

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.

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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.

Sloyan's final chapter focuses on treatments of Johannine themes such as the Spirit, the law, christology, soteriology, and the meaning of "Son of Man." He reviews selected articles from periodical literature and some books he considers especially helpful for students, teachers, and preachers. He closes with a brief summary of current trends in Fourth-Gospel scholarship, most notable of which is the move away from a historical approach toward a literary (narrative) approach to John's Gospel.

The bibliography would have been more helpful had it covered a broader selection of Johannine studies and been briefly annotated. As it is, it consists essentially of a list of works cited in notes, whether or not they have much to do with Fourth Gospel research.

Given the comprehensive scope of the survey attempted, Sloyan has done a remarkable job of reducing the data to a very readable and comprehensible 98 pages. Clearly, he has been unable to encompass all aspects of Fourth Gospel research and has had to be selective in the works reviewed, but this is understandable in any field in which the writing is as prolific as it has been in Johannine studies. He has, however, provided the student with a single volume which gives an overview of some of the best in recent research in this field, and which attempts to represent the various authors fairly rather than critiquing their positions. Given the low price of this volume, it is a best buy for those who wish to survey the field without reading hundreds of books and articles.

It is to Sloyan's credit that he has made a serious attempt to faithfully represent the intentions of each author rather than his own views on the various issues. Whether or not he has been successful will ultimately be decided best by the authors themselves.

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Van Engen, Charles Edward. *God's Missionary People: Rethinking the Purpose of the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 224 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

In *God's Missionary People*, Charles Van Engen makes an impressive contribution to the writings on ecclesiology/missiology. Arthur F. Glasser, who wrote the foreword, comments that this study "will precipitate much discussion within the churches about themselves and their mission to the world." Van Engen brings theory and praxis together in good balance. This author expands my vision, and like G. K. Chesterton's "agreeable man"—the one who agrees with me, supports my thesis of many years that the local church is "where it's at." One remembers longtime Chicago mayor