

# Flag a needless intrusion of state in churches

To the editors:

In recent months, there has been quite a bit of controversy over the American Flag. During the Labor Day weekend, the local Methodist and Baptist churches held a joint service. The service called for prayer concerning the situation in the Middle East. I would expect that this was representative of church services across our nation.

This being my first visit to the Baptist Church, I was attentive to the decor and noticed right away the absence of an American flag. I attended the coffee hour after service and found no flag in the building.

Reaching into my experiences and thoughts, I started to think about separation of God and State. We have taken religion out of our schools, but failed to take state out of our churches. I commend the Williamson Baptist Church. Church should be beyond man's boundaries.

There are many Americans who would argue against this and scream those "love it or leave it" slogans. These are the same people who refer to people of Arab extraction as "rag heads" and "camel jockeys." The same people who get sick if their children married an African American.

Many associate our flag with military

battles. I associate our flag with battles against bias and bigotry. 1969, Atlanta blatantly refused to integrate its school system. Our flag saw an end to it. My children or their descendants will marry someone of African or Hispanic extraction. Our flag will see to that as well.

When I think of flags and churches, Northern Ireland comes to mind. Many Anglican and Protestant churches fly not one but several Union Jacks. Ironically, a few miles away in Donegal, Republic of Ireland, you will not find a flag on buildings owned by these same religious sects. I find it commendable that even in



the bitter sections of West Belfast or any other part of Ireland you will not find a flag on a Roman Catholic Church. The churches of Northern Ireland are certainly not more patriotic. These flags are emblems of bigotry.

I am sure the same situation exists around the world in South Africa, Israel, Iran, etc. I commend those churches around the world which have set themselves above "local politics."

Michael F. Larson  
Ontario

## St. Paul asserts only God judges

To the editors:

I wish to compliment you on the sensitive, caring article on homosexuality in the Aug. 23 issue, "Gays strive for complete acceptance by church."

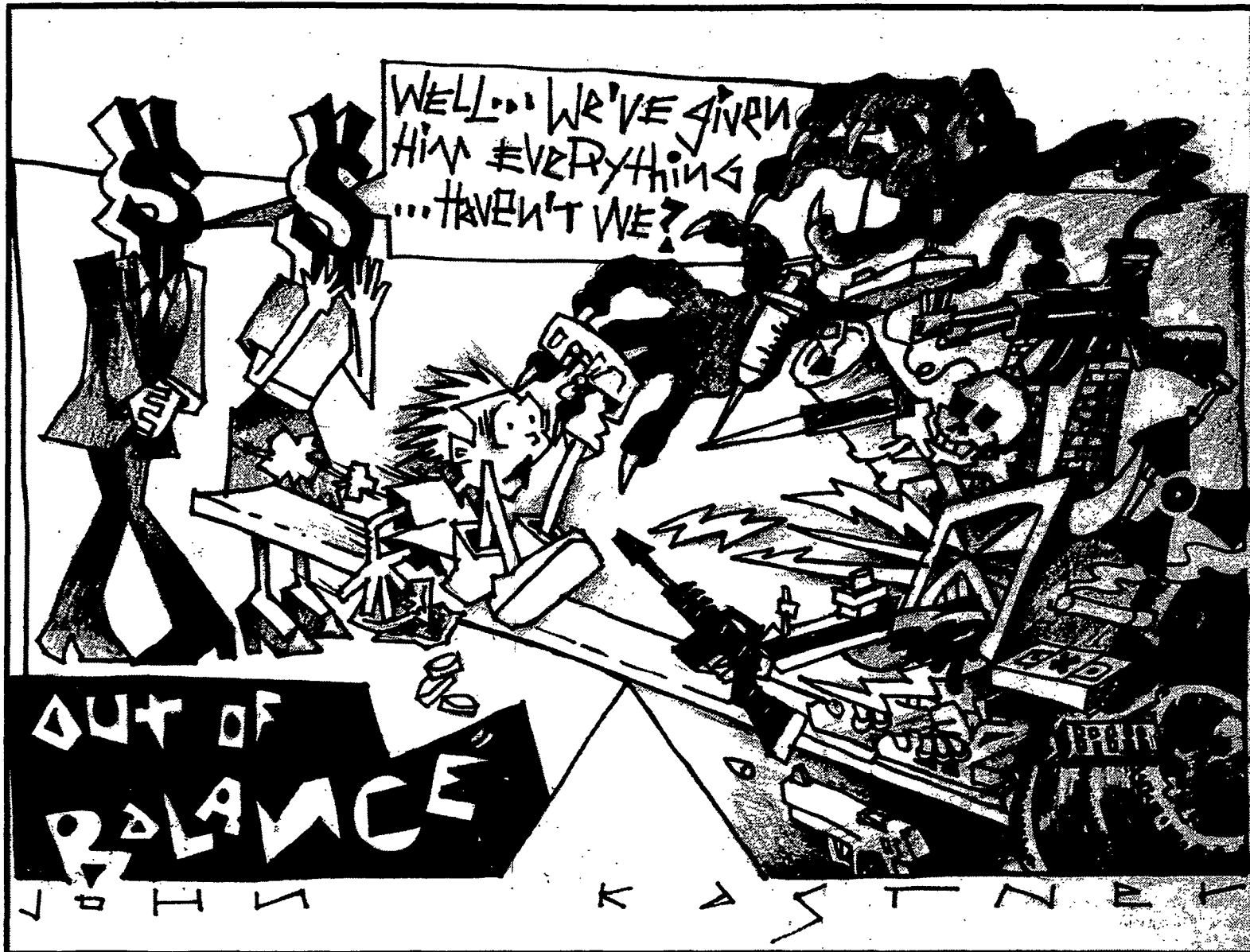
I also wish to respond to Michael Macaluso Jr., chairman of Citizen's for a Decent Community (letter to the editor, Sept. 20). As a happily married grandmother, I find it difficult to understand such hatred for the 10 percent of the population who have a different way of loving. Does he really think this group is "deserving of death?" He quotes Romans 1:18 as saying "clearly and infallibly that those who engage in homosexual practice are deserving of death." I looked up Romans 1:18 in two Bibles: "The New English Bible," (New York University Press, 1971), and "The Holy Bible," (The Doway Bible House, New York, 1944). Neither death or homosexuality are mentioned in this verse. In Romans 1:22-27, Paul associated homosexuality with idolatry. He further states Romans 1:29-32 — those deserving of death are "one mass of envy, murder, rivalry, treachery, and malevolence, whisperers, and scandal mongers." In Romans 2:1, Paul continues with "You therefore have no defense — you who sit in judgment, whoever you may be — for in judging your fellow man you condemn yourself since you, the judge, are equally guilty."

Paul's main thesis is God is the final judge of all behavior.

Whatever happened to "Peace on earth, good will to men?" "You will know we are Christians by our love."

Rena B. Camblin  
Meadow Drive  
Palmyra

Joan Novak  
Slaterville Road  
Ithaca



## Convert lauds examples of Catholic acquaintances

To the editors:

Regarding Father McBrien's column, "Church must attract converts for right reasons" (Courier, Aug. 30), I'm one of the converts of the 1950's.

The reasons still ring true of the convert he quoted, "It's hierarchy and authority."

The good example of my schoolmates at Shortsville High when they declared over and over to me, "The Catholic Church is the" one, true church. At that time I was Episcopalian. I do not recall them berating the church I attended.

Their qualities of respect for authority, good family relations, a wonderful sense of humor, deep devotion of the Catholic faith made them special and beloved to me.

Graduation from high school didn't mean severing ties, it strengthened them.

Out in the business world, I was for-

ward to be employed where my future godmother worked. A lovely, Catholic, witty, Irish lady, whose lifestyle influenced me. Her sterling example of a good Catholic was evident by others who came to work there. Either she became their godmother or sponsor; she carried her faith into the marketplace.

Two of my dear Catholic friends are now deceased, but their memories live on in my heart.

The Act of Faith required, as well as Hope and Love, were required in my instructions to be learned. The Act of Faith — "I believe in all the sacred truths the Catholic Church believes and teaches, because God has revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived," still ring true.

A quote from Bishop Fulton Sheen's

"The World's First Love," the chapter on Mary and the sword: "How few are the converts to the faith who have not felt the scorn and bigotry of the world that protests their leaving the mediocrity of humanity for the high level of the supernatural." Our Lord speaking of the opposition they would invoke said, "I came to bring the sword, to set father against son, and mother against daughter." If a convert feels that contradiction, then how much worse shall Mary, who mothered the Cross-bearer!

## Sermons on the Ten Commandments could help to resolve contemporary society's woes

To the editors:

I am a catholic seventy years of age. When I was a kid, business could be done with a handshake. Being married was a lifetime commitment. We could believe our government. Children respected their parents and teachers. I don't know how to solve these problems of today but I believe that church should begin to give sermons each week on the Ten Commandments starting with the first and ending with the tenth. It would take ten weeks to complete and would be a reminder to all of us that this is

the way the Lord wanted us to live. Living the Ten Commandments would solve our problems with honesty in government, business and marriage. Living the Ten Commandments could stop living out of wedlock, abortions, leaving the church, even murders. It may even help our homosexuals understand the way our Lord wants us to live. I feel the Ten Commandments should be covered once a year.

Paul L. Telech  
Country Lane  
Pine City

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1150 Buffalo Road • Rochester, New York 14624 • 716/328-4340

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