

Written in a very remote rural mission in tropical Africa, Dorr's book succeeds not by being an ordered, tight sequence of thought but by jostling sustained thought with separate points and recorded experience; the pages present an *author at work* as well as a text. Could this be theology as the taking stock of field-work? His wide-ranging experience as an Irish priest, both pastor and academic, familiar with Latin America and Africa is turned into theology. We are made to see that whilst much Western theology concentrated on documents from the past as its sources, Third World theology puts more stress on the present experience of people—above all of the poor—as a source of theology. There are some tantalisingly brief pages on the psycho-social approach used for years by Dorr, an approach that enables people, especially the poor, to become agents of their own development. Leaders are trained by action and reflection to let the 'generative themes' of specific groups emerge, sacrificing the leaders' goals and priorities. Dorr is candid about any theologian's limitations, including his own. He guesses rightly that readers of his book (and no doubt reviewers too) are going to be in his own position, somewhere in the middle of the pyramids of power. The author makes himself accessible by the loose texture of his argument, regularly breaking out into jottings, a series of points made in staccato form. It is the voice of a man used to talking and listening in groups; a book, then, to be used as much as read.

Identifying a split between 'spirituality' and 'justice', Dorr offers a redefinition of each that makes them interdependent. Following *Micah*, spirituality will mean walking humbly before our God, loving tenderly and acting justly. The use of the *Magnificat* may be predictable, but the book of *Judith* is rescued from current oblivion. There follow some remarks, somewhat disappointing, on spirituality and theology. (*Most people are said to keep their urge to theologise under tight rein, except in bars or at cocktail parties; whose experience is being recorded here?*). He then turns to the bulk of his theme, an exploration of justice in which the Third World is often the subject rather than just the object. The fundamental needs of unity, security, justice, work, progress, relationships, rootedness, harmony and hope are proclaimed as 'Kingdom values' to be worked out in secular society and in the Church. There are some stimulating thoughts on prayer and providence.

The general 'values' are sound enough but hardly novel, so that it is the Third World perspective and particular experiences and insights that linger and stimulate. Dorr would be the first to admit that anyone's experience is limited, yet there are ways of complementing one's personal experience and enlarging one's sympathies. Startling omissions disjoint his account. Sin and forgiveness or the sacramental anticipations of the Kingdom do not feature much. He seems careful to avoid examining the legitimate use of force or organised, militant struggles for justice whether of the peaceful Indian kind or the armed sort that has helped to change parts of Africa, Latin America and indeed his own Ireland. Thus the actual experience of so many in the Third World goes unrecorded, remains voiceless. In the end, he is reluctant to allow drastic collisions whether of meanings in his text or of groups in history. Dorr tells us that the experience of Christ is in some ways normative for him; 'His silence before Herod and his words before Pilate suggest ways in which I might take a stance in public affairs'. Does Christ's use of violence in the Temple suggest nothing?

ROBERT OMBRES OP