

Pastor offends community with 'slave sale'

By Kelley Shannon
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. — A televangelist has apologized for a reference to a "slave sale" fund-raiser that upset black community leaders and others.

The Rev. John Hagee of Cornerstone Church said Monday he didn't mean to offend anyone when he wrote in a church bulletin that "slavery in America is returning to Cornerstone."

The pastor was publicizing a fund-raising event for seniors at Cornerstone High School. Each senior class member will be auctioned off in front of the congregation March 31 to raise money for a senior class trip, Hagee explained.

The students — billed by Hagee as "very talented help" — are to do work at the home or business of the bidder.

"Make plans to come and go home with a slave," Hagee wrote.

The newsletter, dated March

3, began circulating last Friday.

Angry reaction quickly followed.

By Monday, Hagee apologized.

"We certainly did not intend to offend anyone and apologize to anyone offended," Hagee said in a prepared statement. He said the news media twisted his words.

"There is not one racial bone in my body," Hagee said. "I was trying to help the high school seniors raise money for their senior trip."

The pastor refused interviews with news reporters but appeared on a KTSA-AM radio talk show to discuss the controversy.

Hagee said the Cornerstone High School "slave sale," a concept he contends has been used in school fund-raisers for generations, will be renamed a "student auction."

"I believe that name will pass and be politically correct, sterile enough," Hagee said.

Hagee and his non-denomi-

national church are known nationally through his television ministry. His local congregation numbers more than 5,000 and is one of the largest non-Catholic congregations in the city. Hagee, who is white, says his congregation is multicultural.

Hagee often expresses political viewpoints in church. He has spoken out against abortion and environmentalists. He also invites political speakers to Cornerstone. Elizabeth Dole, wife of Republican presidential candidate Sen. Bob Dole, is to speak Sunday.

A spokeswoman for Mrs. Dole said the candidate's wife is glad Hagee apologized and that she plans to keep her appointment to speak at the church.

Some black leaders were irate over Hagee's words.

Ethel Minor, president of the San Antonio Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Hagee's remarks are a setback for efforts to

improve race relations in the community.

She added that she has received calls from whites who also are upset about Hagee's words.

Labeling the event a slave sale is humiliating to the high school students who will be bid on, Mrs. Minor said.

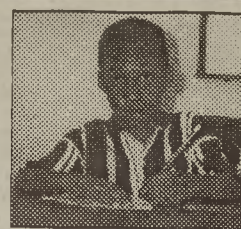
"These are high school seniors," she said. "You don't want anyone to call you a slave."

Black activist Mario Marcel Salas blasted Hagee's newsletter as "insensitive at the least, and totally racist and bigoted at worst."

Attorney Cornelius Cox, who is black, said he believes anyone — especially blacks — should be outraged by Hagee's remarks, which he said may not have been malicious but were insensitive.

"Slavery was one of the worst atrocities ever in this country. Is that something to make fun of? Something to mock?" Cox said.

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Omegas expelled from UNCC campus

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intake program that includes only one or two official meetings over a two-week period. Anything outside of that is a violation of fraternity policy and grounds for suspension."

Blough said a student came forward with allegations earlier in this semester. "We looked into it and more

involved charges were filed," she said. "As a result of a hearing last Friday, the hearing board (three faculty and staff members) found the group guilty of hazing. The punishment was charter revocation. The fraternity has been permanently removed or expelled from the campus."

The usual peer review by UNCC students was by-

passed because the student review board already had a backlog of cases, Blough said.

The case has been reported to the campus police and it was unclear Wednesday if criminal charges would be filed in the case. UNCC is on a mid-semester break, so students could not be reached at the campus.

The UNCC Omega chapter

was suspended by the national organization for two years in 1989.

But some fraternity members question expelling the student, said Greg Massey, a 1983 UNCC graduate. "That punishment is so severe, for me to feel good about it, it needs to not be just an allegation and people believing that without due process being performed."

OJ Simpson problems

Continued from page 3A

a duty to defend under the terms of the policy," he said.

The former football star has \$4 million "on his business policy and a personal rider with a cap of \$1 million," Shaffer said.

Shaffer says both policies cover Simpson only for business matters. The personal rider covers Simpson in the event he is sued as an individual, rather than as an executive of his company, in a busi-

ness-related grievance.

Sources close to the civil case told Newsweek magazine that Simpson will likely file a separate action asking a judge to decide whether coverage is merited.

CORRECTION

A photo in last week's Post misidentified N.C. Gov. Jim Hunt. The intended photo in the editorial written by James Alsbrook should have been Republican presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan.



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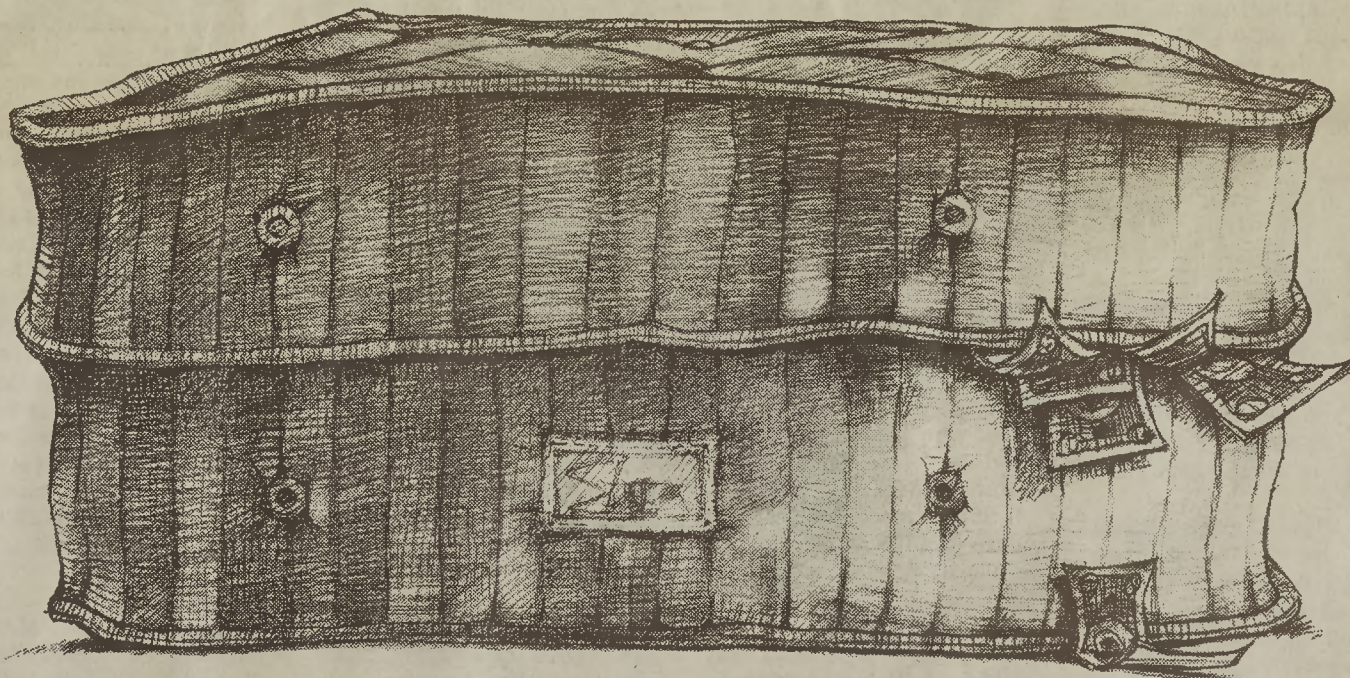
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