

section on Jesus' earthly appearance and character has been left out and his much respected work on the Abgar Legend has been replaced by that of H. J. W. Drijvers. Only that by the aged O. Cullmann on the infancy Gospels is largely unchanged. Here some expansion would have been necessary, at least the inclusion of some unique and possibly early extracts from the Armenian version (e.g., the identification of the star of Bethlehem with a group of angels).

In the section entitled "Gospels under the names of holy women," one finds three Gnostic titles: *The Questions of Mary*, *The Gospel of Mary*, and the *Genna Marias*. The scant attestations to the first and the third titles do not even warrant calling these works "fragmentary." While the first two are accounted for in the Nag Hammadi corpus, the third is but a paragraph from Epiphanius' account on the Gnostics. The inclusion of such titles in the volume attests to the attempted thoroughness of its coverage. Even here, the reader is given a basic bibliography to editions, translations, and studies.

The importance of this revised edition lies simply in its bringing together most of the existing documents, however fragmentary, that fall within the established category of NT apocrypha. Surely not all known Gospels are included; the omission of certain late Gospels in addition to some of the "Infancy Gospels" is noteworthy.

The value of such an edition to serious students of the New Testament is immeasurable. The ultimate usefulness of the present volume is largely to be determined by the awaited indices. These are expected to be at the end of volume 2, as one finds them in the German edition.

Let us hope that the second volume will appear at not too great an interval after the first.

Andrews University

ABRAHAM TERIAN

Shorter, Aylward. *The Church in the African City*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991. viii + 152 pp. Paperback, \$19.95.

This latest book by Aylward Shorter, written after many years of mission experience in Africa, deals with a timely subject. Shorter addresses the crisis of rapid urbanization, with its ensuing materialism and secularization, which threatens to overwhelm much of sub-Saharan Africa. His aim is to examine the challenges this urbanization process poses for the church and to develop strategies that will enable the church to meet this situation.

The content of the book does not fully justify its title. The focus is on East Africa (in particular, Nairobi, Kampala, Dar-es-Salaam, and Harare) and on the work of the Roman Catholic Church. But the author has also

travelled rather widely in other parts of Africa, and most of his observations are equally valid for the mushrooming cities of Central and West Africa (Kinshasa, Lagos, Ibadan, Abidjan, Dakar). Even though many of the strategy proposals are intended to fit the framework of the Roman Catholic Church, the book is written from an ecumenical perspective, and many of the underlying principles can be applied within other ecclesiastical traditions.

The first four chapters are devoted to a discussion of the socio-economic realities of urbanization in Africa. The author emphasizes the importance of a rapidly developing urban consciousness, even in smaller towns and rural areas, as an important facet of the urbanization process. His treatment of the history and different topologies of African towns; the main factors causing large-scale migration to the towns; and the often devastating results—cultural, social and economic, is insightful and helpful even for readers who have lived in urban Africa themselves. Shorter does not fail to call special attention to the cultural disorientation of many African city dwellers, who continue to maintain strong ties with their village of origin, and thus live in two semi-encapsulated worlds at the same time.

Chapters 5-11 deal with the response of the church to the crisis caused by the urbanization process. The anti-urbanism which has long characterized much Christian thinking is shown to be biblically unjustified. The author calls for an imaginative adaptation of existing church structures and the creation of additional, specialized ministries. Existing parish structures may need to be abandoned; interparochial and supraparochial initiatives and team ministries need to be developed on a wider scale; basic Christian communities, interfaith cooperation and industrial missions can help to connect the church with the people's concrete life.

Beyond what Shorter has presented, at least two other aspects should have been discussed. Shorter notes that the Roman Catholic Church faces more problems in urban church attendance than do other Christian churches. An analysis of the reasons for this difference might uncover factors which should be taken into account when developing new strategies for making the church relevant to the urban dweller. The second point is of much greater importance: the author mainly discusses structural renewal, but hardly touches upon the need to contextualize the Christian message in such a way that it will have a stronger appeal to the increasingly secularized urban African. Or to state it differently: Shorter's book, while, quite rightly, calling for a much needed re-thinking of organizational structures and pleading for a multi-faceted social support system for the urban population in general and the church members in particular, regrettably fails to emphasize the duty of the church to translate its message into terms and categories that more effectively communicate the gospel to the new African in the cities. Furthermore, it offers no

principles to undergird the approach to this task. In other publications (*African Christian Theology*, 1975, and *Jesus and the Witchdoctor*, 1985) Shorter has called for a dialogue between Christianity and the African traditional religions. *The Church in the African City* should have provided the opportunity to pursue this dialogue further, while focusing on the increasingly secular religious climate of the African city.

In spite of these last observations, this book is strongly recommended for all who are directly or indirectly involved with missions in modern Africa.

Andrews University

REINDER BRUINSMA

Sloyan, Gerard S. *What Are They Saying about John?* New York: Paulist Press, 1991. 125 pp. \$6.95.

Sloyan introduces his work *What Are They Saying About John?* with the disclaimer, "Surely this is a foolhardy venture" (1). Indeed, to attempt in less than 100 pages (excluding endnotes and bibliographies) to survey the scope of scholarly writing on the Gospel of John in a manner both fair and thorough would seem foolhardy. Sloyan further admits that the method he has chosen to adopt "may be even more freighted with peril. It tries to convey the essence of long and complex arguments by transmitting sizable segments of them" (2). His solution for the reader, however, apparently becomes the most perilous, since he states that "the subject-matter index thus becomes the key to using this book" (2), although no such index can be found in the book.

Nevertheless, Sloyan has done a valuable service to the reader by providing a digest of significant commentaries and scholarly articles on the Gospel of John. He arbitrarily delimits the scope of writings in his major survey to the years 1970-1990. However, his first chapter includes a survey of "landmark commentaries" prior to 1970, beginning with the church fathers, then focusing on the commentaries of Hoskyns and Davey, Bultmann, Barrett, Schnackenburg, and Brown, plus the two thematic works by Dodd.

In chap. 2, Sloyan discusses research dealing with the questions of authorship and sources in the fourth Gospel. He reviews works by R. T. Fortna, Urban C. von Wahlde, D. Moody Smith, J. Louis Martyn, Barnabas Lindars, John A. T. Robinson, Oscar Cullmann, Alan Culpepper, and Martin Hengel.

Chap. 3 consists of a summary of studies having to do with the Fourth Gospel as religious literature, beginning with the narrative criticism of Culpepper and concluding with the contextual method of Teresa Okure.