Shmoozing at the bar mitzvah

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He cited the Crusades and the Inquisition as "strange acts done in the name of God, but which was wrong. Except for the two holy men, he cited no instances of strange Jewish fiend.

The rabbi went on to criticize "many of today's youth who seek God through chemicals, strange cults, and Eastern religions." He praised Jack for seeking God in the correct manner, though not in so many words.

Then it was over. The crowd bottlenecked at the door, so it took five minutes to get out of the temple, and I used trying to think of clever things to say to flirt with the cantor.

I couldn't come up with anything, so I congratulated Sonny on his performance at the altar, complementing the trim figure he cut in his prayer shawl.

There would be a reception that night at a country club in Canton. There would be a band, which Sonny picked of course, guaranteeing the music would be "the grown-ups' liking. There would be lots of food: Jewish food—chopped liver, gefilte fish, egg salad, flanken—guaranteeing the grown-ups would like it. There would be lots of tiny relatives with cheeks in need of pinching, guaranteeing the grown-ups would love it.

And there would be an open bar, guaranteeing I could tolerate it. For now, at least, the wine on the table is the lobby was finally open.

State needs death penalty

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must face the consequences of his actions. Justice is served by the death penalty.

Some opponents of the death penalty feel it unjust for the government to take anyone's life. Lieutenant Governor John Kerry of Massachusetts has said, "We do not believe government should be in the business of killing people." I wish I could agree. But it is inevitable that the government must kill to defend society. It was inevitable to fight Hitler in World War II, and it is right for us to fight murderers in this country today.

Another reason we should retain capital punishment is deterrence. Many who are against the death penalty claim capital punishment is deterrent. Opponents of the death penalty claim capital punishment has a deterrent effect. And more import-

tantly, common sense tells us the death penalty is a deterrent. We know that a murderer who is executed will never kill again. A murderer who is sentenced to life in prison, on the other hand, can hope for parole, escape, or a commutation of his sentence. Many killers are eventually released, and some will kill again. Without a death penalty, furthermore, a murderer serving a life sentence can kill his fellow inmates without fear of further punishment.

The death penalty also helps discourage criminals from murdering substitutes to eliminate witnesses to crimes. Without a death penalty, the punishment for murder is not significantly more harsh than the punishment for serious crimes like armed robbery, so a robber might kill his victims to reduce his chances of being caught. With capital punishment, however, the robber might think twice before killing his victim.

Opponents of the death penalty often say it could lead to the execution of an innocent man. That is a legitimate concern. But the reason we have such an elaborate appeals system in our courts is to prove "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the accused is guilty. In America, the number of guilty criminals who escape justice through legal technicalities and tricks far exceeds the number of innocent people convicted of crimes they did not commit. Over the last twenty years, our criminal justice system has bent over backwards to protect the rights of criminals. In the process, the rights of victims have been forgotten. The time has now come to reverse this trend. It is time for us to start thinking about the rights of the innocent citizen. Our families, friends, and communities are worth defending, and for this reason, we must retain capital punishment.