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August 19, 1968

Negro Named To Head Baptist School's Upward Bound Project

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Walter O. Mason Jr., director of Oklahoma City's Community Action Program, will become the first Negro faculty member at Oklahoma Baptist University here when he becomes director of the school's Upward Bound program and associate professor of education.

Mason, a Baptist deacon for 20 years, has been executive director of the Community Action Program of Oklahoma City and County, Inc., since 1965, supervising 36 program units and 400 personnel.

"At a time when relations between races in America are strained, it is most appropriate for a Christian College such as OBU to bring onto its faculty a man like Mr. Mason who is amply qualified in education, experience and spiritual maturity," said Grady C. Cothen, president of Oklahoma Baptist University.

Mason, commenting on his appointment, said, "I think institutions such as OBU must take the lead in demonstrating Brotherhood among the races, the essence of a true democracy. I look forward to making my contribution to these efforts."

A native of Texas, Mason is a graduate of Langston University and Oklahoma State University where he has completed course work for the doctorate in education. He was an All America lineman in 1943 at Langston University.

The Upward Bound program he will direct is in its third year at the Baptist school. Upward Bound is a pre-college program funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity for high school students from low income families.

A former public school teacher in Oklahoma, Mason directed the first summer institute for secondary teachers on desegregation of public schools at the University of Langston, developed Langston's first Head Start program, and directed a project which was the forerunner of the national Upward Bound program.

Earlier this month, Mason was elected chairman of a national steering committee for the Office of Economic Opportunity and other governmental agencies.

He is a member of the Faith Memorial Baptist Church in Oklahoma City where he is a deacon and Sunday School teacher.

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US-2ers Include
 Registered Nurse

8/19/68

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--A nurse for medical mission work in the San Blas Islands is among the 33 Southern Baptist US-2 missionary appointees for 1968.

The young missionary appointees (maximum age, 27) were recognized officially during Home Missions Week at the Baptist Assembly here, where they met for orientation before departing for two-year assignments across the U. S. and Panama.

They are appointed annually by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, to reinforce the work of 2,266 career missionaries.

Naomi Page, 25, of Nashville, will be the first registered nurse to assist in Southern Baptists' medical missions work in Aligandi, Panama since 1965.

A graduate of the Baptist Hospital School of Nursing and Belmont College in Nashville, Miss Page is a registered nurse.

For the first time, US-2ers have been appointed to work exclusively with students under the department of special mission ministries. Several appointees will serve as Baptist Student Union directors on college campuses in California, Idaho, Indiana, New York and Wisconsin.

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In addition, others will be filling pulpits, initiating contact in resort areas, and tackling language barriers in the inner cities of such metropolises as New York and Chicago.

Upon completion of their assignments, the US-2ers receive severance pay of \$50 per month of service (\$75 for married couples) and a 25 per cent bonus if they continue their education. (They must be college graduates.)

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HemisFair Observes Day
For Girls' Auxiliary

8/19/68

SAN ANTONIO, Tex. (BP)--Girls dressed in green and gold marched behind the official HemisFair band to the ceremonial flag plaza at the HemisFair here in observance of Girls' Auxiliary Day at the world's fair (Aug. 16).

An estimated 1,000 Girls' Auxiliary members from Texas and neighboring states attended the special emphasis day at the HemisFair, the first time that the fair has staged a special day for a denominational organization similar to the Baptist group.

Flag raising ceremonies honored Girls' Auxiliary and the girls saluted the U. S. flag and the Christian flag, which was raised instead of the flag of the "nation of the day."

The HemisFair band played the Girls' Auxiliary Hymn as girls in national costumes of countries where Southern Baptists have mission work led the group to the Baptist Pavillion, where Texas and Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union officials and several missionaries signed autographs and greeted the girls.

A member of the governor's HemisFair staff, Mrs. Alfred Negley who also is Democratic National Committeewoman from Texas, welcomed the crowd on behalf of the governor and HemisFair officials. She presented a citation to Miss Marjorie Jones of Birmingham, Ala., director of Girls' Auxiliary for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

A prayer for world understanding was led by Mrs. R. L. Mathis, vice president of the Baptist World Alliance and promotion division director for the SBC Woman's Missionary Union.

During the day, the Girls' Auxiliary members reigned over Project Y (the youth area at the HemisFair) throughout the day. Girls from local churches presented skits, songs and demonstrated camping skills.

The event, sponsored by the San Antonio Woman's Missionary Union, was directed by Mrs. W. Dain Higdon, Girls' Auxiliary director for the San Antonio Baptist Association. A special rate of less than half price admissions was arranged for the Girls' Auxiliary members.

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PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Forty-first in a series)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

This is a subject that has been debated for many years. Christians are rather sharply divided regarding it.

The general trend in the United States has been away from capital punishment. There has been a decrease in the crimes that are punishable by death. Murder is the only capital offense in most states, although some retain it as punishment for rape, robbery, and arson.

Ramsay Clark, Attorney General of the United States, recently suggested that capital punishment for federal offenses should be abolished. He said that it would be one more step out of barbarism.

People, generally, are less favorable to capital punishment. The American Institute of Public Opinion recently released a report showing that the percentage of people approving the death penalty for persons convicted of murder had decreased from 68 per cent in 1953 to 51 per cent in 1960 and 42 per cent in 1966.

There has been a noticeable decrease in the number who have been executed in recent years. In 1936 there were 194 executions in the United States; thirty years later there was only one execution in the entire country.

As the number executed has decreased, the number in "death row" awaiting execution has sharply increased. One state (California) recently reported over seventy men awaiting execution, while another state (Florida) had fifty in death row. In addition there were many more in county jails who had been assessed the death penalty.

Several states have abolished capital punishment. A recent Associated Press report said that thirteen states had either abolished it or had so restricted it as to make it almost non-existent. There are approximately seventy (70) foreign countries that have abolished the death penalty.

Contrary to the contention of the defenders of capital punishment, it is not an effective deterrent to crime. There is little if any evidence of an increase in capital offenses in states or countries that have abolished capital punishment. One report reveals that the five states that most frequently assess the death penalty have the highest murder rates.

There are several additional arguments against the death penalty. One of the strongest is the discriminatory way in which it is applied. Who are the ones who are executed? In the main, they are the poor or the underprivileged of society. To an unusual degree, they belong to the minority peoples of our culture.

Still another reason for the abolition of capital punishment is the fact that when it is assessed there is no way to correct an error. There have been cases where a man has been executed and later it was revealed or discovered that he was innocent. The fact that a judge and a jury may make a mistake should raise serious questions about capital punishment.

What is needed in contemporary America is a more enlightened and effective penal system. The emphasis should be primarily remedial rather than punitive. If one cannot be reformed so as to become again a useful citizen, then he should be separated from society for the remainder of his life. There is no place for capital punishment in a remedial-oriented penal system.

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Forty-second in a Series)

THE BIBLE AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Bible has been appealed to by some who oppose capital punishment but particularly by those who defend it.

The Old Testament is used in the main, by the latter. What do we find in the Old Testament? There are fifteen to twenty offenses that are punishable by death. Would those who use the Bible to defend capital punishment assess the death penalty for all of those offenses?

As one would expect, premeditated murder was punishable by death (Ex. 21:12), although six cities of refuge were provided for those who had killed another "unawares" or "without enmity" (Num. 35:9-33). The death penalty was also assessed for one who stole a man and sold him (Ex. 21:16).

There were two offenses against parents that were punishable by death: smiting or striking (Ex. 21:15) and cursing (Ex. 21:17).

Certain sexual acts were capital offenses. An adulterous relation between a man and another man's wife meant death for both (Lev. 20:10, Deut. 22:22). If a husband accused his wife of not being a virgin when he took her and "the tokens of her virginity be not found for the damsel" she was to be stoned to death (Deut. 22:13-21).

If a man had relations with a betrothed virgin in the city both were to be put to death (Deut. 22:23-24), if in the field, the man alone was to be put to death. In the latter case it was assumed that the damsel cried for help and no one heard her (Deut. 22:25-27).

Incest (Lev. 20:11-12, 14) and homosexuality (Lev. 20:13) were punishable by death, as was also true of lying with a beast (Ex. 22:19), which applied to women as well as men (Lev. 20:15-16).

Certain religious transgressions were considered capital offenses. This was true of one who defiled the sabbath, which included doing any work on the sabbath day (Ex. 31:14-15; cf. 35:2). One man was actually stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath (Num. 15:32-36).

A prophet or a "dreamer of dreams" who would lead the people to worship false gods (Deut. 13:5), one who would entice others to "serve other gods" (Deut. 13:6-10), and those who worshipped other gods (Deut. 17:2-5) were to be put to death. The same was true of those who gave their seed to Molech (Lev. 20:2) or who blasphemed God (Lev. 24:16).

The stranger who came near to the Tabernacle when it was being set up by the Levites (Num. 1:51) or when the sons of Aaron were ministering in it (Num. 3:10, 38) was to be put to death. There was a provision for the death penalty for a witch (Ex. 22:18) or one who had a familiar spirit or was a wizard (Lev. 20:27).

Surely no one in the contemporary period would advocate capital punishment for all of the preceding offenses. Personally, I do not believe we can wisely or correctly use what we find in the Bible as justification for capital punishment in our day.

The severity of the punishment found in the Old Testament needs to be evaluated and understood in the light of that day. Other than the cities of refuge a penal system was non-existent. Furthermore, the teachings of the Old Testament should be interpreted and evaluated in the light of the fuller revelation found in the New Testament. I believe that capital punishment violates the spirit and the basic teachings of the New Testament.