

a matter as the inheritance of two brothers. In this perspective Mr. Kenny's thesis perpetuates the Constantinian Church in a new and more complicated form.

My difference with him seems to hinge on the fact that in his January response to my letter he considered the "Paul V vis-à-vis Elizabeth I" debacle to be an "ecclesiastical issue," whereas the thrust of my analogy was to consider it a matter of "human justice and peace" whose lesson should be much clearer for the contemporary church.

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Denis Kenny Responds:

James Rowley claims that I am really asking the Church to utilize its power in a different way, that is, on the side of the poor. The Church, however, does not have much political power, that is, the capacity to mount coercive sanctions to insure the realization of its ambitions, nor does it seem now to have much ecclesiastical power, that is, the capacity to mount plausible psychological or spiritual sanctions to impose its will. It can have, however, persuasive influence. The question is: Will the Church, as a general structural orientation, align itself with those who exercise political power or with those who are struggling, not just for a transfer of power—as in a "coup"—but for the diffusion and eventual elimination of power, so that an ever increasing number of human persons can participate in the decisions—economic, political and cultural—which affect their lives? In the latter case the Church would in every context be opposed to all crystallizations and concentrations of power. During the

"era of Constantine" the Catholic Church, through its political alignments and its conceptual apparatus, tended to be an institutional and ideological factor which insured that men remain the passive objects of their fate rather than the active subjects of their destiny, to use the language of Paulo Freire. A "kenotic" conception of the Church demands that it renounce its spiritual power and arrogance as well as its allegiance with, and legitimation of, existing configurations of power to become an advocate of, and catalyst for, liberation from the wide variety of forms of human subjugation. Such a political realignment would require a much more radical transformation than the adjustment to modernity called for by Vatican II.

In both articles referred to by Father Brown I am making two related points:

A. A religious institution or movement is always involved either latently or manifestly in politics.

B. The Catholic Church in the Constantinian Age was involved in politics, but on the wrong side, i.e., on the side of imperial power. (The fact that it was often forced to take sides in struggles between imperial powers is immaterial in the context of my argument.)

My objection to the Constantinian Church, therefore, is not to its political involvement as such but to its un-Christian identification with the rich and the powerful rather than with the poor and the oppressed. To nurture otherworldly, innerworldly or mystical concerns in the midst of injustice and oppression is a political act. To dispel the clouds of mystification and mobilize support behind the oppressed in their struggle for liberation is also a political act, but one which seems more compatible

with Christ's repudiation of political and economic power and his clear identification with the poor and the oppressed.

## Libs and Antilibs

To the Editors: In the Bergers' response to Warren Ashby in January *Worldview* (Exchange: "The Assault on Liberalism") on what liberals and the, say, antilibs, are all about, a crucial difference is quite clearly exposed. The Bergers in their last paragraph write: "We are not interested in making fine sociological points." (Great.) "We *are* interested in the designing of policies that will attack social injustice without disrupting the fabric of society." (They go on to welcome Ashby in that enterprise.) The point at issue is whether it is *possible* to attack social injustice without disrupting the fabric of society. It may be possible to "attack" without disruption, but success without at least some disruption to the social order, I feel, is impossible. Presumably the Bergers define social injustice as outside the social fabric; only such a definition avoids a nonsensical position, but then the definition is nonsense.

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Peter and Brigitte Berger Respond:

Come on, Professor Faulhaber! If the roof of your house has a leak, you can try to fix it. You can also tear down the whole house and rebuild it as a pagoda. There is a slight difference between the two procedures. No?

In the May issue of *Worldview*:

### ON THE OCCASION OF ISRAEL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY A SYMPOSIUM

1. Is this the time for a change in U.S. policy toward Israel? If not, why not? If so, what change?
2. What must Israel do differently if it is to look forward with confidence to its next 25 years?