notably a 'semeia' or signs gospel.<sup>17</sup> But a difficulty with this idea is the uniformity of language in the gospel. Studies of the language distribution in the gospel by Schweizer and Ruckstuhl have shown that the gospel is remarkably unified, and if there had been a use of sources, they have been thoroughly reworked by the final evangelist.<sup>18</sup> This language critique does not resolve the question, and indeed Fortna, von Wahlde and Nicol address these concerns, but it does raise questions about the relationship of the final gospel to the putative sources underlying it. Very likely the final author of the gospel has completely re-worked existing material, or if there were two versions the author wrote both.

The difficulty of chapter 21 and the prologue also raise questions about the process of composition. Chapter 21 is often viewed as a late edition, and it does have some stylistic and theological distinctiveness, but attribution of chapter 21 to a later hand is also disputed by some. The prologue has often been viewed as distinctive, but it has a narrative structure that seems to anticipate the gospel itself, and may not be secondary to the gospel at all.<sup>19</sup>

But even with the acceptance of sources and the possible attachment of the prologue and/or chapter 21 to an earlier structure of the gospel, none of this requires a long process. If an evangelist had this material relatively early, the entire gospel could have been shaped well within the first century, possibly early in the first century. The existence of sources and multiple editing simply does not require a long period of development.

Perhaps the dominant way in which a developmental approach to John's gospel is now represented in critical scholarship is a view of how it arose in interaction with the community to whom it was written. J. Louis Martyn's book, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, has been a major force in this view of John's composition.<sup>20</sup> In Martyn's view, the gospel narratives were shaped by events that affected the Johannine community. Obviously such a dual horizon story must represent a process of development and a late composition. Similar approaches can be seen in the work of Raymond Brown and John Painter.<sup>21</sup>

While Martyn's approach to the development of the Fourth Gospel has received wide acceptance, significant critiques have appeared as well. The historical placement of the writing, and especially the circumstance cited by Martyn, has been questioned. And some question the idea of the Johannine community as the origination or destination of the gospel. The developmental approach in its modern guise is thus by no means a certain result of scholarship.

### *John is dependent on the Synoptics*

The final critique of John's value and a basis for asserting its lateness and secondary quality is that it is dependent upon the Synoptic gospels for its depiction of Jesus. To a certain extent this is a circular argument. One of the main reasons for seeing it as dependent is frequently a prior assumption of lateness, hence common material can be assumed to have been gleaned from the Synoptics. But the relationship to the Synoptics is then often used to support its lateness.

Up until the early 20th century, critical scholarship was generally convinced of John's dependence on the Synoptic gospels. But even with a literary dependence, the nature of John's use of the Synoptics has given some cause for concern. Hans Windisch, for instance, suggests that if John was drawing on the Synoptics then the relationship could hardly be one of merely supplementation or interpretation.<sup>22</sup> The starkly different presentation of the gospel story, according to Windisch, could only be one of strong disagreement and thus an attempt to replace the Synoptic version with a significantly different version of the story of Jesus. Windisch's study questions the easy acceptance of literary dependence within a framework of general compatibility of the four gospels. John is at points vastly different from the Synoptic Gospels and at least some recognition and assessment of a critical engagement needs to be involved if literary dependence is to be maintained.

With the rise in form criticism, questions about the possible independent transmission of oral narratives gave rise to a reassessment of the question of dependence. Percival Gardner-Smith's famous little monograph set in motion a pervasive reexamination of the question of literary dependence of John on the Synoptics, such that a new consensus about the independence of John could be said to have become the norm in the mid-20th century.<sup>23</sup> This consensus has undoubtedly dissolved, with scholars divided on the question of John's dependence on the Synoptics.

The question of the literary dependence of John is a major issue facing Johannine studies. To the degree that John is independent, a certain kind of priority can be asserted. At least in this case one can speak of an independent source of information about Jesus contained in the Fourth Gospel, although that does not inherently testify to its trustworthiness. Even if John should be found to be somewhat dependent, it may still contain traditions from sources independent of the Synoptic gospels. This question of literary dependence will be treated in more detail in the next section of this paper.

The arguments that F. C. Baur and David Strauss raised in opposition to considering John a primary source for early Jesus material continue to inform much of the scholarly attitude toward John, often without suitable reflection. Each of the main arguments for marginalizing John can be seen to have significant problems. This suggests that more critical examination of John's dating and the value of its presentation of Jesus is in order. Some significant rethinking of these issues has been taking place. This study will discuss, in turn, three different ways that John has been conceived as having priority: John's literary independence, John's literary priority, and John's historical and theological priority.

### **Literary Independence**

One way of asserting a Johannine priority is by means of establishing its literary independence. As previously discussed, the old scholarly consensus was that John was dependent upon some or all of the Synoptic gospels. To a great extent this old consensus was not critical but was based in great part on assumptions of its late date. But if the late date is held open as an item to prove, then the rela-

tionship of John to the Synoptics must stand on its ground.

The tide turned in the middle of the 20th century, as previously discussed, with the growth of form criticism and its attention to oral transmission. Two particular scholars have been particularly influential in this move. The first is Percival Gardner-Smith, who simply asked whether it is easier to account for the similarities and the differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel given, respectively, the theories of literary dependence and independence. He concludes that the few similarities could easily be accounted for by oral transmission of similar stories. On the other hand, if a literary relationship exists, then one has to explain the extensive differences in content and form between the gospels. This dilemma between the similarities and differences, of course, is what also drove Hans Windisch's examination at about the same time with vastly different conclusions. For Gardner-Smith, the question was one of plausibility, especially if oral transmission can be seen as relatively conservative.

The second scholar who heavily influenced this move toward independence is C.H. Dodd with his book on the historical traditions in the Fourth Gospel.<sup>24</sup> Dodd's basic thrust is very similar, although his focus is aimed more at the historical veracity of certain traditions in the Fourth Gospel, especially ones that do not necessarily have strong similarities with Synoptics. Thus both Gardner-Smith and Dodd came to similar conclusions about the oral basis behind John.

Based on the growth of reliance on the oral material, the majority of scholars moved toward a theory of independence. We see, for instance, in the commentaries of Raymond Brown, Rudolf Schnackenburg, Rudolf Bultmann, Leon Morris, Ernst Haenchen and Barnabas Lindars, the operative approach is for a literary independence rather than dependence.<sup>25</sup> Such a move toward literary independence was not unanimous, however. C. K. Barrett's commentary, even in its second edition, continued to support John's reliance on the Synoptics.<sup>26</sup> And a particularly strong effort to sustain John's reliance on the Synoptic Gospels has come from Frans Neirynck and his network of scholars in Louvain.<sup>27</sup> The issue thus remains a vital one in Johannine research.

This survey cannot adequately assess the strength of all these arguments.<sup>28</sup> However, they frequently turn on a number of key issues:

First, is the genre of gospel itself sufficient to demonstrate a literary dependence? Was Mark's gospel, for instance, completely a *sui generis* (unique) document that then gave rise to all the other gospels? If the gospel genre itself is unique, then clearly John must be relying on some knowledge of Mark (or vice versa). Mark's first gospel has been valorized as a unique approach to relating the story of Jesus which establishes a model used subsequently by all the other evangelists.<sup>29</sup> To the extent that the gospels can be seen as a form of *bios* (biography in its Greek milieu), then this approach loses significant probative value. Burridge's recent work has made a compelling case that the gospels are not *sui generis* but can comfortably be seen within the framework of biography.<sup>30</sup>

Second, did the passion narrative become relatively fixed in the oral tradition as a whole unit, or is this composition a product of Mark? The large bulk of the similarities between John and the Synoptics come in the passion narrative. Form criticism generally concluded that the passion narrative is a

unique and fixed form in and of itself, and would have been transmitted orally in the sequence largely found in all the gospels. Objections to this, however, have been raised. John R. Donahue in a programmatic essay in 1976, and previously suggested in his dissertation, suggests that the passion narrative in Mark shows signs of the evangelist's composition, developing themes that have already appeared in the second Gospel.<sup>31</sup> If so, then passion narratives generally can be seen as originating with Mark, and John's passion narrative may derive from Mark. While Mark's passion does show signs of extensive editing, it is not necessary to dismiss the strong influence of oral transmission and the inherent narrative structure the passion narrative reflects.

Third, are the similarities in specific wording and/or narrative order sufficient to demonstrate a reliance by John on Mark, or can these be accounted for by certain terms being fixed in the oral tradition? The issue of specific wording and narrative order is the main emphasis of C. K. Barrett and Frans Neirynck in their opposition to the independence of John. Barrett in his commentary lists a number of items that are strikingly similar (such as specific items in the feeding of the 5,000 such as 200 denarii), and a list of commonly ordered events (such as the feeding of the 5,000 followed by the walking on water).<sup>32</sup> What is striking about Barrett's list is the relatively few points of exact correspondence and that outside of the passion not many commonly ordered events are provided. Part of this lack of similarity is the result of the extensive sections of John's text that have relatively few obvious connections, thus disrupting any pattern. Such points of commonality, even if few, are influential for some scholars. The assessment of the strength of such points of commonality requires a relative evaluation of the strength of oral traditions and/or a concept of literary influence.

Fourth, one final issue that has recently arisen is the question of how broadly and quickly the gospels were distributed. This might have a bearing on whether we have a literary usage, perhaps even an intertextual engagement with Mark by John. Richard Bauckham in a significant book *The Gospels for All Christians* has made a strong case that the gospels were distributed broadly and quickly after being written.<sup>33</sup> Bauckham thus asserts that it was highly likely that Mark was available for John and for his audience at a very early date, thus reducing the possibility of John's independence.

What arises from these cruxes in the approach to the independence of John is that no clear agreement exists as to what would constitute proof for literary dependence or independence. Certainly, a number of points of commonality between John and the Synoptic gospels are suggested, especially with Mark, but few word-for-word similarities, as is found between the Synoptic gospels. In the case of John and the Synoptics, the determinations are ultimately based on a relative assessment of the durability of oral traditions and an assessment of the uniqueness of Mark's account.

The alternatives of 'independent of the Synoptic gospels' or 'literarily dependent on the Synoptic gospels' do not exhaust the possible permutations of the relationship. Other scholars have been interested in alternatives or variations in the way the gospels might have been influenced by one another. These alternatives include influence of the written gospels on the oral tradition, multiple stages of authorship, and combinations of these.

A prolific scholar of the relationship of John and Synoptics has been M. E. Boismard. Boismard has detected a very complex interrelationship between the gospels, consisting of multiple stages of intermediate documents.<sup>34</sup> In Boismard's view, the Gospel of John both influenced and was influenced by Mark, and vice versa. This is because he posits stages of literary production such that various early documents (such as Primal Mark and Primal John) could have had a direct literary influence on the final documents (such as Final Mark and Final John). Boismard's approach could feasibly sustain both the priority of John and the posteriority of John at the same time. The difficulty with Boismard's approach, and the reason it has received few adherents, is that it is hard to imagine such a complex scheme of literary production, especially without any hard evidence for such documents.

A very different approach is that of Anton Dauer, who has argued that the early literary forms influenced the oral traditions that were still circulating, and these modified oral traditions then continued to spawn subsequent gospels.<sup>35</sup> To be specific, he argues that John did not rely on the Synoptic gospels directly as a source but that John's oral source shows traces of influence by the Synoptic gospels. Dauer finds where there are direct points of contact (often specific factual items), one cannot demonstrate a literary influence by the Synoptic gospels on John. Thus, Mark, Matthew and especially Luke have been taken up into the oral traditions that John has used as the basis for his gospel. The difficulty with Dauer's thesis is that it is hard to show precisely that the Synoptic gospels actually influenced the oral tradition, or alternatively that the oral traditions of the Synoptic gospels and John simply have common features at this point.

A third approach is somewhat between Dauer's approach and Boismard's approach. Paul Anderson has suggested that the relationship between John and the Synoptics has been reciprocal in nature.<sup>36</sup> He calls this relationship 'interfluent'. This relationship is complex, but one could say it had both an oral and a textual component. Anderson finds that John and Mark had contact at the oral level. This explains, for instance, the significant number of contacts in the John 6 (Feeding of the 5,000) narrative. These similarities cannot be explained by literary dependence but rather suggest a rich interaction at the oral level. At the same time, however, Anderson finds that John's written gospel (the first version of John) complements and corrects Mark by providing material absent from Mark and by making some corrections in detail and chronology. In this respect, then, the Fourth Gospel is aware of Mark but not literarily dependent on Mark. Relationships with the other Synoptic gospels are distinctive as well, suggesting that John has influenced Luke (which will be explored in detail below), and Matthew has influenced John between its first and final stages of production.

The assessment of John's independence, then, is very much in up in the air. What is lacking is a firm basis for assessing the nature of oral traditions and the degree to which a literary knowledge of other gospels might have been treated by the Fourth Evangelist. Knowledge of Mark or other gospels, whether mediated by oral traditions or by memory, cannot be definitively refuted. On the other hand, so little textual evidence has been offered that the case of literary dependence is by no means secure. Thus, literary

relationships are not an independent means of establishing dating or priority. Those who understand a late John, or a John which has had a long period of gestation through editorial revision, are more likely to entertain ideas of literary influence or dependence. Those who have decided on other grounds that the Fourth Gospel is unique, and possibly showing evidence of early tradition, will often assume argue that the evidence for literary relationship is either weak or non-existent and thus continue to urge a literary independence.

## Literary Priority

In what is perhaps a variation of the question of literary independence are arguments that John not only is independent of the Synoptic tradition but actually earlier. In some instances this argument is simply chronological and connected with the idea of literary independence. But others argue that John is not only early but has actually influenced other synoptic gospels, thus turning the old ordering on its head.

In the first category is the work of Klaus Berger, who has recently argued that John is written very early, probably the earliest of the gospels.<sup>37</sup> He actually dates the gospel to the period of between 64 and 70 C.E., since in his view the gospel assumes the death of Peter, but does not know of a physical destruction of Jerusalem or the temple. Berger's work is closely argued and deserves a bit of attention here, especially since it is little known in modern English reviews of the literature.

Berger in the first place, rather distinctly, posits that chapter 21 is an essential part of the gospel and is not a late addition. This element is important since in concluding this he connects the gospel's authorship with both the witness to the events of Jesus and to the early community of disciples, which he distinctively sees as still in one place as one group. He finds that the focus in both the main section of the gospel (especially chapters 12 and 9) and in chapter 21 is on concerns that affected the church shortly after the departure of Jesus. He detects numerous indications from within the text that the gospel arose in and was oriented toward an early period in the church's life.

At a number of points Berger relates John's gospel to other witnesses in the early church. First, he finds that John's relationship with the Synoptics can be said to be complementary. That is, he argues that John includes points that are synoptic in nature and the Synoptics include points which are Johannine in nature. This suggests to Berger that the two sets of documents stem from similar early traditions, not that John derives from the Synoptics. In a couple of key cases, however, he sees more direct relationships. He finds that Q is a later echo of traditions that are detailed more clearly and at an earlier date in John. For instance, Q 12:10 (Luke 12:10 par. Matt 12:31-32) discusses the sin against the Holy Spirit in connection with sins against the Son of Man. This is understandable, according to Berger, only against the backdrop of the fuller tradition related in John 9, especially 9:35-41, in which the Pharisees' rejection of Jesus' mighty acts (the work of the Holy Spirit) causes their sins to remain. In a similar vein, Berger sees a number of specific parallels between the gospels of John and Matthew, particularly in their engagement with the problem of 'Jew-

ish Christians'. These similarities, however, are not to be explained by John's reliance on Matthew but rather on Matthew's gospel demonstrating signs of contact with the Fourth Gospel as a document. In each specific case, Berger sees John as offering earlier forms of the theological issue at stake. Berger also notices very strong connections with Paul's letters, such that he imagines Paul having early contact with Jewish Christians who might be called 'pre-Johannine' in their perspective. Thus John and Paul share certain ways of conceiving of christological issues.

Berger's approach is by no means uncritical or fundamentalist. Rather, he examines the Johannine material from a very critical stance and yet comes to the conclusion time and again that the material in John represents a very early period in the development of Christianity. One example might help show his method. In the depiction of the temple 'cleansing' in John 2:19, Jesus speaks of the destruction of the temple. This destruction is also predicted in Matthew and Luke, but in these two gospels good cases can be made that these are *vaticania ex eventu* (written after the destruction occurred), and thus the event is told from the perspective of past fact. John's gospel, in contrast, seems to show no signs of any knowledge of this destruction. In contrast to Matthew and Luke, John shows no knowledge of both the city and the temple being destroyed, referring only to the temple. Indeed, Berger points out that Jesus' comment makes no note of Romans, or enemies, or even God's punishment being involved in the destruction. It is, then, a rhetorical point based on a Jewish expectation focused on the miracle of a new temple being constructed in its place. It is, in the Johannine context, not a reflection of historical actualities but an anticipation of God's miraculous plan to rebuild the temple. This 'rebuilding' according to John was interpreted after the resurrection by the early church to refer to Jesus' body. In this the author of John agrees with a trajectory of Paul's thought, the church as both the body of Christ and the temple of God. Thus, Berger argues that both the tradition of John 2:19 and the actual gospel predate the destruction of the temple, in contrast to similar comments in Matthew and Luke.

While Berger's approach can be seen as asserting a theological priority for John, sometimes with traces being left in other early literature such as Paul and Matthew, others have focused on more specific literary connections. In particular, Barbara Shellard and myself have looked at the special case of John's relationship with Luke. In two independent studies done at approximately the same time, they both come to the conclusion that the extensive points of contact point to John's influence on Luke rather than vice versa.<sup>38</sup>

Shellard approaches the problem from a broad perspective. She examines a number of significant passages in which there are strong similarities between Luke and John, and questions whether it is reasonable to imagine these similarities arising from Luke's influence on John or vice versa. In each case she concludes that the stronger case can be made that John has provided an influence on Luke and that Luke is often seen as mediating between Markan and Johannine portrayals. In other words, Luke functions as a middle term between competing traditions and the best way to understand this is that Luke is relying on them both.

A good example of Shellard's approach is her examina-

tion of the anointing story in Luke 7. It is well known that Luke's account of the anointing is significantly different from Mark's in that it is located very early, has a sinner woman doing the anointing, is not an anointing before Jesus' burial, and she anoints Jesus' feet, not his head, and also wipes his feet with her hair. Luke shares similarity with John, particularly in the feature of the anointing the feet and wiping them with her hair. Traditionally this latter feature in John has been taken to be a borrowing from Luke. But Shellard points out that the features in John are consistent with the story and seem to suggest a singularly distinctive version of the anointing story, especially given its connection with the raising of Lazarus and Mary and Martha. Luke, however, has certain key inconsistencies that suggest Luke has conflated two accounts. The wiping of the feet is tied more directly to tears, improbable for such a quantity of tears. Also, the reference to the hair seems extraneous to the carefully balanced response by Jesus: no kiss/kissed feet, no water/tears, no oil/anointed feet. Thus, the feature of the hair – even the application of the oil on the feet – seem to have been imported and clumsily adapted to the story. This suggests to Shellard that Luke is more probably the dependent evangelist, dependent both on Mark and John, and because of the major conflicts has moved the story out of its original place in the narrative.

My own approach is more of a systematic analysis of Luke's passion narrative, paying special attention to those places where Luke: (a) departs from the Markan narrative pattern, and (b) shows points of similarity with John's account. In numerous situations, and in a number of places where the similar order of events can be shown, Luke seems to depart from the Markan pattern in order to accommodate the Johannine features: sometimes simply facts, other times major theological perspectives. My conclusions are that Luke appears to be aware of John as an additional source, and to be engaging in some kind of dialogue between the two sources, not doing this mechanically but rather weighing the relative value of each account and often weaving the two together in a more nuanced passion narrative.

An example of my approach can be seen in the Pilate trial in Luke. A number of points of commonality can be found between Luke's trial and John's. Of special note are the number of departures from Mark's account in Luke and that many of them are found in John: the triple declarations of innocence, the triple attempts to release Jesus, the fact that the crowd unsolicitedly demands Barabas's release rather than Pilate offering them a choice, the doubled cry by them to crucify Jesus, and the implication that Pilate turns Jesus over to the Jews to crucify him. At each point Luke departs from the Markan account to make room for these distinctive features, and at each point where such a departure takes place it is to insert a Johannine feature. John's account, on the other hand, seems to be more internally consistent. Thus it appears that Luke has editorially merged two traditions: Mark and John.

This approach to Luke and John has also been supported by other recent scholars who echo the same findings. Robert Morgan, Shellard's doctoral advisor, has become convinced of John's literary priority over Luke.<sup>39</sup> Paul Anderson has also argued that there is a definite influence of John on Luke's gospel, not the other way around.<sup>40</sup>

A far more daring approach to understanding John's literary priority is that of Peter Hofrichter. Hofrichter understands the Fourth Gospel to be the first gospel written, arising out of an early Hellenistic-Jewish church which interpreted Jesus in light of certain proto-gnostic ideas of a descending ascending redeemer.<sup>41</sup> This early idea was developed into the hymn prefacing the gospel of John. The Fourth Gospel was then written with Jesus material in mind to focus on the earthly Jesus (versus the pre-existent Jesus). The various discussions on the mouth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel are attempts to interpret and reign in the gnostic interpretation. From this early gospel of John, Hofrichter then sees Mark developing his own gospel. But the Fourth Gospel serves as the initial model, and provides a kind of narrative structure, upon which Mark then develops his gospel.

Hofrichter's approach seems to push against one of the major trends in current Johannine research: the increasing tendency to locate much if not all of Johannine thought well within the boundaries of Jewish thought. Hofrichter, in contrast, locates the genesis of John in a Hellenistic proto-gnostic conception, which John attempts to control and which Mark then rejects with his own more Jewish narrative. This approach is undoubtedly daring, and needs significantly more demonstration of both major theses: that the direction of influence was from John to Mark, and that John is primarily a Hellenistic-oriented document.

A rethinking about literary relationships in the NT is occurring that is raising serious questions about the secondary nature of the Fourth Gospel. Both in terms of careful literary analysis, the stuff of old source-critical discussions (Shellard and myself), and in terms of theological developments (Berger and Hofrichter, though from very different perspectives), John is being considered as an early, or the earliest, of the gospels.

## Historical and Theological Priority

Another approach to affirming the priority of John is found in studies that focus more on the substance of the gospel, that is the historical and theological presentation of Jesus found in the Fourth Gospel. A number of efforts attempt to bring John back into consideration as a source for the reconstruction of the historical Jesus as well as to examine John as a serious witness to the very earliest tendencies within the formation of the church.

One of the significant issues affecting John's reconsideration as an early witness to Jesus traditions is the re-evaluation of Judaism in the first century. Perhaps it is better to use the more common term now, 'Judaisms', since the result of current studies has been an emphasis on the diversity found within Judaism in the period before the destruction of the temple. A major contribution to this re-evaluation is the extensive cluster of documents found at Qumran.

One striking element of the Qumran literature is the cluster of similarities it shows with some of the distinctive theological perspectives found in the Fourth Gospel. Perhaps most striking in this regard is the strong dualism in both the Dead Sea Scrolls and John.<sup>42</sup> This dualism in past scholarship was attributed to Hellenistic influence, thus distancing

it from the Palestinian Jesus tradition. But this dualistic perspective, especially in the contrast of light and dark, representing good and evil, is a pervasive element in the Qumran literature. This feature in John must now be counted as a reflection of Jewish ideology, not Hellenism, especially the way it is framed around the God of Israel and founded firmly in creation.

Other features such as Qumran's rather distinctive calendar, a critical orientation to the priesthood in Jerusalem, determinism, and distinctive approaches to purity and community have all produced a new view of the diverse approaches to Judaism in Jesus' time. Many of these suggest ways that John's perspective about Jesus might be reevaluated. For instance, the question of the dating of the last supper has been considered in light of the calendar controversy between the Jerusalem priesthood and the Qumran community.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Jesus' own baptizing ministry described in the Fourth Gospel, as well as John the Baptist's baptizing ministry, might be explained in part by the Qumran community's emphasis on frequent immersions, despite differences. No one feature is as distinctive as the dualism described above, but this has led to a willingness to think of John as reflecting a form of Jewish thought present in Palestine at the time of Jesus.

In a similar vein has been a re-evaluation of John's testimony about the geographical locations in John. While this was often dismissed as secondary, it is clear now that the frequent geographical notes in John are critical to the development of the narrative. For instance, John's description of the Sheep Pool in John 5 might rest on very secure historical information.<sup>44</sup> Similarly the references to John's baptizing ministry at Aenon near Salim (John 3:23) might now be seen to be accurate references to a place with water in the dry months.

Thus, historical Jesus scholars are often willing, in contrast to previous efforts, to see in John some credible strains of historical tradition. John P. Meier's treatment of the historical Jesus considers highly credible the Fourth Gospel's testimony that Jesus had a baptizing ministry parallel to John's, concluding that Jesus may have continued baptizing throughout his career.<sup>45</sup> Critical thought is a carefully slow process of reconsidering the Fourth Gospel's historical framework.

Within this discussion of John and the Jewish aspects of the gospel, it would be remiss not to consider the fault lines that are developing around one of the major interpretational approaches to John. In 1968, J. Louis Martyn wrote *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, undoubtedly one of the most influential books on how to approach John.<sup>46</sup> Martyn argues that John was written with a dual horizon in mind: the time of Jesus, and the time of the Johannine community to which the gospel was addressed. A major focus is on John 9, the story of the man born blind and the threat of excommunication from the synagogue in that narrative. For Martyn this is a clear dating feature, and he thus suggests that the Johannine community was faced with a specific threat of excommunication by means of the introduction of the *birkhat ha-minim* the curse against the heretics which became part of the regular set of benedictions, in the synagogue lectionary around AD 85. In other words, a primary thrust of the gospel was aimed at events which occurred after 85, thus making

the gospel primarily a text addressed to the Johannine community, late, and only secondarily interested in the life of Jesus. While this approach has been adopted as almost a 'given' of Johannine studies, serious questions about its validity have arisen, especially concerning the depiction of Judaism in the post-temple period. Reuvel Kimmelman in particular has dismissed the importance and the widespread applicability of the *birkhat ha-minim*.<sup>47</sup> Others have questioned the integrity of the anti-Jewish rhetoric of the gospel, thus undermining one of its legs.<sup>48</sup> What is occurring as a result of these questions is a return to consideration that John depicts significant opposition to both Jesus and the Jesus followers in the very early period following his death.

Perhaps the most significant single work to bring attention to the historical issues in the Fourth Gospel is John A.T. Robinson's posthumous book *The Priority of John*.<sup>49</sup> Robinson does not actually argue that John is the first of the gospel's written; his actual position on the development of the four gospels is more fluid. Rather, Robinson argues strenuously that the Fourth Gospel is based on early traditions that are as old as Mark's, and thus should be taken very seriously and on par with representations of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.

Robinson approaches the historicity from a number of angles, establishing a number of threshold elements which increase the probability of the historical grounding of the gospel. These include the argument that the author of the gospel is the disciple John, suggestions that the geographical references in the gospel are highly supportable, and an attack on reasons for a late dating of the gospel. It is remarkable that many of the points raised in a variety of literature, such as in various archeological reports and subsequent articles from them, are found carefully sifted by Robinson. The analysis of the conflicting options about the Sheep Pool from John 5 (see discussion above) are very extensively reported by Robinson.

Perhaps one of Robinson's most notable efforts deals with the relative value of John's chronology. A carefully argued section suggests that John's dating of the last supper, which is distinct from the Synoptics' dating, is highly probable during the period of Jesus' life, while the Synoptics' dating is not. The repeated trips to Jerusalem, with the increasing conflict with the Jewish leadership, are suggested as the most likely reason for the rejection and death of Jesus. In an examination of the gospel narrative from the beginning to the end, Robinson finds numerous points where the gospel of John can be reasonably suggested to have valid claims to historical grounding. An example of the kind of details Robinson examines is found in his consideration of Nicodemus. Robinson argues, by sifting a lot of detail, that there was a Nakdimon ben Gurion who was part of a leading family in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. This Nakdimon would have been an old man at the time of Jesus, and hence the question in John 3:4 (how can a man be born again when he is old?) is exactly appropriate to the historical person. While this does not prove that John is actually referring to this person Nakdimon, it does at least suggest that a historical grounding is possible. Not all of Robinson's points are equally persuasive, but many are persuasive, and these alone suggest that the wholesale rejection of John as secondary should be reexamined.

Robinson may well be faulted for the extent to which he tries to establish John's portrayal as historically probable. His discussion of the teaching of Jesus, it seemed to me, is less persuasive. The long dialogues have a greater claim to theological shaping by the evangelist, and thus Robinson's attempts to connect them with Jesus' historical teachings without acknowledging the creative role of the evangelist at times seemed stretched. But Robinson had a major job in confronting the biblical guild on a 'settled' feature of biblical scholarship.

Craig Blomberg's very recent book on the historical reliability of John examines the gospel, combing it for points of historical plausibility.<sup>50</sup> In many ways he follows the lead of Robinson in his treatment of specific historical items, despite a relative paucity of references to Robinson's work. But in some significant ways Blomberg approaches the question very differently. While, like Robinson, Blomberg argues for John the disciple's authorship, this is a far more crucial issue for him. Because Blomberg accepts a traditional view of the time and place of writing, that is in Ephesus in the late first century, the direct connection with the disciple of Jesus becomes essential for supporting the historical features as reminiscences by the apostle.

A distinctive feature of Blomberg's work is his avoidance or denial of the difficulties in reconciling the competing depictions of Jesus' ministry in John and the Synoptics. This appears to reflect an approach to the gospels that supports the inherent historicity of all of the gospels. He frequently refers to 'interlocking' narratives, by which he means that information or narratives in either John or the Synoptics helps to explain information or narratives in the other. Interlocking narratives for Blomberg suggest that both John and Synoptics contain pieces of the original historical event, and thus each should be read in light of the other. At other times, however, he is willing to consider such improbable situations as two temple incidents. This effort to reconcile the Johannine and Synoptic versions is seen throughout his analysis, and tends to diminish the critical force of the arguments in the book. Blomberg, then, is not arguing for an early date of John, nor for any literary interrelationship with the Synoptics. Instead John stands as a late, yet independent, reminiscence of the disciple John, and its historical reliability depends on this connection to John.

## Conclusions and Summary

A number of main trajectories in these Johannine studies, then, may be summarised, some complementary, others not.

First, almost all of the efforts affirm in one way or another John's literary independence from the Synoptic gospels. The Fourth Gospel draws upon traditions that are not primarily dependent on any of the Synoptic gospels. There are some questions about John's relationship with Mark, but to a degree this is often imagined in some form of oral sharing (Anderson), less commonly some literary contact at a very early stage of composition (Boismard).

This literary independence almost automatically allows for some consideration of historical validity of material in the Fourth Gospel, although allowing for a wide variety of assessment. If John is independently drawing upon oral tra-

ditions about Jesus and subjecting them to its very distinctive theological shaping, then it will be subject to a more openly critical attitude toward the value of its data. If, on the other hand, the material is directly tied to John or some other eye-witness of Jesus (Robinson, Blomberg, and Berger), then a greater willingness to assume historical veracity exists.

Second, different approaches are taken to the date of the writing. Literary independence does not speak directly to dating, and so for many a late date can be maintained even while seeing an independent production (Blomberg or even D.M. Smith). Others have questioned the assumption of a late date, and for various reasons. For these the possibility of an early date is introduced once again into consideration. Sometimes this questioning of a late date results from scepticism about theories of the progressive development of the gospel or the historical development within the purported Johannine community. Sometimes it arises from a sense of literary influence on other gospels (Shellard and myself). And sometimes it arises from a view that the gospel is closely connected with the Jesus event itself (Robinson and Berger). It must be said that without some evidence of literary connections, whether Synoptic influence on John, or John's influence on one or more Synoptics, scant basis exists for asserting either an early or late date.

Third, some see evidence of a literary relationship between John and the Synoptics that is substantially different from John's reliance on the Synoptics. The perspectives range from oral influence (Dauer and Anderson), to complex intermediate documents (Boismard), to more direct linear relationships. In the latter, the interesting relationship between John and Luke has produced arguments for John's direct influence on Luke (Shellard, Anderson, and myself). Berger has also suggested a direct link between John and Q material.

Fourth, varying emphases occur regarding the historical grounding of the Fourth Gospel. This is a major emphasis in Blomberg and Robinson. For most, however, the issue of historicity is secondary to clarifying either the literary relationships or the relative placement of John within the range or early documents.

What all this scholarly activity suggests is that openness is growing for reassessing John's place in the early growth of gospel traditions. Some elements have been received more openly in the main stream of biblical scholarship; others are still definitely minority opinions. Much of this suggests continued areas of exploration:

First, the matter of John's literary independence has achieved relatively strong support within the scholarly community. Despite continued resistance by some (Neiryneck), one can say that a relatively strong consensus still maintains that John is not dependent on the Synoptic gospels. One clear area of uncertainty is the relationship between Mark and John. Anderson's suggestions that some kind of sharing has taken place, if only to explain the common genre of the gospel, must be taken seriously and explored further.

Second, the argument for John's possible influence on other gospels, thus asserting a literary priority for John in at least some special cases, is relatively recent in biblical scholarship and there has not been sufficient time for this idea to percolate through the scholarly community. If sustained in any degree, this will provide a compelling argument

for an early date of John.

Third, the reassessment of Judaism in the second temple period is becoming widespread, largely because the implications of the Qumran documents are being felt throughout biblical scholarship. This has certainly almost destroyed attempts to place John in the Hellenistic camp, or at the very least Hellenistic influence is filtered through Judaism. This reassessment is increasing the argument for historical plausibility in John. This effort to reconceptualize the religious and cultural thought world of first century Palestine will continue to have an effect on Johannine studies.

Fourth, questions about the dating of John are heavily contingent on theories concerning the community the author relates to and the importance placed on events that might have affected this community. The attempt to date John late because of the *birkhat ha minim* and its effect on the Johannine community increasingly is being tested. Some question the importance and even existence of the Johannine community in explaining the gospel, focusing instead on the author's unique composition. This is an area of contention that will need further research.

Fifth, thankfully modern scholarship is more accepting of John's theological shaping of the gospel. In part this has come about because of post-modernism's acknowledgment that all writing is ideological; certainly this is accepted for all the gospels. Thus John's frankly theological agenda does not inherently invalidate historical reliability. But it must still be said that consideration of John's redactional tendencies must remain an important part of analysis of the gospel text.

Many of the scholarly approaches outlined in this paper support a greater plausibility for historical data in John. There is more room, then, for bringing John back into the discussion of the Jesus of history, which will surely open up the discussion in new and exciting ways.

## Notes

- 1 An abbreviated form of this paper was given at the *Stone-Campbell Journal* Conference in St. Louis, March 2003.
- 2 In this category. C. H. Dodd, *The Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), and J. A. T. Robinson, *The Priority of John* (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1987).
- 3 Pride of place for this perspective must be given to Percival Gardner-Smith, *Saint John and the Synoptic Gospels* (Cambridge: University Press, 1938) and many who have followed him in this view. D. Moody Smith, 'Sources of the Gospel of John: An Assessment of the Present State of the Problem', *NTS 10* (1963) 349, came to call this view the new consensus, although he later acknowledged that this consensus has not held up in *Johannine Christianity* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 147.
- 4 An example of this would be Peter Hofrichter, *Model und Vorlage der Synoptiker – Das vorredaktionelle Johannesevangelium* (Darmstadt: Georg Olms Verlag, 1997). Within the narrower scope of Luke-John relationships, Mark A. Matson, *In Dialogue with Another Gospel? The Influence of the Fourth Gospel on the Passion Narrative of the Gospel of Luke* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2001).
- 5 For a more extensive discussion of this controversy, see Joseph Smith, 'Gaius and the Controversy over Johannine Literature' (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1979), Joseph Bludau,

- Die ersten Gegner der Johannesschriften* (Freiburg: Herder, 1925), and Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Apocalypse in the Ancient Church* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1929). In addition see Matson, *In Dialogue with Another Gospel?*, 200-206.
- 6 J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 66. The major references to John in Irenaeus are found in *Against Heresies* 1.27.2-4 and 3.11.8.
  - 7 David Strauss, *Life of Jesus* (trans. of 4th German ed.; London: Chapman Bros., 1846), 2:150.
  - 8 Ferdinand Christian Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* (Tübingen; Verlag und Druck, 1847), 239.
  - 9 Much of the following discussion is drawn from a previous paper of mine on the historical value of the Fourth Gospel, 'The Contribution to the Temple Cleansing by the Fourth Gospel' in *SBL 1992 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 489-506.
  - 10 I use here the language of 'agent' under the influence of A. E. Harvey, 'Christ as Agent' in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament* (ed. L. D. Hurst and N.T. Wright; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) and James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001).
  - 11 For example, B. W. Bacon, *The Gospel of the Hellenists* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1933).
  - 12 See Raymond Brown's review of previous attempts to locate John against Hellenistic thought in *The Gospel According to John, I-XIII* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), lvi-lix.
  - 13 See, for instance, C. H. Dodd's treatment in *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, esp. 54-73.
  - 14 Elaine Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973). Note that Irenaeus *Against Heresies*, 3.11.7 specifically felt compelled to refute the Gnostics' use of John.
  - 15 Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 7-9 and in various points in the commentary.
  - 16 See as an example the collection of articles in James Charlesworth, ed., *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). In a recent article Charlesworth, 'The Priority of John? Reflections on the Essenes and the First Edition of John' in *Für und wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002), 73-114, expands on these ideas.
  - 17 So Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, entire, argues for a semeia source, a revelatory discourse source and a passion/resurrection narrative. Robert Fortna, *The Gospel of Signs: A Reconstruction of the Narrative Source Underlying the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) is perhaps the most significant monograph to urge a unified signs gospel underlying the current Fourth Gospel. See also Urban von Wahlde, *The Earliest Version of John's Gospel: Recovering the Gospel of Signs* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1989), and W. Nicol, *The Semeia in the Fourth Gospel: Tradition and Redaction* (Leiden, J. Brill, 1972).
  - 18 E. Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums, Der gegenwärtige Stand der einschlägigen Forschungen* (Freiburg in der Schweiz: Paulusverlag, 1951), and E. Schweizer, *Ego Eimi: Die religionsgeschichtliche Herkunft und theologische Bedeutung der johanneischen Bildreden, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Quellenfrage des vierten Evangeliums* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939).
  - 19 Note, for instance the discussion in John Ashton, *Studying John* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) which seems to presume that the prologue was composed along with the gospel, in part a reflection on the Incarnate Word and on Wisdom ideas, perhaps in dialogue with the narrative and certainly anticipating it. Peter Hofrichter in *In Anfang war der 'Johannesprolog.'* *Dasurchristliche Logosbekenntnis – die Basis neutestamentlicher und gnostischer Theologie* (Regensburg: Biblische Untersuchungen 17, 1986) suggests the priority of the prologue.
  - 20 J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Harper, 1968).
  - 21 Raymond Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979), and John Painter, *The Quest for the Messiah: The History, Literature, and Theology of the Johannine Community* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).
  - 22 Hans Windisch, *Johannes und die Synoptiker: Wollte der vierte Evangelist die älteren Evangelien ergänzen oder ersetzen?* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1926).
  - 23 Percival Gardner-Smith, *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels*.
  - 24 C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*.
  - 25 Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John*; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968); Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995); Ernst Haenchen, *John 1 & 2* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1977).
  - 26 C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978).
  - 27 See especially F. Neirynck, 'John and the Synoptics' in *L'Evangile de Jean: Sources, rédaction, théologie* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1977), 73-106, and 'John and the Synoptics: 1975-1990' in *John and the Synoptics* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1979).
  - 28 For an extensive treatment of the relationship between John and the Synoptics see D. Moody Smith, *John Among the Gospels: The Relationship in Twentieth-Century Research* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).
  - 29 To a great extent this is the logical conclusion to Werner Kelber's thesis in *The Oral and the Written Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), in which the act of writing a gospel itself was a unique and powerful move. Given the uniqueness of it, it must have been influential on subsequent gospels, being patterned after this first document.
  - 30 Richard A. Burridge, *What are the Gospels?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
  - 31 John R. Donahue, 'Introduction: From Passion Traditions to Passion Narrative' in *The Passion in Mark*, ed. W. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), and *Are You the Christ?* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973).
  - 32 See Barrett, *Gospel*, 42-46.
  - 33 Richard Bauckham, ed. *The Gospels for All Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).
  - 34 M.-E. Boismard and A. Lamouille, *L'Evangile de Jean: Commentaire*. Vol. 3 of *Synopse des quatre Evangiles en français* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1977).
  - 35 Anton Dauer, *Johannes und Lukas: Untersuchungen zu den johanneisch-lukanischen Parallelperikopen Joh 4,46-54/Lk 7,1-10 – Joh 12,1-8/Lk 7,36-50; 10,38-42 – Joh 20,19-29/Lk 24,36-49* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1984) and *Die Passiongeschichte im Johannesevangelium: eine traditions-geschichtliche und theologische Untersuchung zu Joh 18, 1-19, 30* (Munich: Kosel, 1972).
  - 36 Paul Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996). He has further developed his thesis in 'Interfluent, Formative and Dialectic-

- cal: A Theory of John's Relation to the Synoptics' in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2002) and 'John and Mark: The Bi-optic Gospels' in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).
- 37 Klaus Berger, *Im Anfang war Johannes* (Stuttgart: Quell Verlag, 1997). See also his article 'Neue Argumente für die Frühdatierung des Johannesevangeliums' in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).
- 38 Barbara Shellard, 'Luke as the Fourth Gospel: its purpose, sources and literary character', (M. Phil thesis, Oxford University, 1997), and also 'The Relationship of Luke and John. A Fresh Look at an Old Problem', *JTS* 46 (1995), 71-98; and Mark A. Matson, *In Dialogue with Another Gospel?*, and 'The Influence of John on Luke's Passion: Toward a Theory of Intergospel Dialogue' in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).
- 39 Robert Morgan, 'The Priority of John over Luke', in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).
- 40 See Anderson, *Fourth Gospel*, 276-77.
- 41 This early idea on the relationship of the Fourth Gospel to the Prologue was developed in Peter Hofrichter, *In Anfang war der Johannesprolog*. The later relationship with the other gospels is found in his *Modell und Vorlage der Synoptiker – Das vorredaktionelle Johannesevangelium*. See also 'Zur Komposition des Markusevangeliums auf der Grundlage des Hellenistenbuches' in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).
- 42 Especially see the articles by James Charlesworth, 'A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 3:13-4:26 and the Dualism Contained in the Gospel of John' and 'Qumran, John and the Odes of Solomon', both in James Charlesworth, ed., *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 1990).
- 43 See A. Jaubert, 'The Calendar of Qumran and the Passion Narrative in John' in *John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Crossroad, 1990).
- 44 See Ingo Broer, 'Knowledge of Palestine in the Fourth Gospel?' in *Jesus in Johannine Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), and James Charlesworth, 'The Priority of John? Reflections on the Essenes and the First Edition of John' in *Für und Wider die Priorität des Johannesevangeliums* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002).
- 45 John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:100-130.
- 46 J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*.
- 47 R. Kimelman, 'Birkhat ha-minim and the Lack of Evidence for an anti-Christian Jewish Prayer in Late Antiquity' in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition II: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Philadelphia: PUBLISHER Fortress Press, 1981).
- 48 Adele Reinhartz, 'The Johannine Community and Its Jewish Neighbors: A Reappraisal' in *What is John?* (ed. Fernando Segovia ; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).
- 49 John A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*.
- 50 Craig L. Blomberg, *Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

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# Mission in Theological Education: Exotic accessory or essential ingredient?

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**KEYWORDS:** missiology, *missio Dei*, church, agent, Trinity, Jesus the Saviour, Scriptures, faith traditions, theology, theological education, gospel message, culture, church history, maintenance mentality, mission mentality

Mission in theological education is often an exotic accessory on the fringes of an already packed theological curriculum. Lamin Sanneh, Professor of History at Yale, writes of how surprised he is that so few of his colleagues at Yale Divinity School 'make regular professional use of the resources in the Day Missions Library, which contains a treasure of information about the worldwide expansion of Christianity'. He goes on to say:

This indifference contrasts sharply with the flowering of interest in the Western missionary movement shown

by departments of history, political science and anthropology. It's ironic that a divinity school can carry out its mission largely uninterested in Christianity's unprecedented expansion around the world.' (1995:715)

Sanneh's comments are addressed to theological education in the West, but the situation is rarely different in non-western theological colleges. Here too, theological education can go on 'largely uninterested in Christianity's unprecedented expansion around the world'. We have hardly begun to appreciate that the explosion of world Christianity has created 'a new climate, a new culture, for interpreting the Bible' and doing theology (Yarborough 2003:30).

My aim in this article is to demonstrate the necessity for integrating mission into theological education while at the same time securing a place within the curriculum for the specialized discipline of missiology. As Eddy Gibbs and Ian Coffey have noted in their stimulating book, *Church Next*