

*The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1-42.* Tübingen: Mohr, 1988. xx, 342 pp, pb., c. \$58.\*

This work represents a minor revision of the author's PhD dissertation at Fordham University in 1984. Okure, currently teaching at the Catholic Institute of West Africa in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, here provides one of the best studies of the subject to date. She notes in the preface that her interest in mission reaches back to her childhood days, and that she was inspired by her living experiences of mission in the African context. After a most helpful opening chapter summarising scholarship on mission in John, Okure focuses her study of mission in John on Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman in chapter 4. The author's contention that this pericope is a "microcosm" of the entire Gospel has been questioned by several reviewers. Her method is rather eclectic, utilising ancient rhetoric, literary criticism, and a "contextual approach" (where one's reading of the whole informs the exegesis of an individual textual unit and vice versa). Okure also subscribes to a form of the "Johannine community hypothesis," conjecturing that the Gospel was written to stir the community to renewed missionary zeal which it had lost. This extrapolation from mission texts in John to a presumed setting in the life of the "Johannine community" constitutes the greatest weakness of this work; it is unclear on what basis Okure concludes that the "Johannine community" had lost its missionary zeal. The idiosyncratic methodology likewise limits the value of the work. Nevertheless, this is among the most helpful studies on the topic and should be found in all advanced-level theological libraries in Africa.

Andreas J. Köstenberger

\*This review first appeared in *Book Notes for Africa* 3 (1997): 14 and is posted with permission.