

OPINION

Where does belief in God enter in?

An old commercial for the Boy Scouts said: "Be prepared; are you ready to take the lead?" A new answer to this old question is: Apparently not if you don't believe in God.

Paul Trout, 15, from Charlottesville, Va., was kicked out of the Boy Scouts of America because he told a review board last month he doesn't believe in a supreme being.

Trout was interviewed concerning his possible promotion to Life Scout, the organization's second highest rank.

Chief Scout Executive Bill Love claims that belief in a supreme being is a membership requirement for the Boy Scouts. The Scout Oath does make a reference to God, but Trout's mother said the boy considered it similar to the one in the Pledge of Allegiance.

No specific references to God are made in the Boy Scout Handbook. Nowhere is it stated that children who do not believe in God are prohibited from joining the organization.

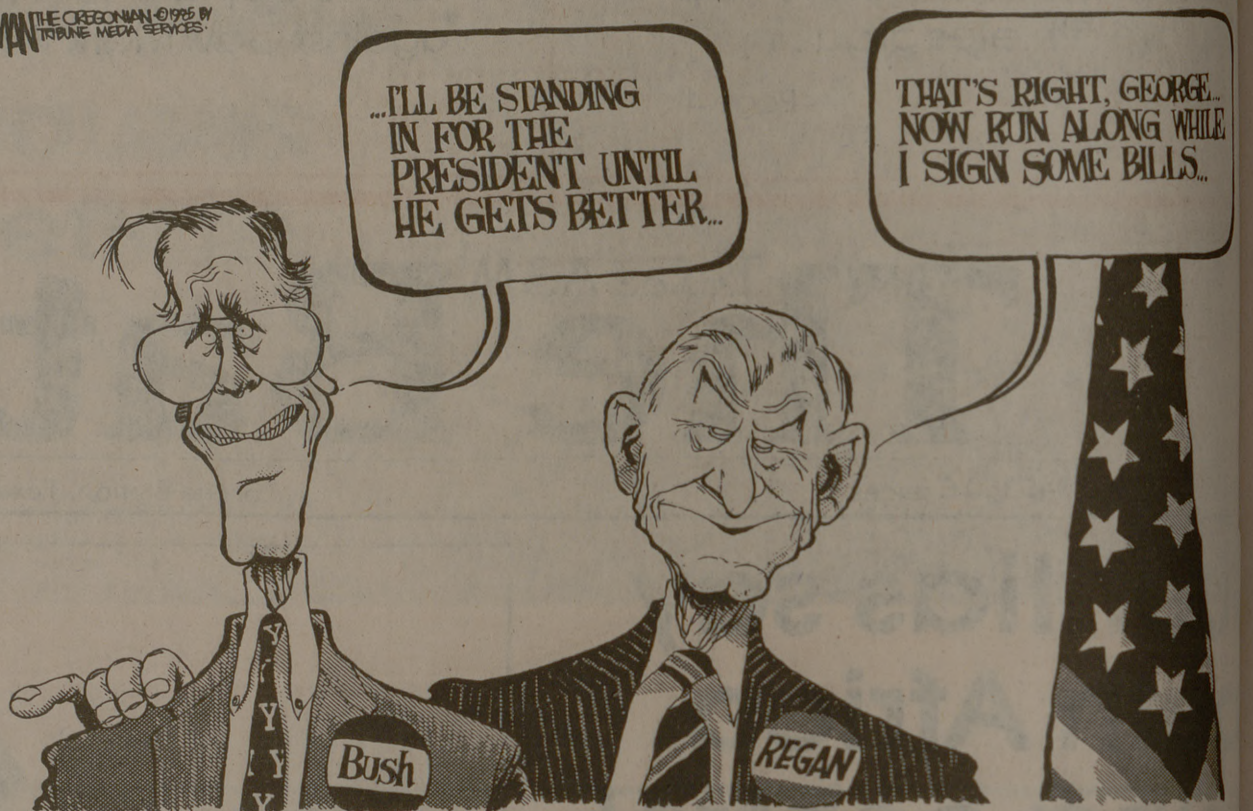
The Boy Scouts teaches leadership, self-confidence and cooperation and thus provide a vital service to the youth of America. By forbidding Trout to participate in scouting, the Boy Scouts is denying him an opportunity to come in contact with these values. The Boy Scouts presents itself as an organization which promotes beneficial and moral characteristics in boys, not as a group that advocates certain religious beliefs.

If the Boy Scouts of America feels that children who do not believe in God do not deserve to be enrolled in its program, it should state such restrictions plainly prior to initiating new members.

Pulling out hidden prejudices and toying with boys' lives is a rotten way to prepare America's leaders of tomorrow.

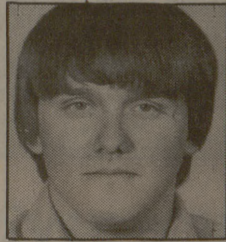
The Battalion Editorial Board

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If 'St. Elmo's Fire' is true, get a fire extinguisher

Movies often reflect society. By watching a movie you sometimes get a feeling for the times in which it was made. I hope that "St. Elmo's Fire" is not one of these movies.



Karl Pallmeyer

"St. Elmo's Fire" is being called "The Big Chill" of our generation. By our generation I mean those of us who are in college or have just graduated. Although most critics hate the movie, most of the people my age who I've talked to enjoyed it. They all say more or less the same thing: "It's a real movie about real people with real problems." These people say they liked "St. Elmo's Fire" more than "The Big Chill" because it's about people they can relate to, people our age.

In "The Big Chill" you have a group of seven people who went to college together during the 1960s and are reunited at the funeral of one of their friends. In "St. Elmo's Fire" you have a group of seven people who have just graduated from college and are still hanging around together for no apparent reason. The characters in "The Big Chill" realize that their friendship is what holds them together and they vow to become closer. The characters in "St. Elmo's Fire" use their friendship as the

means to satisfy their selfish wants, regardless of the effects on others.

The characters in "St. Elmo's Fire" have two main motivations; the first is money. One character changes political parties because a Republican senator pays more than a Democratic congressman. Another character drops his law school plans to work for a businessman-gangster just so he can impress a girl with the money and power of his employer. Another character borrows off her paychecks for the next three weeks just so her apartment will have the successful "look."

Their second motivation is sex. One guy does everything but rape a girl who is trying to talk to him about her personal problems. The same guy uses the line, "Why don't you give me a going away present," to get another girl to have sex with him. By the way, this guy has also abandoned his wife and child. One of the girls in the movie is having an affair, she claims, with her boss for "job security."

In the course of the movie we see every character cast off any morals or commitments they have to achieve their own ends. These people do have problems, but these problems are their own fault. These people deny what they have learned about people in college, and the results are catastrophic. Money and sex don't last forever. What does last forever are the friendships you have formed and the influence you have had

on others' lives. You should try to have a positive influence in others' lives.

But there is some realism in the movie, and that's scary. In my college career I have had the misfortune to meet several students who do their major because they can make a lot of money with a degree in that major. I chose journalism, not to make money (there isn't that much in this business), but because I like to write and I enjoy finding out what is going on in the world. Isn't that something just because they like to do it? I have also met many people with a very selfish attitude toward sex. I think sex is the ultimate expression of love. Isn't sex more than just a way to have fun at someone else's expense?

The children of the 1960s will be remembered as the generation of questions and peace. Films like "Graduate," "Woodstock," "Easy Rider," "Five Easy Pieces" and "The Big Chill" recall, favorably, their generation. With "St. Elmo's Fire," the generation will be remembered as nothing but a group of immature worshippers of nymphomaniacs. Let's work together and prove them wrong.

Karl Pallmeyer is a senior journalism major and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the address and telephone number of the writer.

Grow up, Jackie

EDITOR:

Hey Jackie, GROW UP like the rest of the Southwest Conference! One question: Is the university here for football or football here for the university?

John Litzinger
Class of '86

In memory of an Ag

EDITOR:

An Aggie has died. We knew him because we were privileged to work with him. His name was Javier Gutierrez, and he was a senior petroleum engineering major.

Javier had gone home to work for the summer, but before he left, he had an opportunity to consider the gift of eternal life. He accepted the forgiveness of sins which comes through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Six weeks later, on July 13, 1985, Javier was killed in an oilfield explosion. We grieve at our loss, but rejoice that he is with Jesus, our Lord.

Robert DeOtte
Murray Moore
Carlos Ortiz
Guillermo Munoz

What's our excuse?

EDITOR:

Apartheid, the political, social, and economic system that has left the black population of South Africa impoverished and without basic civil rights, has achieved growing notoriety in the United States.

Its opponents grow more outspoken, while waves of protest sweep the crowded black townships of South Africa. It's incredible, then, that a South African vice-consul can come to Texas A&M and state that, "It (apartheid) no longer exists in the hearts and minds of South Africans." Or that his statement should be reported without comment in The Battalion, (April 24, 1985).

We need to thank Paul Thorpe for describing some of the realities of apartheid in his guest column on July 11. It's time that we at A&M take a stand on apartheid.

As the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa gains momentum and more and more black people put their lives on the line to win freedom and the right to self-determination, the international solidarity movement is also growing rapidly as an increasing number of responsible people join hands in supporting the just struggle against racism and repression in South Africa.

There are many groups and individuals around the world actively involved in combatting the evil of apartheid, and the U.S. is no exception.

The anti-apartheid movement in this country is quite advanced and active on many fronts.

In our own community, a new campus group, Students Against Apartheid, has been meeting since May.

We are planning activities and programs to inform the public and enlist the widest possible support in the struggle to abolish apartheid and establish a just society where the majority has control over its own destiny.

Our activities range from writing to our congressional representatives, urging their support for sanctions that will put real pressure on the South African regime, to educating the public on the plight of black people in South Africa.

We want everyone to know that their involvement can make a difference. We are organizing protests against those who support apartheid, whether through investments in companies doing business in South Africa or by selling South African products such as gold Krugerrand coins in this country.

Texas A&M can not escape its responsibility towards the South African people. Through its endowment, A&M is major investor in multinational corporations.

Do these investments include compa-

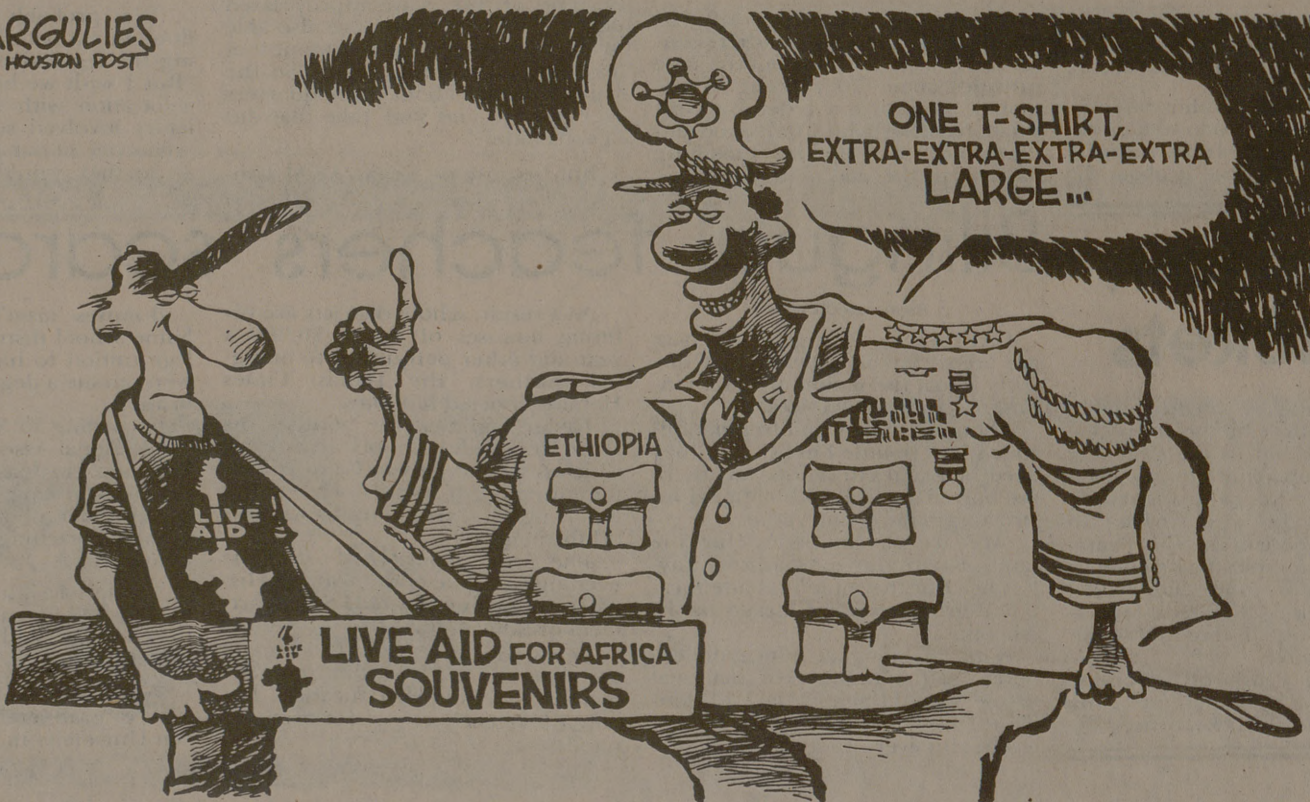
nies doing business in South Africa? South Africa used to be a profitable investment, but few new companies are willing to risk the political uncertainty and limited returns that South Africa now offers investors.

It has been argued that divestment of these holdings ultimately hurts black South Africans through loss of jobs, but the fact is that less than 1 percent of all black South Africans are employed by American firms.

Most black leaders in South Africa, notably Bishop Desmond Tutu, recipient of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, argue that their people are prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to achieve an end to apartheid. They have no choice but to confront apartheid; what excuse can we have for not acting?

Norman Maraya
President, Students Against Apartheid
accompanied by three signatures

MARGULIES
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