

The pulpit is an unfair platform for politicking

TAKE HEED, REV. Jerry Falwell and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton. You're messing with my Constitution, and I don't like it one bit.

Most of us would rather have the government butt out of our personal business when at all possible — especially when it comes to religion. It's been a longstanding tradition, ever since the Founding Fathers sat down to pen the Constitution.

But you and your overzealous followers have grossly violated the doctrine of separation of church and state and have gone a long way toward nullifying it altogether.

Now, I've gotta tell you fellas, the last thing I want is the government using the Sunday pulpit to spew its propaganda. That means you guys have to keep your part of the deal. As clerics, stay out of politics.

As American citizens, do as you please. Speak out on the political issues, campaign for candidates, run for office. But stop abusing your role as church leaders to sway political opinion.

Moral crusaders — distinctly out of fashion with the Founders, and with good reason — have ebbed and flowed in popularity among the masses throughout history.

Some merit could be given to the theory that during bad economic times the crusader's lot flows with an unremitting fervor, surpassing even those of the 12th century in their attempts to recapture the Holy Land.

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T noticed, these are bad economic times. And we've got crusaders coming out of our — well, out of our television sets.

Presently, Gumbleton, auxiliary bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit, is out promoting the "pastoral letter" he helped to author. That letter takes a dim view of nuclear weapons and war in general.

Fine goal, indeed. I have a little firsthand knowledge about war and believe all wars to be immoral. I also think nuclear weapons are insane and should be eliminated.



crackerbarrel
debate

Steve
Barnaby

But Gumbleton would have us believe that he and a few of his bishop buddies are throwing out this letter for the sake of discussion — no religious coercion of the political system intended, thank you.

Baloney.

These guys are using the pulpit and their moral influence over parishioners to sway votes in Congress. They aren't alone in abusing the system.

Unabashedly, from the left and right, the neo-

Christian crusaders harangue us with speeches on abortion, capital punishment, nuclear weapons, prayer in school, government aid to church-related schools and whatever else is on the political agenda for the year.

Left and right, they have formed political lobbying groups — Moral Majority, Pax Christi USA and Bread for the World, among others. Most disturbing is their gall in suggesting these organizations are something other than religious-based political lobbying groups.

IT'S HYPOCRITICAL, plain and simple.

Religious prejudice is a terrible thing. It allows for no compromise and causes more grief than it prevents. Other countries — especially in South America — see the church and the state collaborate to manipulate and suppress its citizenry. We saw it happen in Europe before and during World War II.

Good reason exists for separation. Let's keep it that way.



Tim
Richard

Lucas, team exude much sincerity

SINCERITY. 1950s STYLE. radiates from Wayne County Executive-elect William Lucas and his transition team. Over lunch last week, they gave the impression they are sincere in wanting to straighten out the crony-laden, deficit-plagued county government that has soaked up so much state, federal and local money. And you want them to succeed.

Lucas and press secretary Bill Johnson invite questions and press contact. Lucas says he is seeking advice from the able Oakland County Executive Dan Murphy and his staff, who pioneered the county executive form of government in Michigan (though not with a home-rule charter).

Lucas has appointed a task force (50-some men and four women) to advise him on reorganization. The elaborate committee structure covers such items as criminal justice, data processing, finance, personnel, public works, and purchasing. To Lucas' credit, he will let this first-class group report publicly Dec. 15, even before his own staff has time to weed out possibly unacceptable ideas. One only wishes the report had been made before the Nov. 2 election.

Lucas' Jan. 3 inauguration will begin with Mass and a prayer breakfast. His priest brother and nun sister will be in town for the ceremony. That is a sincere beginning.

SOME BOTHERSOME points linger, however. After asking unionized county employees to prepare for concessions, Lucas went before the Compensation Commission to ask a \$70,000-plus salary for himself and \$10,000 raises for other elected county administrators. His timing couldn't have been worse. And even if the idea is justifiable, couldn't the clerk or prosecutor have been persuaded to make the public presentation?

His closest advisers remain Jamel Akhtar, a former union leader in the sheriff's department, and Dennis Nystrom, who was first the union's and then Lucas' lawyer in the long, unsuccessful court fights to save jobs in that department when other county departments were taking layoffs.

Lucas asked for — and amazingly received — \$188,000 from the lame-duck Board of Commissioners for transition expenses, some of dubious value. (Nystrom assured us, in all sincerity, that a lot of the money wouldn't be used. Let's hope he is correct.)

YET FOR ALL their sincerity, one must search in vain for a fresh, specific idea from Lucas or the transition team. Their talk about "streamlined," "accountable" and "procedures" never progresses beyond generalities.

With 76 percent of the vote, Lucas believes he has earned public confidence, inviting all to "look at my record."

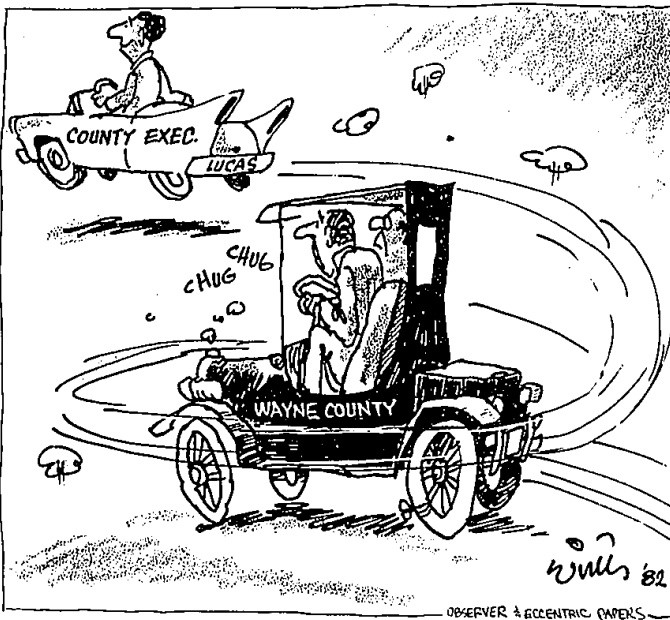
What record? Was he ever a leader in the Sheriffs Association or the Michigan Association of Counties? Didn't Lucas as sheriff overspend his budget by \$460,000 in 1968-9, by \$1 million in 1972-3, by \$1.3 million in 1974-5, by \$3.4 million in 1977-8 and by \$5.4 million in 1980-1, and have to request "supplemental" appropriations each of those years?

Didn't the man who last week talked about "avoiding confrontations" and decreasing tensions between Detroit and the suburbs accept the support of a "Black Slate" this year?

Didn't the man who says he will curb the management "union" in the discarded Road Commission also serve on the examination panel for the son-in-law of Road Commission Chairman Mike Berry? And didn't that panel score the candidate for assistant airport superintendent 100 percent based on "personal qualifications," an oral test and "experience"?

IN THE POP songs of the 1950s, to win the girl you didn't need a good job, money, character or a passionate heart. All you needed was sincerity. If sincerity can straighten out the embarrassment that is Wayne County government, Lucas and his team should do fine.

'He's going first class!'



It developed character

When players ran the game

AS THE COLLEGE football season moves to its conclusion with the holiday bowl games, two big questions still persist.

Is there too much emphasis on winning?

Is the present game really developing character and leadership?

Let's look at the first question and take the case of the University of Michigan, which is being frowned upon because it lost its final game to Ohio State and yet kept its right to appear in the prestigious Rose Bowl on New Year's Day.

True, the Wolverines didn't look good against the Ohio State Buckeyes — but they won eight conference games in a row and had the best percentage record. So why should the Ohio defeat cast a smudge on the entire season?

THEN THERE is the case of Michigan State, where coach Muddy Waters was fired because he had a losing season.

True, the team's record was poor, but the critics failed to consider the type of talent the coaches had on their squad.

Most of the criticism came from the old grads who want a winner at any cost. You see them in the stands, wringing their hands when things go wrong.

The Stroller well remembers the year that Michigan missed on four tries from the one-yard line and lost the Ohio game in Columbus and the bid to go to the Rose Bowl. The hooting and hollering from the Michigan stands was terrific. No credit was given to Ohio for stopping four successive chances.

This is a simple case of too much emphasis on winning.

THEN THERE is the present practice of coaches' sending in plays to the quarterback.

How much leadership is being built into the life of the players when they must look toward the coach on every play?

At Michigan, for instance, it is said that Steven Smith is one of the best quarterbacks to come along in a while. Then why does he look to the bench, or even take time out to visit the bench, for every order?



the stroller

W.W.
Edgar

Not long ago there was a time when the game was in the players' hands. Once the game started, they were on their own, and the quarterback handled the offense with lessons taken from the coach's book of plays.

Once in a while, the coach, through a set of signals, would send a message to the quarterback, but it wasn't regular practice.

The chief of this style was "Greasy" Neale at West Virginia. On game days, he always wore a yellow cap and light tan shoes. All during the game, he would twist the peak of his cap or lift his leg in a kicking motion. There was no rule that covered a coach's wearing apparel.

When The Stroller sees these plays being sent in from the bench, he often wonders what will happen to these players when they get into trouble out in the business world. There will be no one to turn to — and they'll be in real trouble.

THE STROLLER often is reminded of another day when he was covering the University of Detroit games and Gus Dorais was the coach.

In the final game of the season, the Titans were trailing by three points and had the ball deep in enemy territory. They could have tried a game-tying field goal, but quarterback Cliff Marsh called a trick play. It backfired, and the Titans lost.

"Why did you call a play like that?" Dorais asked him later in the locker room.

"We didn't want to wind up in a tie. We wanted to win," Marsh answered.

"OK," Dorais said. "It's your game, if that's the way you felt."

Football would be better off if it turned back to the days when the players ran the game. They'd develop character and leadership.



Nick
Sharkey

Questions our readers ask

MR. OR MS. Reader, you may not realize it, but you are king/queen. A great newspaper war is going on in this area, and you are the winner.

Metropolitan Detroit is one of only a shrinking handful of areas in the United States where two newspaper companies are vigorously battling for the top position in the daily market. In most cities, one newspaper dominates. Newspapers have died in recent years in Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Detroit — unlike sun belt cities where competition is particularly tough — has a dwindling population base. This makes the battle for newspaper readers only fiercer here.

THE NEWSPAPER you are holding is in that competitive environment. This is a locally oriented publication.

We cover your local community as comprehensively as possible. That means we list the local births, deaths, brides and club meetings. In addition, we give in-depth coverage of institutions such as local government, the school board, community colleges and local businesses.

On our sports pages we chronicle the victories of local high school teams and the wide-ranging adult recreation activities.

Our five offices in Rochester, Birmingham, Farmington, Livonia and Plymouth give readers quick access to our staffers.

Because of the great competition among newspapers in this area, interest in newspapers is high. Editors are often asked to speak to small audiences about their profession. Since most of you can't attend these sessions, I thought I would outline some of the questions I am most often asked.

Q. Why do newspapers only publish "negative" news?

A. It may not seem like it, but most of this newspaper's space is taken up by "positive" news. For every story published about vandalism at a local high school, many more are published about students making the honor roll, new educational programs and improving scores on standardized tests.

By definition, news is the unusual and the unexpected. That means newspapers must report on the closing of a local school or an increase in burglaries in your neighborhood. These stories make the greatest impact with readers and are remembered. But the majority of our time and space is devoted to the accomplishments of persons living in your suburban area.

Q. Aren't most reporters biased when they write a story?

A. Reporters are human beings. That means they must use their own backgrounds as they approach every story. We are all limited in our personal experiences, thus we have a certain bias.

The good reporter recognizes his/her bias, but attempts to write every story as fairly as possible. That means the viewpoints of both sides are presented in controversial stories (called simultaneous rebuttal).

Stories are selected for publication on the basis of their importance to the community covered.

Q. Are reporters involved in editorial endorsement of political candidates?

A. The responsibility for making editorial endorsements rests with the editor. This editor considers many factors in making the endorsement. These usually include personal interviews, campaign platforms and past performance of the candidate. Since reporters often know local candidates through activities in the community, they are consulted by the editor.

Q. Does your newspaper correct mistakes?

A. A significant factual error is corrected as soon as possible by this newspaper. Any newspaper that does not correct mistakes is not honest. If you know of an important error that we have made, don't hesitate to let us know.