clearly what was first affirmed in a general way” (italics of the author; p. 56). No doubt some development is due to such a process of explicitation, but certainly many theologians would balk at limiting such development to mere explicitation of the implicit. For this reviewer, the major flaw in this book is the compulsion to attribute to the whole of Church social teaching what in fact was only achieved with Vatican II. This compulsion is in continual tension with Carrier’s own recognition of the real change which took place, one which has been repeatedly pointed out by theologians, historians, and social scientists, not all of whom can be dismissed as being motivated by ideological biases.

If it is perhaps expecting too much to think that encyclicals should point out the deficiencies or errors of their predecessors, one could expect more from a compilation such as this, even if it comes out under official auspices. Carrier is also aware of the contingent elements in Church social teaching, and in certain parts of the book, acknowledges them, as he likewise points out the shift in method which takes place beginning with Vatican II, but his stated purpose of showing a unity in the teaching of all the popes, seems to this reviewer to lead to considerable confusion, not to say open contradictions.

John N. Schumacher, S.J.


Dorr intends this book (which we shall call Social Justice Agenda for brevity) to fulfill two main aims. It seeks to provide a general and simple introduction to the converging developments in the spirituality, theology and teaching of the mainline Christian Churches on social issues over the past generation. It also suggests the kind of action that these Christian Churches should undertake in relation to social issues. By mainline Christian Churches Dorr means the Catholic Christian Church and the member Churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The emphasis in this book is on the role that the institutional Church can play in responding to social justice and peace issues. It is meant to complement Dorr’s earlier book Integral Spirituality, in which the concern was what individual Christians and small committed groups of Christians could do to respond to the demands of social justice and
The book has three main parts. The first part, which is Chapter 1, aims to give a general account of the major issues of social justice and peace which confront the Christian today. It mentions fourteen issues which Dorr considers as constituting the present social justice and peace agenda of the mainline Christian Churches. These are: the gap between the rich and the poor; international debt; oppression and liberation; violence or non-violence in the struggle for liberation; disarmament; justice for women; racism; human rights; the population explosion; the ecological question; refugees; unemployment; alternative models of development; and justice in the Church. Dorr has the fruitful insight of identifying the search for a model of development alternative to the present dominant ones as perhaps the most comprehensive and fundamental issue of the social justice and peace agenda. The search for an alternative model of development is needed in order to adequately address, along with the other issues, the problem of unemployment and the ecological question as well.

The second part of the book is an account of what the Churches have to say about the issues mentioned earlier. It begins by tracing the historical development of the social justice and peace agenda in the Catholic Christian Church (Chapter 2) and in the World Council of Churches (Chapter 3). Then it concretely describes the main principles or guidelines of Christian teaching on issues of social justice and peace (Chapter 4), giving two formulations of each of these principles, one of a generation ago, the other being the current formulation, and then showing the continuity and contrast between the two.

The third part of the book takes up the vital question of what the individual Christian and especially the institutional Church can do to promote social justice and peace. It starts by clarifying what it means for the Church itself to make an option for the poor (Chapter 5), the latter involving analysis of the structures of society and various ways of challenging the various kinds of injustice described in the first chapter of the book. Subsequently it examines the crucial contribution which individual Christians and Churches can make to the building of a society and a world characterized by justice, respect for the integrity of creation, sustainability and participation (Chapter 6). The last two chapters of the book concentrate on what is entailed by the Church itself becoming more just. The analysis centers on the kind of power that the Church has and how this power could be used in ways that are truly just. Chapter 7 deals with the ability to do theology as power and how this can be used to set ordinary people free. Chapter 8 takes up the wider question of formation for justice of those being prepared for various kinds of special ministry in the Church.
This book is inspiring reading because of its Gospel-based perspective, enthusiasm tempered by realism, practicality, strong pastoral sense, and relevance to present-day social problems. The value and interest of the book is increased by the fact that its approach is ecumenical. It is cognizant and approving of the convergence of the spirituality, theology and teaching of the mainline Christian Churches on issues of social justice and peace.

It gives appropriate attention to feminism, to the need to recover effective respect for the dignity and function of the laity in the Church, and to the integrity of creation. In the face of oppressive social structures, it shows awareness of the falsity of the dilemma of choosing between armed struggle, on one hand, and passivity or acquiescence, on the other hand (pp. 14-15).

Social Justice Agenda is aware that a critical inculcation of Christian faith is part of the Church’s work for social justice and peace, and that this includes helping peoples return to the roots of their culture (p. 17). Its presentation of the problematic of overpopulation is a good one, taking a perspective not only in terms of numbers but also in conjunction with lifestyle and the resulting pattern of utilization of resources (p. 30). The book expresses well the complexity of social ethical effort (p. 33, in relation to refugees). It addresses the issue of participation in the Church (p. 40), something quite opportune considering that the ideal of a more participatory Church is now under attack from re-clericalizing forces.

Perhaps one of the most useful features of the book is the presentation of previous and current versions of the principles or guidelines of Christian teaching on issues of social justice and peace (Chapter 4). This presentation is accurate, concise and stimulating.

The fact that Social Justice Agenda was written over four years in a time of rapid geopolitical change shows in a few slight inconsistencies in geopolitical context. Thus on p. 14 the Baltic states are still given as examples of nations under the political control of more powerful neighbors, and the supposition is that the Soviet Union still exists and is still a superpower. On p. 126, however, the collapse of the “Eastern bloc” is presupposed. On pp. 30-31 Dorr also still uses the obsolescent term “Third World” after adverting, on p. 75, to the more accurate and striking term “Two Thirds World” used by the European Ecumenical Assembly (Basel, May 1989).

One of the limitations of Social Justice Agenda is its insufficient attention to problems already obvious at the time of its editing. Such problems include the increasing worldwide dominance of neoliberalism in economic theory and practice, the widespread though probably inaccurate perception that there is no viable alternative to neoliberalism, the recrudescence of social Darwinism, and the erosion of social ethical effort by
postmodernist attitudes.

*Social Justice Agenda* does not sufficiently address, even at the level of a survey, certain dilemmas of public policy confronting Two Thirds World societies. Among these are the appropriate balance among certain social goals that are in tension with each other, and which compete for the scarce resources of society. Such "competing" social goals include: economic growth and egalitarian redistribution; freedom and discipline; workers' benefits and direct investment for economic expansion; export orientation and relative autarky; cosmopolitan outlook and national or ethnocultural identity.

All told, however, the weaknesses and limitations of the book are not enough to detract from its value to the student of Christian social teaching and to those engaged in the social apostolate. It is probably the best recent concise updating on developments in the spirituality, theology and teaching of the mainline Christian Churches on social issues over the past generation. It also makes many practical suggestions on general lines of action which the Churches as institutions can follow so they can effectively promote social justice and peace in today's world.

*Romeo J. Intengan, S.J.*


This is the second of a ten-volume series which purports to make "more readily available and usable for priests, seminarians and others who require ready access to the essential teachings found in these documents" (p. vi); that is, those documents which the anonymous editors have selected on the basis of principles equally anonymous.

The first part is made up of excerpts from the creeds and papal dogmatic letters of the patristic era; the second consists of summaries of documents from Leo XIII to John Paul II as disparate in character as *ex professo* doctrinal encyclicals, encyclicals celebrating centenaries of the early Christological councils, a papal homily, and a letter of Cardinal Seper, then prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, to Fr. Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., in 1980. The diverse character of, and diverse theological value of, these documents, even if they were printed in full and not in précis made by unknown hands with occasional brief quotations, seem totally insignificant to the compilers, since