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*PG-13 - MORTAL KOMBAT (D) Mon-Thur 5:05 7:20 9:45	
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# Campus ministers adopt code of ministry ethics

**□ The code of ethics cautions against "publicly demeaning" other religions.**

By Tara Wilkinson  
THE BATTALION

A group of Texas A&M campus ministers adopted a code of ministry ethics in November in an attempt to build trust and understanding between themselves and A&M administrators.

The Campus Ministry Association, CMA, adopted the 10-point code in order to clarify the organization's purpose, which is for ministers from diverse religions to find common ground so they can better support A&M students.

The code calls for CMA members to uphold several principles, including "mutual respect" and "the privilege of all people to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience."

CMA is composed of 18 members representing 13 religious denominations, including Judaism, Mormonism, Catholicism and Protestantism.

CMA members, in a wide range of ways, act as spiritual mentors to A&M students.

Thomas McMullin, CMA member and professional educator at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Institute of Religion, said having an official document of what behaviors CMA does and does not condone will add to the organization's credibility.

"It gives the University some sense that we are self-policing, if you will, our organization," he said.

The relationship between ministry and University officials has historically been awkward, McMullin said, because at a public in-

stitution it is difficult to balance freedom of religion and separation of church and state.

"It's a fine line," he said. "It's a difficult thing to be a public university administrator and to recognize that people have legitimate religious rights ... without opening a can of worms to, say, the Branch Davidians."

By condemning "coercive techniques or manipulative appeals intended to bypass one's right to critical thinking," McMullin said that the code excludes cults from CMA membership.

The code uplifts the right of students to "be left alone" and disavows "publicly demeaning" other religions.

CMA members, who hold diverse, even contradictory religious beliefs, said the ethics code is not a firm set of rules and can be interpreted in different ways.

John Watson, a CMA member and an Interservice campus staff member, said the code does not censor ministers' expression of what they believe to be true or untrue. Instead, he said the code works to encourage religious discussion by promoting respect.

"It gives us some parameters in which to talk about different issues and about what is true," Watson said.

Slander and hate literature are obvious violations of the code, he said, but beyond that, the authors intended it to be a general list of ethical standards. Watson said most people will not be confused about the code's meaning.

"Most people will read it and say, 'Oh, OK, that just means you can't go around calling people names,'" he said.

Charlie Brent, CMA member and full-time Campus Crusade staff member, said the code's language is vague and will have probably have no effect on how religious organizations behave on campus.

Although Brent said some of the code's authors probably disagree with Campus




- ★ In order to respect the values of all people regardless of religious background, we affirm the right of every person to retain his/her own belief system, to privacy, to be left alone, to survey other belief options, and to make their own decisions in freedom.
- ★ In order to foster an atmosphere of religious tolerance within the TAMU community, we disavow behaviors which seek to promote one religion by publicly demeaning another.
- ★ In order to defend the human dignity and freedom of all people, we disagree with coercive techniques or manipulative appeals intended to bypass one's right to critical thinking.

Crusades' conservative evangelistic techniques, he is not worried that biases might have influenced the code.

"This particular code of ethics will have no bearing on how Campus Crusade conducts its activities," Brent said.

McMullin said the code's intent is not to establish specific behavioral guidelines, but is "an attempt to identify how we should treat each other."

"I think the spirit of the thing is most important," McMullin said. "And the spirit of this is tolerance."



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# Sheltering Arms relocates, restructures programs

**□ The center will move toward being a mental assessment program as well as a shelter.**

By Melissa Keerins  
THE BATTALION

Sheltering Arms, a local center for child and youth services, is moving locations and restructuring its programs.

The center began services in 1974 as part of the Twin City Mission. The shelter provides emergency care for children, who have been abused, neglected or abandoned.

Linda Patton, Sheltering Arms administrator, said that the primary function of the center is to provide an emergency shelter.

"Most of the children we served had been removed from their homes by the Department

of Protective and Regulatory Services," Patton said.

The shelter also provides other services for families in need. Grammy's House is relief care for families in crisis. It provides free child care for up to 72 hours for children up to age 17.

The STAR program provides free counseling for families in crisis. It resolves crises and helps prevent runaways. STAR is offered to families who have children ages 10-17.

Laura McAndrew, children services coordinator, said the Sheltering Arms employees encourage people to take advantage of our programs like Grammy's House and STAR.

"We want them to get help to prevent more runaways," she said.

Sheltering Arms is the only emergency shelter in the Brazos Valley that offers so many programs to help families, Patton said.

In January, the shelter will move toward being a mental assessment center as well as a shelter.

"Children would be placed with us for 60 to 90 days," Patton said. "We would perform a battery of psychological tests so the best possible placement for the children can be achieved."

The new facility used to be a part of Saint Michael's Academy.

"We are redoing the inside to create bedrooms, living space and offices for therapeutic programming," McAndrew said. "We are very excited about the move."

McAndrew said Sheltering Arms is more than just a shelter for abused children.

"If the father in a family has a heart attack and the mother needs to be at the hospital with him, we will take care of the children," she said.

"Also, if a single mother who is pregnant with another child goes into labor, we will take care

of her other child while she is in the hospital."

Melissa McClung, Sheltering Arms volunteer coordinator, said the volunteer program has been reorganized recently.

"We now take application year round," McClung said. "Volunteer training is going to be held three times a year, and the next one is in January."

Volunteers take on a variety of duties, ranging from supervisory positions, to clerical work and cleaning.


"They watch the kids so the paid staff can take care of other things," McClung said.

She said the volunteers sometimes get stuck with the dirty work.

"If they can do the laundry or cook," she said, "it frees up a trained staff member to be with the kids."

Applications are available at the Twin City Mission for interested persons.

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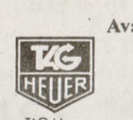

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The Battalion (ISSN #1055-4726) is published daily, Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters and Monday through Thursday during the summer sessions (except on University holidays and exam periods), at Texas A&M University. Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77840.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843.