Prayer should not be in school

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Burt S. Kalish's column "Prayer in the classroom would benefit our society," which appeared in The Tech on Tuesday, April 24. Kalish complains that his proposal to allow prayer in the public schools in Framingham was rejected. Although he does not state so explicitly in his column, Kalish also favors the prayer amendments which were recently voted down by the Senate.

"Prayer in the public schools is not illegal in Framingham or anywhere else in the country, and I have no objection to it. Any student may pray silently in the hallway on his way to class, at his desk before the teacher calls the class to order, while exams are being passed out, or at any other time. A student can also simply stop listening to the teacher for a moment and pray, just as students often stop listening for other reasons. The acceptability of such private prayer is well established in Judaism-Christian tradition and it has never been declared illegal in this country. What is illegal, and what I oppose, is organized public school prayer. Students may also pray at home before leaving for school or anywhere in a student's home or some other place of worship. Transportation could easily be arranged, and prayer could begin early enough so that they end in time for the students to arrive at school in time for class. Oddy enough, it seems that the people who spend so much effort in favor of school-run, organized prayer at public schools are unwilling to spend effort to organize places for students in other, perfectly acceptable locations.

When my mother was a girl, she used to read aloud from a Bible. A few weeks ago I asked her about how it was organized and she could not remember. She told me that nobody paid attention and often the children were talking among themselves so that no one could hear anyway. I believe that such unsightly activities served to alienate numerous people of her generation from religion.

I have many friends for whom religion was not as important a part of their upbringing as it became for them when they reached college age and beyond. Although I have no proof, I suspect that if people of our generation had been force-fed religion in a very poor environment such as the public schools, many more of us would not have been alienated from it and far fewer would decide to make religion an important part of their lives when they get older. Thus I support Kalish's belief that religion benefits by being separated from politics, but I believe that this separation must include keeping religion out of public education.

It can certainly be argued that there is no problem in allowing public schools to be used for organized prayer outside of school hours, with the groups involved paying for any additional heating and services required. However, I think it is much more important to maintain a strict separation between religion and public education.

Kaliski also speaks against the study of the Bible in high school. However, I believe in a God who would not be opposed to us studying Zeus and Osiris as I did not know much about Central America until I studied in it in ninth grade, and when I returned I had formed the basis from which I learned more and developed my own opinions on issues concerning that part of the world.

The words "under God" were added to the Pledge of Allegiance at the flag after the Second World War. Where I went to school, the law stated that we were to recite the Pledge every day from kindergartners through high school. If this had any effect on the opinions of anyone I went to school with concerning God, country or religion, it was only towards making a mockery of them. After all, we also said "independent" while I was studying the validity of studying Zeus and Osiris as I could not be independent in a god who, lest I prefer to know that, and something important may be lost forever.

By going to school with a nonoptimal line of thought you may find that you are more likely to take much better pictures than you thought! But sooner than the dedication in the libraries is over you'll never know that, and something important may be lost forever.

If you get your color print film developed at a drugstore or a camera store, you should be in touch with the lab made bad prints from your good negatives! Unfortunately you'll probably make all the difference in the world.

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You probably take much better pictures than you think you do

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