

OPINION

# Brazil's giant leap

Censorship. It puts fear into artists' hearts and drowns creativity. Some consider it one of the worst crimes a human being can commit — the murder of ideas.

Many communist and military governments have censored everything from journalism and communications to art and music.

One government — Brazil — has finally decided to let its creative juices flow. Brazilian Justice Minister Fernando Lyra announced Monday that "Censorship is hereby extinct," at least for that country.

For 21 years its military government inhibited authors, film makers, composers and actors. Between 1979 and 1985, Gen. Joao Figueiredo held a loose rein on censorship, but freedom of expression wasn't guaranteed.

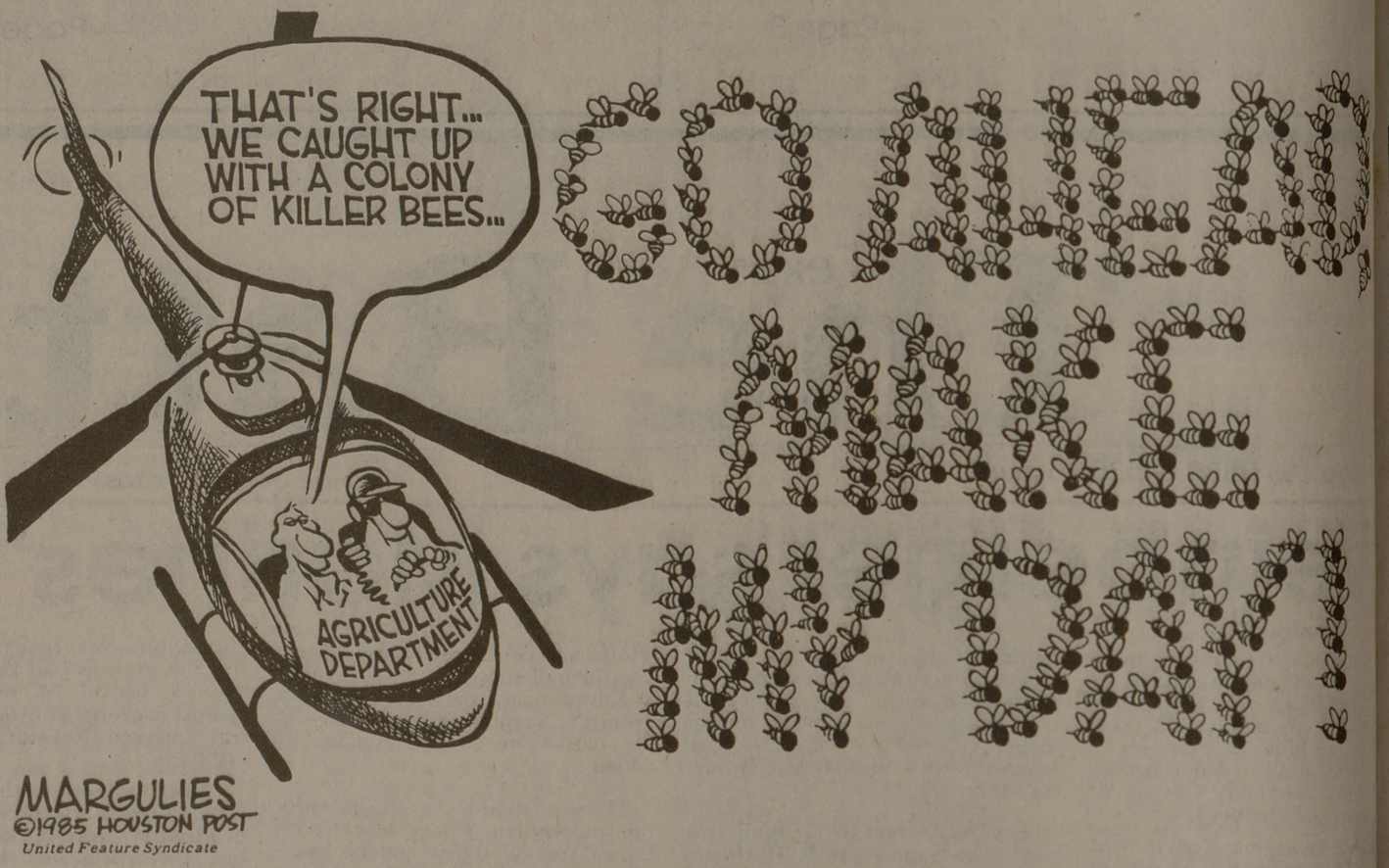
Lyra's announcement is an important step for the people of Brazil. Not only will artistic endeavors be unrestricted, but other vital public services such as newspapers will be unhampered.

The plight of Brazilian artists may seem far removed from the campus of Texas A&M. But as journalists, we are bothered by censorship no matter where it occurs.

Anyone who enjoys the privilege of free expression and the benefits that accompany it should be equally concerned.

Brazil has taken a big step toward the free exchange of ideas that we already enjoy. We hope other countries will follow its example.

The Battalion Editorial Board



# 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.

## Evangelism, nazism not comparable

EDITOR:

On July 29 and 30 KAMU-FM broadcast two National Public Radio programs ("Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered"), which considered the rise of neo-nazism in the United States.

In a number of statements the reporters equated this movement with fundamental or evangelical Christianity. Such identification is, at best, irresponsible reporting suggesting a lack of understanding of true Christianity.

It is certainly an injustice to those who are truly fundamental evangelical Christians for groups such as Posse Cometas, The Order, The Arian Nation, etc. to be associated with the theologically conservative church. If you heard these broadcasts and would like to express your opinion concerning the nature of the reporting, I suggest that you write the editors of the respective programs.

Morning Edition: National Public Radio Attn: Jay Kernis 2025 M Street NW Washington, D.C. 20036

All Things Considered: National Public Radio Attn: Ted Clark 2025 M Street NW Washington, D.C. 20036

You may also call NPR at (800) 822-2300 or (202) 822-2323.

Bob DeTote

## Moral character related to God

EDITOR:

We disagree with your July 23rd editorial, "Where does belief in God enter in?" You state that "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."

In contrast to your opinion, we maintain that moral character is directly related to one's spiritual beliefs. Indeed, belief in God has everything to do with good moral character, true self-confidence and leadership.

We need to turn no further than the Bible to see that God loves us and is interested in every detail of our lives — including how children are raised and the character qualities He wants them to take on as they mature.

Why is belief in God so tied to this issue? Because "the fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" and "the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 1:7 and 2:6).

The Bible clearly states that God in-

vented wisdom, compassion, discipline, and understanding upon which good morals and upstanding character are based! It also says (numerous times) that only through a relationship with God through Jesus Christ can one reach his or her full potential, have the most abundant life possible and have eternal life after death.

The choice is clear: we can either choose to believe what the Bible has to say or we can reject it. There is no ground in between.

People wonder why teenage suicide, drug abuse and divorce are on the rise. The answer is very simple: we live in a society which, for the most part, has rejected God's word (the Bible) and His interest in and authority over our lives.

In America of the 1980's, what is right today may not be considered right tomorrow; what was wrong last year is accepted now because the latest sociological belief condones it. How utterly wrong this is. How confusing it is to America's children!

In light of this, we applaud the Boy Scouts on their principle that young men in their ranks should believe in God.

In your conclusion, you state that "...toying with boys' lives is a rotten way to prepare America's leaders of tomorrow." In contrast, we insist that "the fool has said in his heart, 'there is no God'" (Psalm 14:1) and that, to prepare tomorrow's leaders, we must "train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

Mike Foarde '86  
Willis Hudson '83  
Gary Squyres '83  
Charlie Stimson '83

## Message of special Aggie unraveled

EDITOR:

I am writing you because I was having trouble understanding why things turned out as they did. Although I really tried to figure it out on my own, it has taken until now, almost two months later, to see what a very special Aggie was showing me. I thought it needed to be shared with someone.

Joseph Walker Swinney was a good friend of mine as he was to others here. It was Joe and another officer (and Aggie grad) from my National Guard unit that insisted on the night we had off from Annual Training last summer we come to College Station where I got my first tour of the campus at 2:30 a.m.

It was Joe that proudly and without mistake or hesitation of name introduced me to practically everyone we ran

# Are woman's 'lot of difficulties' worth \$30 million in damages?

Try to imagine how much \$30 million is. Imagine how many things you could buy with that much money. The number of cars, houses, boats or planes. Jewelry, furs, college educations — do any of those things cost \$30 million?



Cheryl Clark

A 23-year-old Matagorda County woman was recently awarded \$30 million in an out-of-court settlement for the deaths of her husband and two children in a trailer fire.

The woman's suit claimed Enterprise Products Co., a gas refinery, and Paragas Inc., which distributes propane, were responsible for a fire that killed her husband and her two children in their trailer house in 1982. The accident was blamed on failure to odorize the gas as required by state law.

I know you can't put a value on a human life. I know you can't say the deaths of her husband and her two children are worth a specific amount of money. I know the woman has suffered from the deaths of her husband and the two children.

But \$30 million worth? The case was settled out of court. The defendants didn't try to contest the suit. They implied they might have been at fault in some way and probably couldn't win the suit if they tried. The attorneys for the two companies said the reason they settled out of court was to save their clients any additional legal fees.

into on campus the next day. And it was Joe who quietly walked me onto Kyle Field's 50-yard line and told me I was standing in the center of the universe.

Joe was killed in a two-jeep accident during Annual Training at Ft. Hood this summer, as all of his friends know. There were many people at his funeral in Dallas, memorial services by fellow members of the Corps at Ft. Riley, Kansas and Quantico, Virginia, and two memorial services at Ft. Hood, one by his unit and one by mine, as he was a member of our unit until he transferred. And there were many who could not attend that wished to.

I had to question "Why?", and were it not for the strength of his family I would not understand what I am supposed to get from this. All of us paid what respect we could because we understood his feelings for ourselves and everything around him. We can all tell you stories that are only bits and pieces of his dedication to it all.

He did not simply come here to earn a degree, to get a job, and then to grow old in front of the weekend reruns on television. The only way to explain what he did was that he came here and loved this school as his father before him.

But if someone was suing you for \$30 million, wouldn't you at least put up some argument?

The lawyer for the woman said she had suffered "lots of difficulties" since the accident.

But \$30 million worth of difficulties?

The woman wasn't physically hurt in the accident. She didn't suffer any crippling injuries. Judging from the article she still seems to be able to function in a normal fashion. In fact, after the verdict was given, the woman couldn't be reached for comment because she was shopping for a pickup truck.

A pickup truck? The woman will be awarded \$20,000 a month for the next 30 years and she's shopping for a pickup truck?

The lawyer for the woman said the money to pay the settlement will come from the insurance policies for the companies. He added that both companies are each worth hundreds of millions of dollars. So it can be assumed the defendants and their respective insurance companies can handle the settlement.

How do you think the insurance companies are going to be able to pay the settlement? The companies will charge a higher premium to the gas companies. How will the gas companies be able to pay this higher premium? They will charge the consumers more money. Nice little circle, huh? A nice \$30 million circle.

The lawyer the woman hired specializes in wrongful death and personal injury lawsuits. How much is the lawyer going to receive for his legal fees? Does he get a percentage of the settlement or do the defendants have

("Love" is the closest I can come to explain what feelings he held here because emotions can't bring the words. By themselves they're simply not enough.) Somewhere through the tears, his mother and I figured that he couldn't have cared more, couldn't have done or felt more for this school and those who touched his life than he did.

To tell you the truth it hurts to realize I won't see him this Fall because it's just so hard to imagine him not being here. And to those who don't know yet or can't feel what this place is all about, I say to you a body knows limits, but a heart, a mind, and a spirit do not know boundaries or restraints.

That's what I think he would want me to see. I told someone the other day I didn't know what all of the hooplah about A&M was, and I hope if she is reading this she knows I was wrong.

Being a transfer student last spring semester, I have yet to attend an Aggie game or Midnight Yell Practice. But I have seen what this place means with an unbridled conviction. A heart I still hear beating, a mind I know still thinks of tomorrows, and the spirit I hear rustling the very tree branches I walk under reminds me.

Mike Pryor

to pay court costs or did the lawyer charge a flat rate out of the goodness of his heart?

I can understand suing for that amount of money if the woman was injured in the accident and required expensive medical treatment for the rest of her life. I can understand if the woman required the money for a reason other just to perhaps see how much she could get. I can understand if she had sued for a lesser amount to pay for the difficulties she suffered.

But what is she going to do with that money?

I know it's everyone's right to sue if they want. There are legitimate reasons to sue. But so many people are abusing the right to sue for the fault of others, it's hurting everyone in the end. Insurance companies will charge higher premiums to the companies, the companies will pass the cost to the consumers.

I'm not against the woman's right to sue for "lots of difficulties" for the death of her husband and children. She certainly had the right and privilege.

But \$30 million worth?

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