

# Corporation refused campus interview space

by Tim Anderson

After several complaints from UNL students, the Student Union and Love Library have decided to grant no more room space to one corporation interviewing students.

According to UNL Ombudsman James Suter, the Union and the library officials will no longer grant rooms for interviewing to the Southwestern Company of Nashville, Tenn., a subsidiary of the Times-Mirror.

This company, according to Suter, has been interviewing students this spring for summer employment, selling religious books door-to-door.

The complaints from students interviewed alleged that Southwestern personnel were using a hard pressure pitch, which at times became insulting to students.

For example, Suter said one complaint was that when a student would ask a negative question concerning the company or their program, the interviewer would sharply tell him he was not the type of person needed for the job. He then would be asked to leave.

"They (Southwestern Company) might have research to prove that this is good business practice, weeding out these people," Suter said. "But they are not going to do it on this campus."

"The University is not forced to let corporations interview on campus. These people were being given this privilege," Suter said.

"We're just not going to let anyone come in here and insult our students — at least not on campus."

Suter said another major complaint was the contract. An advertisement has been run in the Lincoln Journal and Lincoln Star newspaper under the heading, "guaranteed salary," but upon carefully reading the contract, one finds that this is not necessarily the case.

The contract states: "In consideration of buying the (Southwestern) Company's books at whole sale and for other good and valuable consideration which is acknowledged, Dealer agrees:

1. To operate in his own way, within his designated territory, in selling books published by Company.
2. To study sales literature furnished by Company.
3. To mail a complete report to Company at the end of each week so that Company may anticipate future orders.
4. To furnish a satisfactory Letter of Credit to the Company or pay cash.
5. To remit weekly to Company during the selling season and daily during the delivery period all money collected by Dealer from the sale of

books, except necessary business expenses, to the extent necessary to pay Dealer's account with Company. Books sold by Dealer are to be delivered by Dealer to Dealer's customers and collected for by Dealer."

"When the student signs this contract, it seems that all he is doing is buying books," Suter said. Later in the contract it is agreed that "Dealer is not an employee or agent of Company."

The Company's brochure says "all you need is enough money to get to Nashville, spend a week there, and then get to your territory." This, according to the brochure, usually amounts to \$50-\$75.

In Nashville, the employes are given a week of intensive sales training. Then the sales manager and the employee come to a "mutual agreement" on a territory in which to sell books.

The brochure says "it will be to your advantage to work away from your home state, because you will be able to concentrate 100 per cent on your work."

Each week during the summer the employe sells his books, takes out enough money for expenses, then sends the rest to Nashville. At the end of the summer, he receives a check for the credit balance of his account.

"The kids are responsible for seeing their books and for collecting from people," Suter said, "and there's nothing wrong with that. Sales have always meant a lot to this country."

"What I don't like is that it looks like this company is operating in a somewhat deceptive manner. They are advertising the job as one with a guaranteed salary, but the contract only entitles the kid to buying books. That's no job."

"If corporations seem to be more concerned with benefits for themselves and their company than they are with the students, then we'll tell them to get out. That's what this looked like and that's the action we took," Suter said.

However, Suter said, he is sure that Southwestern is a legitimate business, it's "just that some of their recruitment policies seem to be deceitful."

"These people seem to have been acting improperly and rudely," Suter said. "It does not behoove the University to allow private corporations to come in here and insult students."

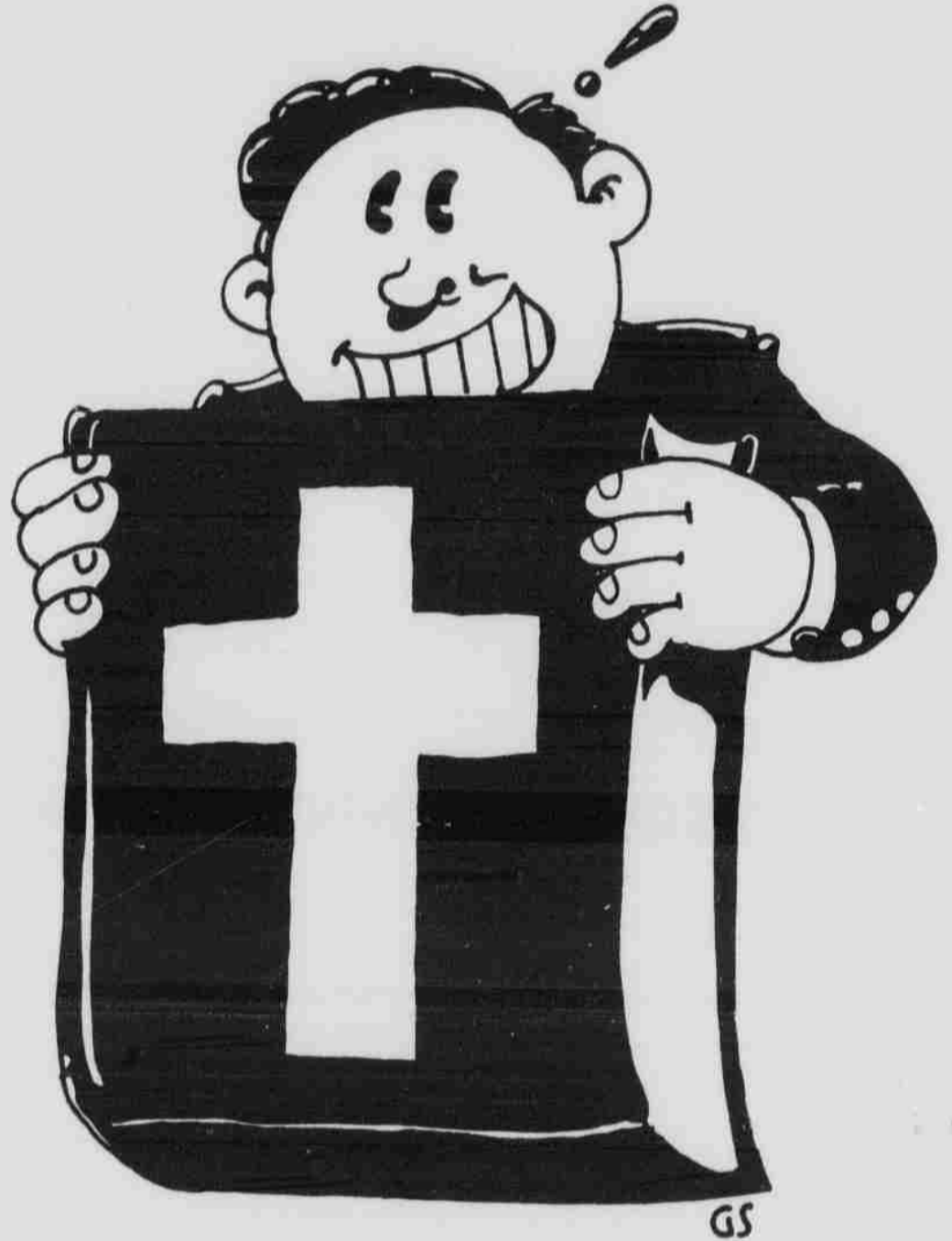
Ken Eidson, one of Southwestern's interviewers in Lincoln, said that although the contract does require the employe to buy books, no definite

number of books or definite amount is established there.

He said the advertisement in the Lincoln papers had been listed in the guaranteed salary column by mistake and that a correction was to be printed in the papers. He said he was not familiar with the Lincoln papers' requirements concerning the

advertising and had therefore mistakenly forgotten to inform them that the salary was on a commission basis.

Edison said he has hired between 15 and 20 UNL students. Last summer, he said, the average student working for Southwestern made \$780 a month and that approximately 7,400 students worked for the company.



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## short stuff

### Chemistry seminar

A Chemistry Department seminar is featuring Gilbert Stork from the Department of Chemistry at Columbia University at 3:30 p.m. Friday in 110 Hamilton Hall.

### Interim flights

Interim charter flights to

Europe with credit courses are being offered for UNL students and staff members next December and January.

Interested students should register with the Overseas Opportunities Center, 205 Nebraska Union, so they will receive more information about the flight when it becomes available.

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