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Interview with

Thomas Maston

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Interviewer: Pat Ledbetter

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Oral History Collection

Thomas B. Maston

Interviewer: Pat Ledbetter

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Ms. Ledbetter: This is Pat Ledbetter interviewing Dr. T. B. Maston, retired professor of Christian ethics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. This interview is taking place in Dr. Maston's office in the library at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The date is July 30, 1974. The interview will be a part of the Oral History Collection at North Texas State University as well as for my own benefit.

Let's begin the interview, Dr. Maston, with a brief biographical sketch of your life. Where were you born? When? So forth.

Dr. Maston: I was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee--that's in East Tennessee just east of Knoxville--on November 26, 1897. My father was a farm laborer. He and my mother grew up in East Tennessee following the Civil War, so both of them were very limited in their education. We lived there at that place for about two or three years

and then moved across the mountain to another place where he was also a farm laborer. Then when I was four years of age. We moved from Tennessee to Ohio. My father, while we lived in Ohio, was a section hand on the railroad, which means that I came from a very ordinary background except that my father, who had a limited education--only an eighth grade--had educated himself. He was well educated and had a lot of native ability. My mother had only gone through the third grade. Those grades were very limited then--just three or four months. All my mother could do would be to read and write. That was just about all. I judge that that's enough of that for the present.

Ledbetter: How about your educational background?

Maston: I got my grade school education in Ohio. We lived in a little state-line town. I was four years of age when we moved up there. I've always been grateful for the fact that I did get my grade school education because at that time the schools were considerably better there than they were in Tennessee. That would not be true now, but it was then. I found out later that's one of the reasons my father

moved to Ohio, was to get us to where the schools were somewhat better. Fortunately, I had a first grade teacher who was an excellent teacher. I got started out well in school. I did very well. My father was very proud of the fact that during most of my grade school education I ranked first in my class as they ranked them then. Then we moved back to Tennessee when I was fourteen, and I went through high school at Central High School at Fountain City, Tennessee, which is just outside of Knoxville.

Ledbetter: Was your father working on the railroad then?

Maston: No, he came back to farm when we came to Tennessee, and we became sharecroppers on a small farm. At Central High School at Fountain City, I played football. I don't look like it now because of my size, but they didn't have to be so big then. Then I went to Carson-Newman College, which is a church related college--Southern Baptist college--just east of Knoxville at Jefferson City.

I graduated from there and then came to Texas to Southwestern Seminary. When I came to Southwestern

Seminary, I'd never known anyone who had been a student here. This school was young then. I came here in the fall of 1920. The school started here in 1910. It started at Baylor in 1908 and moved here in 1910. Then later I went to the University of North Carolina and the University of Chicago for some summer school work. On that basis I decided that I would not get what I ought to get in the field of sociology to do my work here. I went to Yale and took a Ph.D. in Christian ethics under Richard Niebuhr. In the meantime, of course, I was teaching here because I started teaching here when I was still an undergraduate student.

Ledbetter: When did you begin teaching?

Maston: Nineteen twenty-two. Dr. Price, who headed the School of Religious Education went away on leave for a half a year at Boston University, and they asked me to teach some of his classes while he was away. When he came back they asked me to continue. I continued to teach them and taught about twenty years in the School of Religious Education and then transferred to the School of Theology and taught

there the rest of the time. I taught for forty-one years altogether in the school.

Ledbetter: Why did you decide to go to Yale?

Maston: I studied catalogues from everywhere I could get, and I had taught practically everything in the School of Religious Education. The school was small then, and I taught adolescent education, social work, recreation, student work, and so forth. I had taught from the time I started in 1922 what was offered in the field of Christian ethics. This was my major interest. I studied catalogues from a number of places and decided that I would come nearer getting what I wanted, that would help me here, at Yale. Another possible reason is the fact that all of my education had been in relatively small denominational schools--Carson-Newman and then here--and I did have a desire to go to a university somewhere and get a graduate degree. I had a doctor's degree from here--doctor's degree in religious education. I was the first one to get that degree here.

Ledbetter: Oh, really?

Maston: I don't know that you'd be interested or not--I think you might be--that I am not an ordained minister. I've

taught in the theological seminary, but I'm not an ordained minister. When I first started out in religious work, I felt that I was called to preach, but for some reason I had a feeling that I was never supposed to be pastor of a church. As I interpret it now, the Lord adjusted himself to my limitations (chuckle). But I had a question about it from the very first, and I gradually worked this thing out over a period of years.

Ledbetter: When you began teaching did you still think you might someday preach?

Maston: Yes, I was real uncertain about it for awhile. I had some uncertainty about whether I was to teach or preach when I came here. For awhile, also, after I got started teaching, I had considerable uncertainty whether I was supposed to teach here or to teach on the college-university level.

Ledbetter: Did you go to Yale with the intention of coming back here? Did you think you might?

Maston: Yes, I did. I think you might be interested to know that I went to Yale in 1932-33 which was right at the bottom of the depression. I had a wife and two children. One of my older colleagues met me on campus

here one day and said, "Well, I've always had respect for your common sense and your financial responsibility, but," he says, "I just don't see how you can go up there with that family." Because we were getting very limited salary at that time.

Ledbetter: How did you finance it?

Maston: I did some writing for one thing. I was writing on some Sunday School lessons for our Sunday School board. That helped me some because it paid me about \$1,200 for a year's lessons, graded lessons. I did a little supply, but not much. We just squeezed it out.

Ledbetter: I know how that goes. Was there anyone at Yale that was particularly influential on your career? Did you find that the theological approach of the people at Yale was considerably different than those at . . .

Maston: Some difference, but not as noticeably different as a lot of folks would think. In other words, although I came from a quite conservative background, as you understand here, I did not have more than, I think one teacher that created any kind of a problem for me. He was very open. In other words, when I went to his office to talk with him, we had an excellent personal

relationship. But the rest of them I found to be very understanding, very helpful. Now my major professor, as I mentioned, was H. Richard Niebuhr, the brother of Reinhold Niebuhr. More folks know about Reinhold because he wrote more and, I guess, was a little more brilliant, but those that studied at Yale think that H. Richard was just as much of a scholar. H. Richard was one that turned out more teachers . . . many of your Christian ethics men, like, for example, at TCU, SMU, Emory, and these places are Richard Niebuhr's students.

Ledbetter: Do you think your experience at Yale was significant in shaping your concern for social . . .

Maston: No, I do not think so. I think I already had that. In other words, that was a part of me from the time I first started, I think--my concern about social things. I think the thing that my study at Yale did for me more than anything else was broaden my understanding and broaden my acquaintance with people. For example, some of the great names like Brunner and Barth and these men. I got much better acquainted with them at Yale than I had in anything that I had

done here. It is true that when I came back from my studies at Yale--and I was there two different years--I restructured practically everything that I was teaching.

Now you may wonder about the two years. I was there one year and got very seriously sick and did not get to the spring term at all. After I came back here for two or three years, I went back to Yale for a year to review and to get ready for my oral exams and work on my dissertation. So I spent two years up there on the campus.

Ledbetter: When were you at the University of Chicago?

Maston: I was at the University of Chicago just for summer school about 1930, I think. I went to the University of North Carolina in 1929. I was working in the field of sociology at the time in both places and had some of the top men in sociology, like Ernest Groves at North Carolina and H. W. Odum and William Ogburn at Chicago, who was then the president of the American Sociological Society.

Ledbetter: But you didn't do theological work at either of those two places.

Maston: Well, I did a course in Christian ethics at the University of Chicago under David Evans, who taught at Harvard and was over there for the summer.

Ledbetter: Chicago was reported to be in the 1920's, you know, the seat of modernism. Did you find that true?

Maston: No, I did not in the classes I had, but in fairness I should say that I took only three courses. One of them was under Edward Steiner, who was a sociologist at Tulane University. And then I had the course in Christian ethics under David Evans, so I didn't have much occasion to get into that, no.

Ledbetter: I see. Let's talk some about your career at Southwestern. You said you made your decision to teach as kind of a gradual process, getting into it gradually. You came to Southwestern when it was a very young institution. Could you tell me something about the conditions in Southwestern when you came?

Maston: It was a small institution then--about 300 or 400 students. It was isolated from the city. In other words, this was a distinct community--Seminary Hill. It had its own Post Office. It even had a railroad station down here--a little shed down here. There was nothing

much, no buildings or houses of any kind except just a few from here over to Hemphill where the steel mills are located now. We even had our own streetcar that ran from the steel mills over here--Toonerville Trolley, they called it. So it was quite an isolated community. We had Fort Worth Hall, which was the first building that was built here--it was built in 1910--and a part of the Woman's Building over there, and a frame administration building out here in the center. This is what we had when we came here. That frame building had just been put up that summer. Although it was small and limited facilities, we did have, I think, at that time some of the greatest teachers that Southwestern has ever had.

Ledbetter: Who were some of the men?

Maston: Well, some of the men were W. T. Conner, who is widely known as a theologian, and B. A. Copass-- Old Testament--who was not what you'd call a great scholar, but the kind of teacher that built a fire under people and made them want to get out and do something. Then we had H. E. Dana in the field of

New Testament and Greek. He did not stay here. He stayed here several years, but he went on to Central Seminary in Kansas City. He was president up there. I considered him one of the greatest teachers that I've had, the kind of teacher that can just work you to death almost and make you love it, which I think is a sign of a good teacher. We had W. W. Barnes in the field of church history. Dr. Barnes, I considered as being one of the broadest scholars, the widest in his knowledge of any of the men that I've known here. Now Dr. Conner was a scholar in his field, but he didn't have the breadth of scholarship of Dr. Barnes. But Dr. Barnes, unfortunately, never did write very much.

Ledbetter: Dr. Scarborough was president then.

Maston: He was president at that time. He became president in 1914, and I came here in the fall of 1920.

Ledbetter: Can you tell me something about his work with the Seminary?

Maston: Well, my relation with Dr. Scarborough was a very satisfying relationship. It is true that some of the faculty members did not like Dr. Scarborough and

criticized him, particularly during the depression period. I think this was largely because of economic pressures that they were under. They criticized him and said that when the going got hard that Dr. Scarborough would run off somewhere down in the Valley somewhere and leave it up to C. M. King, the business manager. But I always found him to be very understanding, very helpful.

He's the one that asked me to come on the faculty. I can visualize, when we were walking from that frame building after the commencement around the front of Fort Worth Hall for a picture-taking session, he came up and touched me by the elbow and called me by my first name as he always had. He said, "Tom, I think we're going to need you here." That's the first hint that they wanted me to stay to teach permanently. I had taught about a year or two. I had spoken at commencement. They used to have student speakers, and I had spoken at commencement. When I talked to him about going off to study at Yale, he was very cooperative, thoroughly cooperative. We didn't have a regular sabbatic leave program then. It was all on an individual basis.

Ledbetter: Did you get any money from the seminary to go to Yale?

Maston: Nothing except for salary. I did get what salary we were getting, which wasn't very much. That's all. I think it averaged about \$90 a month, is what I got during the fall semester. I don't remember during the spring semester. But there was one year during the depression that I had a record of what I got from the seminary, which was \$1,056 for my total income for one year during the depression period. So we were forced together quite a little bit as a family, but it is true that I had a very good relationship with him.

Ledbetter: Do you think he was an instrumental man in building the seminary?

Maston: Oh, yes. No question about that. Yes, no question about that. He was, of course, Dr. Carroll's choice to become his successor. Some objected to that, but he was a very aggressive sort of a leader. He had been the leader of the "Seventy-five Million Campaign" which had its successes and also its failures to some degree, but that had gotten him before Southern Baptists as a whole, so he was widely known.

I think he was a very effective president. It is true that he was the kind of president that kept his hands on everything. Practically every decision about the institution was made by him, which wasn't bad when the institution was small. He could do this.

Ledbetter: When you first began teaching and working with the Southern Baptists, what was the Southern Baptist approach to social problems and to social concern?

Maston: Well, in the main, of course, Southern Baptists were quite conservative as they always have been. It is true, I think, that most Southern Baptists are conservative theologically and since they are conservative theologically, they seem to think that means that they have got to be conservative along all lines, which is not my perspective at all. I think that the ideal is to be a liberal on social issues and basically conservative theologically so you can have a foundation.

Ledbetter: I've read about your career that you are the instrumental figure in bridging the gap in Texas among Southern Baptists from orthodox theology in the past

and modern social concern with religion. Do you think that's an adequate position for your . . .

Maston: Well, I would have to let others judge whether I would have been able to do that, but that has been my ideal.

Ledbetter: That's been your ideal.

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Just hold onto the orthodox religion of the past?

Maston: Now I say basically I'm conservative. My viewpoint is that we need to have a theology that is basically conservative in regard to the nature of God, in regard to Christ, in regard to man, in regard to the scriptures and so forth--these things that are basically fundamental. Now I'm not a high-bound conservative on a good many things, particularly in the approach to the Bible. I'm not one of these that thinks that all the dots and dashes were dictated. See what I'm talking about? My viewpoint of inspiration would not be acceptable to a good many Southern Baptists, but I think of it as being a higher conception of inspiration than the so-called "verbal inspiration" type of thing.

Ledbetter: I see. Why do you think so many Southern Baptists did reject the so-called "social gospel" or social concern?

Maston: Well, the rather interesting thing about the relation of Southern Baptists to the social gospel is the fact that at first they seemingly accepted it and went along with it. We had one book that was written by C. S. Gardner, who taught at Southern. I believe it was copyrighted in 1914, which would have been right in the middle of the social gospel movement.

But Southern Baptists turned against it. They turned away from the so-called social gospel movement when they identified it with theological liberalism. At least this is my viewpoint. Then we've had a considerable period of time when we've had to try to overcome this and help them to see that it's not a matter of a social gospel or an individual gospel. It's a matter of a gospel that applies to all of life, and it is to be applied to every area of life.

Ledbetter: Okay, this brings us to a topic that I'm particularly concerned about--the fundamentalist and modernist

controversy. It seems to me that a large part of the fundamentalist reaction in Texas was a reaction to the social gospel movement.

Maston: Yes, quite a bit of it. I do think that we need to make a distinction within fundamentalism. You have two types of fundamentalism. You have fundamentalism that is centered largely--although not exclusively--in the North, which is basically theological. Then there is the fundamentalism that was built up around J. Frank Norris here in the South, and this is really, I guess, ecclesiological--in other words, organizational and structural more than it was theological. Now it, I think, adopted to some degree the theological stance of the northern fundamentalists and the terminology, but I think also that the primary emphasis here was not theological. I think you get the difference if you think in terms of the Dallas Theological Seminary, which is in the tradition of northern fundamentalism--a conservative theological position but an effort to make that conservative theological position acceptable, to make it dignified. To make it respectable is a better term--to make it respectable. Now in contrast is the school at Arlington, you see.

Ledbetter: The one established by Norris.

Maston: Yes, although I think it has become a little stronger. But it is a separationist movement, a movement to appeal primarily to the underprivileged, you see.

Ledbetter: But why would those people reject a social gospel movement?

Maston: Because of their strong prejudices and because of their basic conservatism. You see, the South has been more conservative along all lines--politically, economically, and so forth. Part of it is our rural orientation. We are not even yet as urban as they are in the North. I think this is part of it. It has become almost a way of life--this conservatism--along all lines. They do identify all the application of the gospel with the social gospel movement. There needs to be made a distinction there. The social gospel movement they do identify with liberalism. That's one reason why I have always taught that when you go out and preach you don't have to preach the social gospel, but preach the gospel and talk about the application of the gospel to life.

Ledbetter: You think then that the whole concept of social gospel just alienates basically conservative people.

- Maston: Basically alienates a lot of Southern Baptists. I wouldn't say all. There are many that are alienated by it. But many of them, yes, it does. It definitely does. It definitely does.
- Ledbetter: In your opinion why do you think the fundamentalist controversy came up when it did in the 1920's? You said that you thought it was a reaction to the liberalism in religion, but why did they get concerned at this time?
- Maston: You mean, for example, the work of J. Frank Norris? I think you have to think in terms of Norris himself. I do not think of this as just being basically a theological reaction like this fundamentalism of the North. The truth of it is that most of the fundamentalism of the North would be pretty much at home in the South even now. Southern Baptists have a difficult time of identifying themselves with any particular theological distinction. We're conservative but we're all degrees of conservatism. I think of myself as being a conservative, but it's a contradictory expression. But I think of myself as being a progressive conservative (chuckle).
- Ledbetter: I see. Then you think that really things may have . . .
- Maston: I think it's a personal thing primarily.

Ledbetter: It was the personal leadership of that man _____
than anything else.

Maston: I think so. Yes. I think so. I think so. And he
was very outstanding. Now when I first came here
in 1920, he was still fairly well acceptable by
Southern Baptists. I heard him speak in chapel at
this Seminary after I became a student here. Now
at that time there was a division among the faculty--
at least I understand there was. Some of the faculty
members like B. A. Copass tried to hold on to him
and tried to preserve him for the nomination. Some
of the others like Dr. Jeff D. Rag just had nothing
to do with him. They didn't believe in him, didn't
believe in his sincerity and genuineness.

So I do think you have to try to analyze
J. Frank Norris, and that would require a psycholo-
gist, I think, to really analyze him. Someone has
suggested that part of the problem that he had and
that led to the separation--and his movement was
largely a separation from Southern Baptists--that
part of it stemmed from an inferiority complex. As
you know, many times it takes the reverse, and it
seems like a fellow has a superiority complex. He

had a sense of inferiority for certain men. You mentioned Dawson was one of them, and George W. Trett and L. R. Scarborough.

Ledbetter: I think your comments about his movement not being a theological movement are interesting because he did spend a great deal of time attacking people whose theological approach was pretty close to his own.

Maston: Yes. Now if I said it wasn't theological, I didn't mean to say it that strong, but primarily not. His was not basically theological.

Ledbetter: It was not a new theology.

Maston: No, no. It was not basically theological. I think it was basically a personal attack on Southern Baptists and on certain individuals--Truett and others who had become leaders among Southern Baptists.

Ledbetter: About the only distinct thing I could pick up on Norris' theology was his emphasis on the second coming.

Maston: Yes. Well, this is true, of course, a fundamentalist position. This is right. This, I think, would be possibly the most distinct thing. Now when I say that the movement was ecclesiological more than it

was theological, they do not believe in mission boards as we have. This is what we call landmark theology. It's related to the landmark movement. Each church sends out its own missionary. They do not believe in this type of cooperative work. At least theoretically they do not. This is, I think, far more important here than it is in . . .

Ledbetter: That would help explain his opposition to the "Seventy-five Million Campaign".

Maston: Yes, it would. Part of that is explained, I think, also by his attitude toward Dr. Scarborough.

Ledbetter: It was partly a personal attack and partly . . .

Maston: Yes, partly personal. I think so. Royce Meadows . . . I'm not sure whether Royce is right about this, but you know that he has written a dissertation on the influence of Norris. He thinks that Norris had more respect for Scarborough than he did for Truett or for Dawson. I'm not sure of this. I could not sense this from my observations during that time. But it may be true.

Ledbetter: Maybe since they were in the same town, and that may have had something to do with it.

Maston: Could be. Could be. Now Royce suggests a rather interesting thing that I have never thought about

and that you may want to check on. He thinks that there's a possibility that part of Norris' problem was the fact that when Dr. Carroll died in 1914 that the trustees did not turn to Norris either to be president of the institution or to consult with him about who'd be president because he says beginning about 1914 is when he became so antagonistic and so vigorous in his opposition.

Ledbetter: That's interesting.

Maston: (chuckle) Interesting, yes.

Ledbetter: The fundamentalists in the 1920's seemed to be very concerned about modernistic theologies gaining a foothold in Texas. How extensive do you feel that this feeling was?

Maston: I do not think very extensive. Now it is possible that there was some of it, that you possibly have already discovered it. They did make an attack on a professor at SMU, for example, I think they finally got him out. Then there was an attack on a man in sociology at Baylor, and I remember about that. I do not remember very much about his writings, whether I would consider him a modernist or not. But those are the only two that I can remember specifically.

Now generally, yes, they made . . . of course, Norris would make attacks on men here in this institution-- on Barnes and some on Conner--and ridicule some of the others quite a little bit. He'd talk about "she-brew" and so forth, ridicule the whole theological approach. But I do not remember if he was being very specific about anybody else except these two. Now there's a possibility that he was.

Ledbetter: Was there any . . . well, he called Dawson a modernist. Was there any justification to that, do you think?

Maston: No, no, I don't think so. I think Dawson was like a good many other folks through the years. He was rather progressive in his social . . . in relation to social issues. A good many of those kind of men get labeled as being liberal or modernist when, basically, their theology is quite conservative.

Ledbetter: That seems to be the key to a lot of his attacks, was people who adopted a rather liberal view towards social concern.

Maston: Yes, yes.

Ledbetter: How did you relate that to his theology of the second coming? Do you think that that had anything to do with his rejection of social concern?

- Maston: Well, the interesting thing is that J. Frank Norris did not reject all concern with social issues because he got into city things quite a little bit sometimes.
- Ledbetter: Well, that's true.
- Maston: He'd get after the police department, city administration, and so forth. So he did get into these things. At the same time he was rejecting the so-called social gospel.
- Ledbetter: Right. I remember some attacks that he made on people whom he accused of believing that salvation came by social work.
- Maston: Yes.
- Ledbetter: That was the reason for my _____.
- Maston: Well, of course, there he'd be on rather sound _____ foundation, as you understand.
- Ledbetter: Right, probably much of his theology was. You said that you knew Dr. Scarborough well. Did you ever hear him speak of Norris? He was one of the people that he most bitterly attacked.
- Maston: Oh, yes. They carried on considerable controversy-- Dr. Scarborough and Dr. Truett and one or two others-- with Norris. They even got on the radio. Many of us

here thought that was a mistake because these men would not--could not--use some of the methods of Norris. We thought it was a mistake for them to get in controversy with Norris publicly because he could kind of take advantage of them, and they couldn't answer back or would not answer back in the same way that he would attack them.

Ledbetter: It seems to me that Scarborough really got more involved in the public controversies, as you say, than the other Baptists.

Maston: This is true. Yes, this is correct. One of the things that I think turned some of us off of Norris about as much as anything--I understand this is true; I couldn't vouch for it--was the fact that we understood that he got the place where he would send Dr. Truett some type of telegram or message just before he'd get ready to preach. I heard just the other day that--I think that maybe it was Royce Meadows, who told me this, I'm not sure--he did that for Dr. M. E. Dodd over at Shreveport, too. Most Southern Baptists thought so much of Dr. Truett that I think this turned some of them off of Norris, just the fact that he'd do this kind of thing. It got to

the place where Bob Coleman, who worked with Dr. Truett for years . . . my understanding is that Bob Coleman got so that he'd intercept those communications and wouldn't let Dr. Truett get them just before he preached.

Ledbetter: They're not in his papers. I've been through Truett's papers. There's very little reference to Norris in any of them.

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Did you find any significant sympathy for him? You said early, when you first came, there was some sympathy for Norris.

Maston: He was a tremendous preacher, tremendous personality. He could preach tremendous sermons when he wanted to preach. So much of the time he was making an attack upon somebody for something. The mood was built on this, and this had been one of the problems, I think, that they had--the fact that they were built so much upon this attitude that it has been hard for them to get along with themselves. They've had splits, as you know. They've got a new fundamentalist movement, the old fundamentalist movement, and so forth.

Ledbetter: Did the teachers here continue to sympathize with him at all? You know, he didn't die until 1952.

Maston: No, no.

Ledbetter: There was no sympathy with him later after the split actually occurred?

Maston: No, no, I don't think so. I don't remember anybody that was sympathetic with him, and certainly no one who would support him in any way.

Ledbetter: Do you remember specifically in the 1920's and the 1930's any restrictions or inhibitions in Southwestern because of his attacking or because of the general fundamentalist movement? Did you feel any limitations in your approach to teaching Bible, for example?

Maston: I don't think so. I don't think so at all. Now I am sure that the whole fundamentalist movement and Norris himself caused teachers to be maybe a little more careful about how they'd say some things. Now we did know that there were some students here that provided a regular pipeline to him. This was known, that he knew what was going on in the classrooms, and it may be that some of the teachers were a little more careful. I don't know. I never felt any pressure along that line at all.

Ledbetter: But you were being spied on (chuckle).

Maston: Well, I may not have been because I was quite young as a teacher then, you see.

Ledbetter: I see.

Maston: Now some of the folks who worked with him in years later were students here. I remember John R. Rice and his family quite well as students here.

Ledbetter: Did he finish at the Seminary?

Maston: Yes, I think I'm right about that. There's a house over here on James Avenue that he build while he was a student.

Ledbetter: What do you think the long range effects on Texas Baptists were?

Maston: I think possibly two-fold. I think there is a possibility that it has made . . . not just Texas Baptists because J. Frank Norris had a lot of influence over the entire Southern Baptist Convention. He used to have a meeting at the same time the Southern Baptist Convention would meet to compete with the Convention. I think it has made, possibly, folks a little more carefully theologically. I'm not sure that this is true. Maybe a little bit defensive.

I think it has also contributed to a lot of heartaches and headaches because churches have been divided at times, families have been divided at times, pastors and so forth. I think there's also a possibility that it made the Convention Baptists just a

little more aggressive. I think this is correct-- the possibility of it. Now the thing I hadn't particularly thought of until Royce called my attention to it is the fact that the First Baptist Church here has considerably influenced our whole Sunday School movement.

Ledbetter: How is that?

Maston: Well, he brought in Louis Entzminger and they built a big Sunday School. Some of the methods that they used are methods that have been adopted by others. You might be interested in this if you do not know it, that C. E. Matthews, who was more instrumental than anybody else in getting Travis Avenue Baptist Church really moving was a product of the First Baptist Church. He came through that church.

Ledbetter: And so they adopted some of his methods.

Maston: That's right. They adopted some of his methods. Arthur Flake, who wrote a book several years ago for Southern Baptists on building a standard Sunday School was there when Entzminger was there. Flake went there on one occasion and studied what was being done at the First Baptist Church. Much of what he says in his building a standard Sunday School, so I understand, came from that church.

Now, of course, Norris has also influenced the type of preaching to some degree by a lot of folks. He was a very verbal sort of person, spectacular. There has also been some influence from, I think, education a little bit because of the institutes for underprivileged pastors in the main. I think of those as being some of the influences that have come from the fundamentalist movement into Southern Baptist life. Not just from Texas but the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole.

Ledbetter: When Norris left the church, or when he was forced out of the church and then began his own movement, were the churches that came into his movement formerly associated with the Southern Baptists?

Maston: Not very many. Most of them were formed by him. You take, for example, here in Fort Worth. He would go out in an area where there was a Convention church, set up a tent, hold a revival meeting, sew down that community with his literature or with the paper that he'd produced and so forth, and have somebody hold a meeting. He'd go in maybe for two or three or four nights. They'd gather a group of dissatisfied people-- at least some of them were, you see--and start a

church. No, there's not very many Convention churches . . . I do not know of a Convention church . . .

Ledbetter: I see. The people that form these churches, though, most of those would have been former Southern Baptists. So he did hurt you.

Maston: Oh, yes. He took away a good many--the dissatisfied and so forth. As you know also, in later years a great many of these fundamentalist churches became independent Baptist churches not associated with either one of the fellowships.

Ledbetter: I was going to ask you about that. Also, what's the distinction between Norris' movement, if it's primarily the organization of the church, a _____ organization of the church as you said, what's the difference in his movement and the earlier Missionary Baptist movement?

Maston: What do you mean by the Missionary Baptist? Do you mean the BMA?

Ledbetter: Yes.

Maston: Well, it's largely of the same general . . . take the big overall movement. It's landmark. I've mentioned landmark theology. Well, now the landmark theology is central in the BMA.

Ledbetter: Now is that S. A. Hayden's?

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Okay.

Maston: You had a controversy there, of course, Truett was involved very much in that one.

Ledbetter: But it's the same kind of thing as the Norris movement.

Maston: In general.

Ledbetter: Why have those people not been able to cooperate and form an opposition denomination?

Maston: They have. You have the Baptist Missionary Association.

Ledbetter: Right, but that's never attracted the group that follows Norris.

Maston: No, no. It's a different spirit. At least I think so. I think so. There's some things about your fundamentalists that most of your BMA's, if I understand correctly, would not accept. At least I think this is correct.

Ledbetter: I see.

Maston: I'm not a theologian now, you see (chuckle).

Ledbetter: So you had the BMA and the Norris movement and the Norris split and then the independent Baptists, but

Norris never had a group of BMA or any of the other groups.

Maston: That's right. There were a lot of them.

Ledbetter: Do you think that Norris' attacks slowed down at all the development of social concern among Texas Baptists?

Maston: I don't think so. I don't think so. I do not think so.

Ledbetter: You don't think that Dawson and other people paid much attention to him?

Maston: No, not from that viewpoint. My viewpoint is that most of your folks among Southern Baptists who took the leadership in this whole area of what I call applied Christianity, most of them took that leadership because of a real deep conviction that this was what they found in the Scriptures, that this was the purpose of God. Now it is true that you had a few in the eastern part of our territory who were considered liberal. I'm not real sure they were liberal. The Poteats, for example, were usually considered more liberal theologically than the average Southern Baptist. But Dawson and folks of that type, I don't think the Norris movement affected them adversely at all.

Ledbetter: I'd hate to be attacked as Poteats, also.

Maston: Yes, yes. Yes, this is right.

Ledbetter: Especially on the evolution business. They were reportedly evolutionists.

Maston: Yes, which became, of course, one of the crucial questions, and this came up to the Southern Baptist Convention. I remember when Dr. George W. McDaniel made a statement--I think it was at Memphis at the Southern Baptist Convention--that he proposed a position to Southern Baptists in regard to evolution:

There was some movement at the time, some trend at the time, to require teachers to sign a statement that they did not believe in evolution. I never will forget a faculty meeting that we had over in Cowden Hall, which was built in 1926. We had a rather small faculty then, and we were all around a big table. Dr. Scarborough brought the matter up and was talking about it. I never will forget that Dr. Conner had a big hand. Dr. Conner slapped that hand down on the table and said, "I am not going to sign anything!"

Ledbetter: (chuckle) And you never had to sign?

Maston: Never had to sign.

Ledbetter: That was one of Norris' major goals, too, to make sure that all the teachers were orthodox and that they were agreed in verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: This seems to be really another of the keys to the theology of the fundamentalist movement--the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

Maston: Well, now that, of course, is very strong among Southern Baptists.

Ledbetter: Even today, do you think?

Maston: Oh, yes.

Ledbetter: What about evolution?

Maston: It's mostly a dead issue now. It is true that there were some Southern Baptists that believed in what they called theistic evolution. In other words, this is a process that God used, but that God was the one that did the creating. There were a good many, and I don't see any problem with it myself. If God wanted to use that method . . . I've said to young people through the years that I think the main thing is that in the beginning God . . . and the method he wants to use in bringing about things we'd better leave that in his hands. I don't think we know enough about it to be dogmatic one way or the other.

Ledbetter: Do you think Southern Baptists in general do? Are they dogmatic in their . . .

Maston: Yes, I think most Southern Baptists would be rather dogmatic about it, that is, most Southern Baptist preachers, not most Southern Baptists, because I think most Southern Baptists don't care one way or the other much about it.

Ledbetter: But you think most Southern Baptist preachers at least would still insist on verbal . . .

Maston: They'd be . . . in verbal inspiration, you're talking about? Well, I'm not really sure I'd say most, but I certainly would agree to many of them. We have a little division right now. I don't know whether you know about it--a new fellowship has arisen--within Southern Baptist ranks. It's a fellowship of faith and message or something like this. They are supposed to be quite conservative, but they're going to work within Southern Baptist ranks. But this is part of theirs--a belief in the verbal inspiration.

Ledbetter: I'd like you to explain a little bit more fully about the theological seminaries that have come from the fundamentalist movement.

Maston: The Dallas Theological Seminary is a fundamentalist institution. It is not part of the Norris movement at all. It represents more of this northern

fundamentalism, where the primary emphasis is on the theological. Now if I understand correctly, they do respect Norris. But they are quite different because they are attempting to make the fundamentalist movement respectable, in other words, by having real scholars. And they have some very real scholars there. They place an emphasis on Biblical preaching and Biblical exegesis. We have a good many Southern Baptist pastors who . . . preacher's boys that go there . . . go to school. As I think I've indicated, the Norris movement and the fundamentalist movement is not an attempt to make the fundamentalist movement respectable theologically or any other way primarily, but it makes an appeal primarily to the underprivileged, to the down and outs, and so forth. This has been the primary appeal. Now if I understand correctly, the institution at Arlington is moving up a little bit, and it's doing a better job. It's giving some real training, but it's not the type of thing that you have over in Dallas at all. Dallas Theological would be more like the Moody Bible Institute, this type of thing.

Ledbetter: Could a Southern Baptist preacher go to Dallas Theological Seminary and get his degree and become a Southern Baptist preacher?

Maston: Oh, yes.

Ledbetter: Does that happen?

Maston: There are a great many that have. Yes, a good many that have been there. Yes, they can. Of course, they can go anywhere they want to (chuckle) because we have no restrictions, you see.

Ledbetter: I mean, that doesn't mean that they've broken with the Southern Baptists?

Maston: No, not necessarily so. We have a good many Southern Baptists, young men, who go North and East for their theological training and then come back and serve in a Southern Baptist church.

Ledbetter: When was the Theological Seminary established? Do you know?

Maston: This one here or the Dallas one?

Ledbetter: Dallas.

Maston: No, ma'am, I do not. I'm sorry. I do not know when it was established.

Ledbetter: This gospel of the second coming that Norris emphasized so much, do you think that's had any significant long range effect on the Southern Baptists?

Maston: I'm sure it has had some because we have a great many Southern Baptists, of course, that agree with him on this emphasis.

Ledbetter: But the Southern Baptists as a denomination haven't taken it up.

Maston: No, no. The Southern Baptists as a denomination have a statement of faith that has been made, but there's nothing that the Southern Baptist Convention can do that can bind a local church, you see. In other words, every local church is independent. We, as I have said half jokingly many times, do not have among Southern Baptists a position on anything (chuckle). We have many positions--many positions. Now you do have a good many Southern Baptist preachers who would agree with the fundamentalists in regard to the second coming of Christ. There are several different positions, any one of which would be acceptable to many Southern Baptists. You've got the premillennial position which is so strong among the fundamentalists, postmillennial position which is not held by very many folks anymore, and then the position that many Southern Baptists hold to is what they call the amillennial position.

Ledbetter: Would you explain the distinction in those?

Maston: Yes. The premillennial position is that Christ will return before the millennium. There will be a thousand-year reign, you see. The postmillennial is that he will

come after that. The amillennial position is not real sure there'll be any such thing at all because the millennium is just mentioned one time in a highly symbolic book.

Ledbetter: Do you think possibly the reason the fundamentalists adopt this premillennial view the extent they do is because of, as you said before, the downtrodden groups they reach?

Maston: I think this is part of it, yes. I think this is part of it. In other words, this makes an appeal to them.

Ledbetter: Right, that Christ is coming soon.

Maston: Yes, Christ . . . yes, he's going to come soon. Incidentally, this is a pretty strong element in the preaching of a man like Billy Graham, you know. All of the conditions have been fulfilled, and Christ can come anytime. I think it is maybe a little more prominent in his preaching than I care for.

Ledbetter: How would you connect something like the Billy Graham movement? Would that have any connection? I don't mean just for Norris, but with the early fundamentalists and the so-called "neo-orthodoxy."

Maston: Well, now neo-orthodox is a different movement.

Ledbetter: Right, but does it have any kind of roots in the old fundamentalist movement?

Maston: Not very much, I do not think. I don't think so. It is true that Billy Graham's background, of course, that he went to--what was it--Bob Jones University, and Bob Jones is a fundamentalist institution. But I don't think he had much relationship to the Norris movement at all.

Now you have in the contemporary period . . . you have a neo-fundamentalism. They prefer to call themselves neo-evangelicals, which has broken to some degree with the old fundamentalism. Now your old line fundamentalists . . . Bob Jones is still in that line and John R. Rice and these fellows. But the neo-fundamentalists are folks who have far more of a place for an interest on social concern and Christian ethics and this kind of thing. Carl Henry would be in this category.

Ledbetter: Where would you put Billy Graham?

Maston: Billy Graham would be in the neo-fundamentalist group, I think. This would be my judgement, but not with the old fundamentalists. You see, the old

line fundamentalists like Bob Jones and John R. Rice and these fellows, they are extremely critical of Graham and think that he has been a traitor to the fundamentalists cause.

Ledbetter: Why is that?

Maston: Because he's . . . well, one thing is that he preaches to any group anywhere. That's one thing. Billy Graham does have some place for social concern. He has taken some leadership in the area of race, for example, and has a pretty well-balanced gospel.

Ledbetter: What would Billy Graham and his followers' position be on the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures?

Maston: I think they would agree with the fundamentalists in the main. Of course, it is true that when you use a term "verbal inspiration," folks may vary in their interpretation in what this means.

Ledbetter: How verbal?

Maston: Yes, how verbal? I've illustrated a good many times, talking with young people, kind of like this. If you can think of God in relationship to the men who wrote the Bible in terms of a professional man or a businessman and a secretary, I think it can help. Here, some men who in dictating to a secretary will dictate even

punctuation because they will not trust the secretary. Somebody else will maybe dictate and . . . oh, he'll indicate, well, it'll just be in maybe paragraphs. Here may be a man that's had a secretary a long time, and he trusts that secretary. He'll get a letter and he hands the letter to the secretary and says, "Now this is what I'd like for you to say." He turns it over to the secretary to do it. Now that last is my viewpoint concerning inspiration. I don't care what label they put on it. For my viewpoint that's a much higher conception of inspiration than the fact that God would just use a man like an inanimate thing almost and dictate exactly what he was going to say. The basic concepts, the basic principles, yes. How he said it, no. One proof of that, of course, is the fact that the writers, particularly certain writers of the New Testament, have distinctive terms, distinctive words, distinctive and different ways of expressing things, like John, Paul.

Ledbetter: Yes, but there does seem to be, then, the link between the new fundamentalism and the old fundamentalism--the verbal inspiration, the Scriptures, and the second coming.

Maston: Yes, that's correct.

Ledbetter: Those theological links would be there.

Maston: I think the main difference as I see it, from my perspective of a teacher of Christian ethics is that your neo-fundamentalists or neo-evangelicals, which is the term they prefer, have far more of a place for ethics, far more of a place for applied Christianity, for social concern.

Ledbetter: And the tactics are very different.

Maston: And the tactics are quite different. This is correct. The spirit is different.

Ledbetter: Okay, let's turn now to your specific teaching career. What courses did you teach at Southwestern?

Maston: I believe I indicated awhile ago that I taught in the School of Religious Education for about twenty years. I was uncertain when I came here whether I ought to go into the School of Religious Education or the School of Theology because I was still uncertain about what I wanted to do. I felt called by the Lord, but I wasn't real sure about what I ought to do. I did not feel like I should be a pastor. I talked to Dr. Scarborough some, and he asked me if I had my college degree. I told him I had, and he suggested I go into the School of Theology. I talked to

Dr. Price, and Dr. Price, of course, thought I should go in the School of Religious Education. I ultimately did go that route.

Now in the School of Religious Education at the time the basic degree, the M.R.E. degree, was a three-year degree. I took along with my educational work . . . I took Greek and Hebrew as electives with my work (chuckle). My wife--the one who is my wife now--we graduated from college together and came here to school. She took the M.R.E., and she took Greek, also.

But, as I told you a minute ago, before I finished my undergraduate work they asked me to teach some for Dr. Price while he was away. When he came back they asked me to go on. I started then teaching and taught right on as I did indicate previously.

When I was teaching in the School of Religious Education, the school was quite small then. We had about three or four teachers. I taught almost everything. I started a course in church recreation--first such course taught, I think, in a Southern Baptist institution. The first book I

wrote was in that field--church recreation. I taught adolescent education. I taught student work which became another major interest. I taught what we had in social work, and now they have about two men teaching in social work over there. I taught this along with everything else.

But as I believe I did indicate, I always taught what was offered in the field of Christian ethics, whatever terminology we used. Sometimes we called it social science, sometimes Christian sociology. And that was for about twenty years.

Almost from the beginning of my teaching, I had the feeling that what we offered in Christian ethics ought to be in the School of Theology--that the preacher boys were the ones that should get that. Not many of them would take it. That's why we switched it from the School of Religious Education.

About 1929 or 1930, I worked out a paper--I found it some time ago--outlining the reasons why I thought that transition should be made--that Christian ethics should be brought over in the School of Theology. I had talked at different times

with Dr. Price and talked to Scarborough. The second time that I went to Yale, 1936 and 1937, I worked it out with them before I went. We worked out an agreement about the division of the work, and I had been teaching in the School of Religious Education--about the courses that would remain in Religious Education and courses that would be transferred to the School of Theology. That was in the catalogue when I came back on 1937.

Beginning in the fall of 1937 and for about four or five years, I taught in both schools. I divided myself in the School of Religion and School of Theology. Incidentally, in the division of the work we had no problem at all except one course. There was one course that Dr. Price wanted to keep in the School of Religious Education that I thought should be taken over to the School of Theology. That was a course on the family. But he agreed and I did take it with me in the School of Theology.

After about four or five years, our student body had grown quite a little bit. For various reasons, but mainly because of that, it was felt that it would be better for me to transfer entirely to

the School of Theology and for them to get another teacher over there. So I transferred then in 1941 or something like that to the School of Theology entirely. In just a few years a second man came into the department. Now we expanded, of course, some. I offered courses in--we are going to talk about race a little later--race and family and communism, ism's in general, social teachings of the Bible, basic ethics. This kind of thing we developed in the School of Theology.

Ledbetter: But your basic emphasis in your various courses was on the application of Christianity.

Maston: This is correct. Now it is true that the basic course that we had then--and still have--is, of course, in Biblical ethics because my viewpoint is that is basic. That's foundational to everything we do. This is a book that I wrote on Biblical ethics which provides some background. They use it now as required reading. This is in a course that is required of everybody in the School of Theology because my viewpoint is that the soundest basis and the best basis to get this emphasis out into the churches is to ground it in the Scriptures.

Our folks are quite responsive, and this is one reason they like Billy Graham--because Billy Graham will hold up a Bible and say, "The Bible says . . . "

Ledbetter: I'm sure this will lead into your goals as a teacher.

Maston: Yes. Now I think I should say that we also have given some emphasis to the history of ethics, but we've always done that on a graduate level. In other words, you've got about a four-fold major emphasis that we try to give Biblical ethics--what we call basic ethics where we deal with fundamental basic principles. I've just finished a manuscript in that area. Then the applied or the social ethics and the history of Christian ethics. Those are your four major areas. Now the applied, of course, is a broad area that you can just keep on expanding. We've had courses on urban life. We've had courses on labor--organized labor--and so forth. We've had those kind of things at different times.

The major goals . . . you asked about that. I did not start out with certain conscious goals. The goals, I think, have been kind of naturally evolved. But you analyze more--at least I have been able to analyze more--as I've looked back. What was I trying to

do? Not that I was so much consciously doing it, but one thing was to influence the students. I know that I have said this many times, particularly in starting this basic course: "If you fellows are not better Christians when you get through this course than you are now, I've failed." It's not just a matter of knowing something, but it's a matter of applying something, and applying it first of all to their own lives.

Now I think, also, that I've had this as a goal, which again was not very conscious, but I have tried to stimulate students to think, to challenge them to think. Then, also, I've tried to build in them a deep conviction that the Lord wanted some things done in this area.

I do believe that a good many of the students will tell you that in the courses that we have had--and I am not just talking about myself, but others in the department and that we've had in the field of Biblical ethics--that for many of them the Bible has become a different book, a new book. They've never seen this side of the Bible. Many of them have not. I have had a good many of them say to me, "I have"

gotten more insight into the Scriptures in this course here than any Bible course that I've ever taken." Unfortunately, the Bible is taught in many different ways. But in New Testament-Old Testament theology and so forth there's not as much emphasis as there should be, I think, on the ethical content of the Bible, what the Bible has to say concerning these everyday problems and everyday relationships. I used to tell my colleagues in Old Testament and New Testament, "Now if you fellows would teach the Bible like I think it ought to be taught, there wouldn't be any place for us." (chuckle)

Ledbetter: (chuckle) Who are some of the people who studied with you in your courses?

Maston: Well, when I retired here, they gave me a little recognition type of service. There had been fifty men who had majored in Christian ethics in graduate work. This is just the Th.D men--doctors. Among these are fellows that head up our work among Southern Baptists in this whole area; Foy Valentine, who heads the Christian Life Commission at Nashville; James Dunn, who heads the Christian Life Commission here in Texas; Jimmy Allen, who used to be head of the

Christian Life Commission here in Texas and the pastor at the First Church of San Antonio.

I'd better not try to name them, but about seven or eight are on the foreign mission field. All of them are teaching Christian ethics in a seminary on the foreign field--at least seven or eight fellows. We've got about fourteen or fifteen in pastorates in addition to Jimmy Allen. There's Joe Trull down at Austin and Wayne Barnes over in Louisiana and Bill Sherman over in Nashville who came from here, Fort Worth. They're scattered around everywhere, including one or two who have become Presbyterians.

Then we have about that same number who are teaching: Dr. Scudder, who came into the department with me and is now the senior member of the department here; John Howell, who teaches up at Midwestern Seminary in the field of ethics. We had one woman who majored in Christian ethics while I was teaching. She teaches at Mercer. Marguerite Woodruff teaches sociology over there.

We have a couple of fellows who have been on the mission field who are back now. One of them teaches at Hardin-Simmons, Julian Bridges. His wife has had

some health problems, and he's teaching in sociology out there. Thurman Bryant is up at William Jewell.

He was a missionary in Brazil for awhile.

Ledbetter: The degree that students would get working with you would be a sociological . . .

Maston: A Th.D. Yes, this is right--a Th.D.

Ledbetter: With a sociological emphasis.

Maston: Well, quite a bit. It depends. See, we let a fellow have some freedom, but in his major work he would take . . . it wouldn't be sociology. It would be history of Christian ethics, contemporary Christian ethics, Biblical ethics, contemporary issues or problems, and so forth. Now the last one would be the nearest thing to sociology. Now we do have . . . in addition to those, I should say we've got a whole bunch of folks that have had Th.M's--masters degree in theology. There are a number of others who have minored in this field: Arthur Rutledge, is director of our Home Mission Board. I had a letter from him just the other day in expression of appreciation for the work that he had. There is Frank Means, who has charge of all the mission work in Latin America. There are pastors like Charles Troutham at the First Church in Washington who have

taken minors. I felt about as close to them. These fellows that majored in ethics during the years that I was teaching, I used to call them my boys, but I don't call them that anymore. They've gotten a little too mature for that (chuckle). And then, of course, there were a good many graduates who never did do graduate work. I hesitate to mention any names because I'm leaving out a bunch of folks, you see, who have been quite prominent.

Ledbetter: This department's really been an influence on the Southern Baptist denomination.

Maston: Well, at least some folks say so. I think so. Now we have about five or six here on our faculty in addition to Pinson and Scudder. Pinson did undergraduate work under me. He did his graduate work after I finished. Larry Baker did his undergraduate work, and he's teaching in the department. C. W. Brister, who is in the pastoral ministry department, he's an ethics major. We have one or two at the Foreign Mission Board at Richmond. We had one up there that passed away a few years ago. Roger Smith is an ethics major that's there. We have Tom Logue who is in charge of student work up in Arkansas. He's an ethics major. We have

them scattered around. These are just the men that majored in ethics.

Ledbetter: So these are the people who are, as you said earlier, trying to reawaken social concern?

Maston: Well, yes, and they have provided quite a little bit of leadership. I think there are several reasons for that. One thing is our emphasis on the Bible itself. Now this is what I believe. I believe that this has built a certainty, a strength, a stability, in these men so that they're willing to face opposition if need be and go on to do what they're persuaded the Lord wants them to do because they have seen it here in the Scriptures itself. Now I think this is one of the factors. I think it is.

Lee Porter is with Christian Life Commission in Nashville. He's another one of our ethics fellows. Even the superintendent of evangelism in Oklahoma who heads the evangelism department in Oklahoma now is an ethics major.

Ledbetter: Dr. Maston, what have your priorities been in your teaching career, and what do you feel your strongest influences have been?

Maston: I've said many times that my order of priorities is first teaching. I think teachers--and I am thinking

particularly of teachers in the Theological Seminary-- need to be good classroom men. That, I think, is the most important thing. I do not think any teacher should neglect the work that he tries to do in the classroom which, among other things, means that he should always go with something that's fresh. I've taught the same things over and over again, of course, as every teacher does, but I tried to make it a practice through the years never to go into the classroom without at least having an opportunity to look over the notes, brush them up a little bit, freshen them up a little bit, and so forth.

The second order, I think, for a teacher in a theological seminary at least--and I'm inclined to believe this for a college and a university, also--is writing, because the writing can be related and usually is rather closely related to what he does in the classroom. Many times--and I think most times--the writing helps to be a better teacher, a more vibrant type of teacher, a more . . . his teaching tends to be more relevant.

Then by teaching at a theological seminary there are many demands for teachers to speak, and I think of that as being the third of the priorities.

Now I haven't mentioned anything other than that which is directly related to one's work as a teacher because I think of the first priority as being a man's family, and then also his church. My life has revolved around these three institutions, and they're within a block of one another. I live within a block of the campus, and I'm within a block of my church. My life has been centered in these three. More in the church now than when I was teaching full time.

Ledbetter: What do you consider to have been your strongest influences as a teacher at Southwestern?

Maston: Well, I hope, at least, the classroom--the classroom methods and techniques, my relation to students. I think if you talk with former students, you will find that I do have a good relationship to students. I used largely an informal type of approach to students, very little formality in the classroom or elsewhere. I can honestly say that I love young people, still love young people. If all there'd been to teaching was just teaching in the classroom, I would have taught a few years longer than I did. I retired at the minimum retirement age, but that's not all there's to teaching.

There's papers to grade, and there are faculty meetings and committee meetings and this kind of thing. But from the student viewpoint, I would have gone for awhile. That's part of it.

I also think of the writing that I've done as being a major channel of influence, particularly the broader influence with the denomination and I would hope to some degree with Christians in general.

In other words, whatever influence I've had I think has been in the classroom and through those who have studied with me and who have gone out from the classroom. Then through the writing I've done, I would say thirdly through the speaking that I've done, and lecturing. But I think of my writing as being more important than any of the speaking and lecturing that I've done personally outside of the classroom.

Ledbetter: The next topic I'd like to turn to . . .

Maston: Would you let me say this? I think it might be interesting to know the type of writing that I've tried to do because I'm a member of a denomination that's considered rather backward, has been considered rather

backward at least. I have been interested in trying to communicate with Southern Baptists, not just the Southern Baptists but particularly to them, which means that I have been interested in doing a simple type of writing--Sunday School lessons, Training Union programs, these kind of things. Even in the writing of books I've tried to write two types of books. One is for the masses of our folks. I've done this is writing some books for the young people, for example, on Right or Wrong and God's Will and Your Life, which are relatively simple. I have a study course book or two that I have written. I have also been interested in trying to do some writing which is much more difficult to do, that would be at least respected by scholars, although I have not written for scholars. I had a man recently--his name's Gustafson--that teaches at the University of Chicago and succeeded Niebuhr at Yale, and he read a manuscript of mine that will be out this fall in book form, and it is very discerning reading that he did--an appraisal that he gave them. One of the things he said was that it was not something written for scholars, although it is a little more technical than I usually write.

Ledbetter: I should think that would be a difficult kind of writing--to do something scholarly respectable and yet understandable.

Maston: Well, I would hope so (chuckle). I would hope it can be done, although it is difficult to do right.

Ledbetter: The next topic I want to turn to is one that's really hardly fair to ask you to discuss in a brief interview since it's something you've spent your whole life on. That's your concept of Christian ethics. You've done a good deal of writing and teaching in this area. I'd like for you to try to explain to us your concept of Christian ethics, especially the Biblical basis.

Maston: Well, part of it, I think, we have maybe touched on, that the basic concepts of Christian ethics evolve from--at least this is my viewpoint--the divine revelation as we have it recorded in the Scriptures. These basic concepts that provide so much of the foundation for Christian ethics are found all the way through. In other words, you find it in the law and in the prophets and the writings. That's the three-fold division that the Jews made of their scriptures. But particularly you find it in the prophets, and in a special way

in the great 8th century (B.C.) prophets--those creative men like Amos and Hosea and Micah and Isaiah. Now I do not mean that exclusively here, but more so here. I think it is more central there than anywhere else. Then in the life and the teachings of Jesus--sermon on the mountain and many, many other things that he taught. So your basic concepts come from the Biblical revelation that we have. Also in Paul's epistles you find a great deal, and in 1st John and James and so forth there is a great deal of content material. Now this is a little bit on the source.

I think of Christian ethics as being a very broad field. We are primarily interested in the application of the Christian spirit and Christian teachings to everyday relationships, but because of the fact that we believe that the foundation of what we do--and the basic concepts are found in the Scriptures--it requires at least a reasonable acquaintance with Old Testament and New Testament. So we encourage a good many of our fellows in doing graduate work to take a minor, for example, in Old Testament or New Testament. But it also requires a good acquaintance with theology and with philosophy, and for the

application to social sciences--sociology and so forth--and even church history.

So it's a very broad area. That's one of the reasons why I liked it, and I would rather teach in the field of Christian ethics than any other. I think my next choice would have been in New Testament because I do like to work in the field of New Testament.

In other words, you have an emphasis here on basic concepts. This is your basic ethic. It is grounded primarily in what we find in the Scriptures primarily and what you find as theology interprets the Scriptures.

But we are interested not just in these basic concepts. We are interested in the application of these concepts, and this is what sometimes is called Christian social ethic in contrast to basic Christian ethic. I recently reviewed a book written by an Englishman where their emphasis was on basic ethics. They're not concerned over there so much with the application. But we've tried to keep these two in balance. At least, I think they need to be kept in balance between the theoretical and the practical,

between the basic and the everyday relationships of life.

Ledbetter: Do you think this is the key or the essence to your reconciliation of conservative or orthodox theology with modern application?

Maston: Yes, yes, yes, I do. I think so. I think that's right. This book of Robinson's that I'm talking about from England, I just reviewed it for "Church and State", a publication down at Baylor. Robinson's definition of Christian ethics is that it is a normative science within theology. Now the part of that I would disagree with . . . I do not think of it as being within theology. I think of it being more independent than that definition would indicate. I think of theology as providing the foundation. Christian ethics is the superstructure. The foundation is absolutely essential for the superstructure, but it cannot be equated with the superstructure. I think of both of them as essential for what I would term the Christian life as the building. Here is your foundation and here is your superstructure.

Ledbetter: But it's built on the base of theology.

Maston: Built on it. That's right.

Ledbetter: What is your concept of the nature of man? How does this apply to Christian ethics?

Maston: Well, I think it is rather simple. My viewpoint is that outside of the doctrine of God there is no basic doctrine that is more foundational for Christian ethics than one's doctrine of man. I say doctrine of man--there are some that do not think there is such a thing. There was an Englishman that wrote a book a number of years ago on The Christian Estimate of Man. There's an estimate but not a doctrine.

I do think that you have a particular perspective of man that you find here, which is very important. I think the basic thing is the fact that man is created in the image of God. Incidentally, I have a chapter in one of my books on Christianity and World Issues on "Christianity and the Individual" in which I outline pretty much my viewpoint concerning the nature of man. But it also crops out, as you would expect, in books that I've written on race and elsewhere, that I think of this as being the basic thing. Now there are different definitions of what is meant by this, when it says that man is created in the image of God. I think of it as being primary to this--that

God is a person which is assumed in the Scriptures.

Man is created a person.

What's the distinctive thing about a person? A person can think and he can feel and so forth. But he also has a sense of being a person. He has a sense of not only a personal being but also of other beings. He has a consciousness of others. I think of the basic thing though, the thing that is tremendously important from my viewpoint, is the fact that there's no person without other persons. In other words, a person is created for communication. This is the thing that I think of as basic here, when it says that man is created in the image of God--he is created a person. He's created for communication--communication with God on the highest level--communication with his fellow man, and so forth. Now this is the thing to me that makes man of no real value--man as such--because this is true not just no one man. This is true of all men created in the image of God.

I think closely akin to that as a part of my viewpoint concerning the value of man is the fact that Christ died to restore that image. That image was not totally destroyed by sin. That image was marred by

sin, but there's enough of that image left there for contact as I see it. Right? An antenna of the soul, somebody suggested. A contact for the gospel. Christ gave his life to restore that image. It's expressed in various ways. But a rather interesting paradox is that when we come into fellowship with him, this image is restored but not completely restored. In other words, it's a lifetime. It will not be completely restored until the end of life's journey when we awake in his likeness.

But again, this is for all men. In other words, Christ died not just for me and not just for you and not just for the white man, not just for yellow man, black man, but for all men. This puts all of us on the same level. Everything that makes man distinctly a man belongs to all men. Now this is where I think your equality and inequality comes in. There's difference of functions. There's difference in capacity--different abilities and so forth--but we're all equally men in the presence of God.

Ledbetter: Very good. Tell us something about your efforts to apply these Christian ethics to everyday problems. That's been your emphasis throughout this interview anyway, These things are not just theoretical.

Maston: Well, in every area, yes. In every area it applies in the family. It applies to this whole area of the woman's lib movement and so forth. As I see it, in a contemporary period. In other words, we're all equal in Christ whether male or female. This is the way Paul expresses it in the Galatian letter. But it's true in relation of husband and wife.

Old Immanuel Kant made a statement back years ago, of course, that I've never forgotten. When I first read it, it impressed me very much. Immanuel Kant said that we should never treat any man as a mere means--now these are not exactly his words--but as an end of infinite value. Now Kant, I do not think, based it necessarily on the Scripture, but this is a concept that I think would carry over. Man created in the image of God means that he should never be used to achieve some other end. Incidentally, I think even preachers sometimes, and teachers, have to watch or they'll use people.

Ledbetter: Do you think possibly there's too little of the real application of these doctrines?

Maston: Yes. And we mentioned about the home. The same thing is true, of course, of the relation of parents to

children. A child is of infinite value. He is created in the image of God. We should treat him like that.

Ledbetter: And as a human being.

Maston: And as a human being, right.

Ledbetter: Very good. Probably one of the most significant applications . . . well, let's see, first of all tell us something about some of your writings on Christian ethics or some of the works you've done.

Maston: Do you want books or do you want others? I don't know how much to get in in detail because I've done a great deal of writing. I never will forget when I told my wife one time that one of the things that I would like to do would be to have a writing ministry. That is when I was first starting out teaching. I didn't know that I was going to get so involved in it. That bottom shelf is stuff that I've written. Those are Sunday School lessons, Training Union programs, articles of various and sundry kinds. I've just recently gathered together the books that I've written. Those are the books that I've written. There are some with the translations of some of them, too. But that will show you that there's an awful

lot of that stuff (chuckle). Of course, a good many of those are Sunday School lessons for a whole quarter or on occasion for a whole year.

Ledbetter: What do you consider your most significant book?

Maston: Well, it depends whether you're thinking in terms of major books or thinking in terms of books that have been read most widely. This is one, Right or Wrong, which is a book written for young people. It has been recently revised by Bill Pinson, who is a graduate of your institution, incidentally, up there. He's a North Texas graduate. Bill came on the faculty when I left, and we have recently revised this. Now this was a book that grew out of conferences that I had conducted for young people because I've had a major interest in young people. That has been a major . . . I judge it has sold more copies possibly than any other, unless it would be that one (gesture) which was also written for young people.

Ledbetter: God's Will and Your Life?

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: This other one is Right or Wrong, and your latest is The Christian Life.

Maston: Now this is a book that's had wide distribution primarily because the women--the WMU folks--adopted this and use it. They had a paperback edition of it published.

Ledbetter: This is The Bible in Race.

Maston: Yes. And they had 50,000 copies of this put out.

Ledbetter: It was used in Sunday Schools?

Maston: No, ~~WMU~~. Now these are the books that sell. You know that. But here is the first major book that I did. Christianity and World Issues, which was published in 1957 by Macmillan, and I judge that on a viewpoint of recognition, if one thinks in terms of that, in the more or less scholarly community this is the one that did more for me and for the institution because this was adopted by the Pulpit Book Club. They took 6,000 copies of it when it came out. The rather interesting thing is that Macmillan has kept it in print. It doesn't sell much now, of course--it's 1957. But I got a report the other day, and they still give me a report each year. This one on Biblical Ethics is another one of the major books. Now there are a good many others, but I think that shows you the two types of books.

Now the Right or Wrong book has been translated into Portuguese and Spanish and Arabic and Chinese.

Ledbetter: That one's had a fairly wide circulation then, hasn't it?

Maston: Yes, ma'am, it has. The first book I wrote was in the field of recreation. I think I told you that. It was translated into Spanish--Handbook for Church Recreation Leaders. Then the second book that I wrote--we'll get on to that, I'm sure, when we get to race--was 0 + One. Then I wrote a study course book, and it was translated into Arabic. Incidentally, this book on the Will of God is the only book that I've had that was translated into a modern European language. It was translated into German and also Arabic. Now this Biblical Ethics is supposed to be translated into Chinese and into Portuguese, but I haven't heard a report recently.

Ledbetter: Probably one of the most significant applications of your writings on Christian ethics is in the realm of race relations. Would you explain the Biblical basis of your stand on race relations?

Maston: Well, I think you would see most of it from our discussions of the nature of man. This is not all of it,

but this is part of it. The fact that man is created in the image of God is just as true of a black man or yellow man as it is a white man. This is part of it. Also, you have a good many other things, and very important from my viewpoint is the fact that God is no respecter of persons, which is an emphasis found in Old Testament and New Testament, both. All are on equality before God. We find this very plainly stated, of course, by Peter in the house of Cornelius. But as I suggested, it is all the way through Old Testament and New Testament as well. Jesus demonstrated it in his own life. He demonstrated it in many ways, but I think of it particularly in his relationship to the Samaritans. You remember his conversation with a woman at the well--Samaritan woman at the well--in which she made the statement, it is made at least, that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, but Jesus did. He crossed over this barrier.

Ledbetter: Over the racial barrier.

Maston: Yes, racial barrier and sexual barrier and moral barrier, as well, to reach her. So this is demonstrated over and over again.

Ledbetter: How have others used the Bible to justify just the opposite?

Maston: They . . . well, it's kind of a proof-text method, of course. Maybe they can accuse me of using a proof-text method. I think of the method that we've used the Bible as being proof-text to some degree, but it's also the general spirit of the Bible itself. Now what they have done has in the main at least misinterpreted certain things in the Old Testament particularly, but also some in the New Testament.

You take the separation of the Jews, which was not racial at all if you'll study it just a little bit. It's not racial at all--it's religious. If you wanted to base your position on the Old Testament to justify maybe a separation of Englishmen from Germans but not a white from a black because it was more national than it was racial. It was not colored. You take the experience of the curse of Cain, you know, that's used a great deal by some. Well, Cain wasn't the one that did it, you know. He wasn't the one that uncovered his father, Ham did. And the Canaanites were not black. They were white!

Ledbetter: (chuckle) The assumption is that if he were cursed, he was also black.

Maston: But they were not black. They were white.

Ledbetter: I wonder where this misconception came from. Do you have any ideas?

Maston: Well, I don't know where it came from, but it was used back in slave days, you see, and is used by some yet to try to prove that the black man's supposed to be inferior, that he's supposed to be a servant.

Ledbetter: And cursed by God.

Maston: Yes, and cursed by God and turned black (chuckle).

Ledbetter: How do you explain your approach? It seems rather unusual for a person with a strong Southern Baptist background and southern background in general to take the position you have on race relations. How do you explain your concern?

Maston: I'm not real sure. I'm not real sure of all the reasons for it. Now I possibly ought to say that I got my grade school education, as I told you, in the North.

Ledbetter: Right, I remember that.

Maston: A small town. We had one, maybe two families of blacks or Negroes, as we called them then. I went to school with them, so I had that kind of background. But the very fact--I think this had something to do with it--that I came from an extremely poor family . . . my father and his people never had any slaves. You see,

they were not that affluent. The same thing is on my mother's side. I think this had a little bit to do with it. I guess you know that the eastern part of Tennessee was anti-slavery.

Ledbetter: Right.

Maston: Both of my grandfathers went up the mountains and joined the Union Army and fought on the Union side. I don't know that this had a thing in the world to do with it, but my experiences with the colored people or the Negro people . . . all of my experiences have been favorable. I've worked with them and so forth. That's part of it, but I think a lot of it-- I hope at least a lot of it--is grounded on what I found in the Scriptures.

Ledbetter: Also, there was a rather common assumption in southern history that the lower class are the most racist.

Maston: Yes, yes.

Ledbetter: Did you find that to be true in your experiences?

Maston: Well, in many areas, yes, this is true. In other words, it is because of the economic factor.

Ledbetter: You did not find that attitude in your family?

Maston: Did not find that attitude in our family. Now my mother . . . I remember there was a period of time

when my mother was not well. When we were sharecroppers, she was not well. We had a Negro woman who came to help some. The thing that impressed me was that my mother had her sit down at the table and eat with her. Now I don't think she ever invited her to eat with the rest of the family, but the two of them ate together. I remember this very vividly as a teenager at this certain . . .

Ledbetter: Was that in Tennessee?

Maston: Yes, this was in Tennessee?

Ledbetter: I see. What was the Southern Baptist position on the race question when you first began your work with them in the 1920's?

Maston: Well, it was very strong, I guess--the position that I took.

Ledbetter: In the 1920's?

Maston: Yes. I think you might be interested. By asking this you force me, or have led me at least, to go back and review a little bit. So I went back through my folders. I keep folders on stuff that I write quite a bit. I have articles that I've written. I'll keep a copy of the article and the reaction that I get to it. I have those in folders. So I went back and went through some of this stuff just looking it up. The first thing that

I find that I ever wrote on race was in 1927. It was entitled, "Racial Revelations." The WMU later published that in a little pamphlet. Una Roberts Lawrence was with the WMU, and she and I had become pretty good friends. That was about a meeting here in Fort Worth. A Negro had invited me to a meeting here in Fort Worth to try to get some conditions improved for Negroes--housing, streets, little more recognition in the papers of the good things that they did instead of all the bad things they did and so forth. I wrote that in the form of an article for the state denominational papers, and the WMU people picked it up. That was in 1927.

Ledbetter: How was that received among Southern Baptists (chuckle)?

Maston: Well, I do not remember anything unfavorable particularly about it.

And I was asked to write a series of Sunday School lessons--what we called graded lessons for sixteen-year-olds. I think I mentioned that in connection with the depression period when I was paid about \$1,200 for writing for a whole year--fifty-two lessons for the pupils and fifty-two lessons for the teacher. Now I think you'd be interested to know

that this was about 1932 or 1933. One quarter was on the Bible, and one quarter was on the young Christian and social problems. One of the lessons was the Christian attitude toward other races. That was in '32 or '33. I don't know whether Vance Kirkpatrick mentions this or not, but I remember when he looked it over. He came in here one time, and he held that up and says, "There it all is. Right there in 1932 and 1933."

Ledbetter: (chuckle) 1932. That's really early for such a stand, isn't it?

Maston: He wasn't just referring to race. He was referring to the general areas that I had worked in. Also, I think you might be interested to know that I did a great deal of other writing in the area of race. I've got them lined up here somewhere. Let me just mention it if you're interested.

Ledbetter: Sure, that's what I want.

Maston: In 1932 again I wrote a series of what we call training union programs. One a month--the entire series on social teachings of the Bible. One of these was on race relations. I used James 2:1-9. That's in 1932. Then another series that I wrote over a long period of

time--1934-1942--in 1941 working for Christian race relations. In 1943 I turned through some lessons that I wrote for young people. One of those was on crossing racial lines--Christianity crossing racial lines. There are others all along through there, but practically always in any kind of series there'd be at least one in this area of race.

I think I mentioned a minute ago that this second book that I wrote was of one which is on race. That was published in 1946 by the Home Mission Board. Now that one I got a great deal of reaction to that. Some of it was very favorable, but also some was very unfavorable.

Ledbetter: From the Southern Baptists?

Maston: Yes, from the Southern Baptists. You might be interested to know that I've made it a policy through the years of replying to everyone who identifies himself as Southern Baptist. I didn't reply to all of the crank letters because I got an awful lot of crank letters sometimes. But every Southern Baptist somehow . . . I practically always said to them that as Southern Baptists or Baptists you have a right to disagree with me just as I have a right to disagree

with you. So that is 1946 that I did that. I just kind of happened into that. You might be interested to know that this interest in race was due to the fact that I just had the feeling that this was a major problem we had at that time.

Ledbetter: Going back to the 1920's even?

Maston: Yes, back to the 1920's.

Ledbetter: The Baptist denomination begins to change--at least the denominational leaders do--somewhere along in here, don't they? There begins to be more interest in that problem.

Maston: Yes. I think you have in mind to ask me something about the opposition and so forth. Well, one of the very interesting things and encouraging things was that the opposition I ran into did not come in the main from leaders. It came from rank-and-file.

Ledbetter: Right, in the rank-and-file of Baptists.

Maston: Yes, yes, but not much from the leaders. Now there's one or two exceptions to that, but not very much. I had this correspondence with E. P. Allred which I had mentioned that I wish I had very much--I don't even have the date on it--but I wrote and protested something that he had put in a publication.

Ledbetter: What was that?

Maston: It was on the race question. He edited at the time . . . I don't remember what they called it, but it was a magazine that the Sunday School Board put out. It had some attitudes on race that I just didn't think were right at all.

Ledbetter: You said some other leaders opposed your position. Who else opposed it?

Maston: Well, there is . . . this comes a good ways over . . . just not too long ago. I wrote about 1955, I think it was. I read a paper to the advisory council on Southern Baptist work with Negroes on integration in which I mostly reviewed the background for the decision of the Supreme Court and so forth in '54. Some of the folks got hold of that and protested--I have a file on that--particularly a church over in Louisiana where the deacons protested. The Christian Life Commission had put it out in pamphlet form, little booklet form. The pastor and I exchanged a letter or two. Then the editor of the Louisiana paper at that time printed the statement from the church and wrote an editorial siding with them. Then I asked for the privilege of replying, in which one of the main things that I said that I

thought that anybody who was going to criticize ought to read it (chuckle). But that's the only time I believe that any editor, so far as I know, has in the editorial page opposed anything.

Ledbetter: But the views were opposed considerably by . . .

Maston: Rank-and-file, yes. I've got some files here that I just pulled out because I thought you might be interested in it. This is particularly true when the secular press picks up a report on anything that you've done.

Ledbetter: Then you start to get letters from the people.

Maston: Yes, and it's not restricted to Baptists, you see? You get a lot of them. There were two occasions. I was chairman of the Christian Life Commission . . . I mean of the advisory council of Southern Baptist work with Negroes for three or four years. The council asked me to speak at the Southern Baptist Convention and asked the program committee to give some time and really to speak on the Southern Baptist and the Negro. It was a meeting in St. Louis. They asked for thirty minutes and got ten minutes but really I only had about eight minutes. I had it written, of course, and read it. The secular papers picked that up. That was in 1956. I got a lot of mail from that.

Ledbetter: What was the nature of this kind of mail?

Maston: Well, I'd hesitate to read some of it (chuckle). I don't know, but this is a folder that I got on that. This is another one that I'll tell you about. This is an anonymous card. Would you like me to read it?

Ledbetter: Okay.

Maston: I'm inclined to believe that this one came from somebody that was a former student: "Maston, how much are the Negroes of the country paying you to use your influence to force one race on another race? If you have any sense at all, you know there is as much difference in the personality of the Negro and the white race as there is in daylight and dark. They mix like water and oil. Apparently, with all of your learning you still don't know a thing. Some people are like that. The more they know, the less they know how to apply it to circumstances. If I were you, I'd shut my mouth. If you want to live with Negroes, go live with them, but don't try to make other people do it. Get out of that seminary and get in some Negro school and take your family and move to a Negro section and integrate, and let's see what you have to say. Go on, let's see you do it. You're nothing but a trouble-maker."

Ledbetter: (chuckle) That's pretty strong language.

Maston: Yes, but that's kind of mild to some of them (chuckle).
Oh, yes, I've got a bunch of them that call me a communist and everything else.

Ledbetter: That's what I was going to ask you, if you were called a communist.

Maston: Oh, yes. Oh, my, yes. I wished I could turn right to one, but . . . yes, I was accused of being a communist. One or two fellows I carried on quite a correspondence with.

Ledbetter: This seems to be quite a prevalent thing. It seems to me . . . we talked earlier about the fundamentalist movement and that a lot of the people who earlier were attacking the modernist and the social gospeler now became very concerned about the communist and the socialist.

Maston: Here's a very brief one: "Birds of a feather flock together. Animals also do under force by mere man to interbreed. I presume by your talk that you are for intermarriage. I'm a Baptist, but I'm a Dr. Criswell-type."

Ledbetter: What about him? Did you get a great deal of criticism from him?

Maston: No, no. We didn't agree back then, but he changed his position or viewpoint. Well, now this other one . . .

this one here is a _____. I think you may be more interested in this because that's a file of letters that I got after speaking at Dallas to the pastors over there on the subject of "A Pastor in a Community Facing Desegregation," that is, integrated. There is the article as it appeared in the Baptist Standard.

Ledbetter: Oh (laughter) _____.

Maston: That would stir up a lot of prejudice right there, wouldn't it?

Ledbetter: Right. What was this in?

Maston: That's the Baptist Standard.

Ledbetter: In the Baptist Standard. Well, did they do that intentionally?

Maston: I don't know. I don't know whether I should take time to do this or not. Yes, here's one along the lines you're talking about: "So you are another preacher communist and like other pastors who say they are called to preach. I am a member of one of the largest churches in Dallas. I am a Baptist missionary in _____, and I am so tired of hearing the scripture repeated 'God created man in his own image'. So what? I am not against the Negro. One person knows as much about what the

Bible has to say about the races as the other. You know what Genesis 9 has to say in regard to Ham. 'And Noah's father said cursed be Canaan . . . and a servant of servants shall he be to his bretheren.' Preachers are so soft and gullible and find scriptures to try to prove their point. Acts 17:16 says that God made all races different, separated them, set bounds of their habitation. What right has clay to question the work of the potter?" He quotes scripture all the way through here.

Ledbetter: Did you reply to this letter?

Maston: I'm sure that I didn't because he didn't identify himself. I always do if they identify themselves as Baptists. If I did not reply to this, I replied to one like this written to preachers, and it's very nice to be able to say that I'm not a preacher.

Ledbetter: (Laughter)

Maston: He ends up by saying that if our preachers do more praying for better sermons, be more reverent, they would profit by it: "Dr. Maston, you have told us what you think. Now I think we as readers, as Christians, should have the same privilege to give our own opinion, too. No one will ever make me

believe God intended to mix the races. What did God tell the Israelites when they entered the Promised Land--what not to do--remember? They did just what he told them not to do. What happened? Of course, you could tell me of a different meaning. The Bible is the same today. I think I know what it all means, too. Just pray for their souls. I hope . . . " I don't know what this says down here.

Ledbetter: (Chuckle) That's very interesting correspondence.

Maston: Yes, quite interesting, and if you get to feeling too big, just read some of it. It'll kind of tone you down (chuckle). Some of it, though, is . . . I have one here from a fellow who identified himself as a Baptist. Here's one that starts out: "Dear Coon-lusting, so-called Preacher: I feel that you're trying to mongrelize our people in the name and under the guise of Christianity . . . " Yes, I was told where to go many times: "How much do you get paid from the NAACP or the Communists? God made white and black so it will never work. A real Baptist won't urge such things," and so forth. "Who gets money? They will do anything. If you get money you'll do anything."

Here's a card from somebody here in Fort Worth: "After reading your article in Tuesday's Star Telegram, it sounded like a Communist brain-washing for the Dallas people. How stupid can one get?"

Ledbetter: How do you explain the connection of communism with . . .

Maston: Well, don't you remember that that was the line that they were all following then? That's the communist effort to undermine the strength of the American people (sarcasm).

Here's another one of these anonymous ones: "I never considered you a teacher. Good Christians come, and then some of the better ones lose out. Crackpots are still teaching, the blind lead the blind. God deliver us from inferiority. Who is the bastard that will force me to associate with cannibals and hybrid bastards?" That one's unsigned.

Ledbetter: (shocked laughter) Weren't you ever very concerned about that kind?

Maston: It doesn't bother me except from Baptists.

Ledbetter: Except from Baptists?

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Do you feel that they shouldn't feel that way?

Maston: Well, it bothers me a little bit.

Ledbetter: Did you ever fear for your position?

Maston: Contrary to what a lot of folks would think, I am not calloused. I am very sensitive. Most of these things I never shared with my wife because it bothers her too much. So I just keep them to myself.

Ledbetter: Were you ever concerned about your position here at the seminary because of that?

Maston: No, never. No, that's one nice thing about it. I didn't have to worry about them firing me. But I got others that balanced the things out, you see. Now these are all such letters back here. Here's one for example from somebody at the Incarnate Word College, a Catholic down in San Antonio: "I would like to commend you for your statement on integration. I am a Catholic and am very happy to see that you are urging your pastors to support integration. After all, souls are spiritual and God certainly isn't going to ask what race one belongs to on Judgement Day. I wish you would exert some pressure . . . "

He calls the name of a pastor. I'd better not. That's the one thing I don't like to get into too much, as you might know. And from businessmen . . . there's one from an insurance man, and from pastors and others.

Ledbetter: Was the reception among Baptist pastors fairly favorable?

Maston: Yes. Fairly favorable, I should say. These are some of the clippings. You might be interested to know that the Dallas Morning News ran a pretty good editorial on it. They did. They ran an editorial on it in addition to running a report. I was asked if I wanted to speak in that particular subject.

Ledbetter: You mentioned earlier your work with the Christian Life Commission of Texas and of the Southern Baptist Convention. Would you tell us something about how that commission came about being?

Maston: The Christian Life Commission of Texas came into being about 1951.

Ledbetter: What was its basic purpose?

Maston: Would you mind if I dropped back just a minute?

Ledbetter: Oh, no, not at all.

Maston: This church from Louisiana that took me to pieces on the pamphlet on integration, that is the pamphlet there. They wrote to the . . .

Ledbetter: There's "nuts" written under it (laughter).

Maston: Oh, yes, that's what they sent to me. That's right. Then the editor had something to say about it. This is what the editor had to say . . . I had some correspondence with the pastor over there. Our son Eugene was in Louisiana at the time. He was a student director at McNeese College. He sent me some clippings of protest. Here is the editorial in the state denominational paper: "A protest by the Board of Deacons of the First Church at Mansfield to the Christian Life Commission against a publication of a pamphlet entitled 'Integration' by Dr. T. B. Maston is timely. When some of our leaders give expression to matters that are so far removed from the thinking of the great majority of our people, it's time to call a halt. The protest deplores a positive stand taken on this pamphlet favoring integration with racists which does not represent the views of the majority of the members of our Southern Baptist churches. We wonder if these brethren who are saying so many things favorable to

integration mean what they mean. We wonder. Do they propose to bring Southern Baptists into the integration camp? If that is their purpose, they had better find greener fields for their propaganda. Christian Life Commission has perhaps created more discord than peace. The pamphlet 'Integration is a Child after the Commission's Heart.' It would be the wise thing for the Southern Baptist Convention to drop the Christian Life Commission, an agency that keeps us constantly uneasy as to what its next utterance will be. It does more harm than good. This protest expresses a feeling of a preponderant majority of Southern Baptists. What it says concerning the pamphlet, 'Integration,' is that this is a very serious matter and has disturbed many of our best members. We cannot impress upon you too forcibly the urgency of correcting this practice. We are afraid this practice will not be corrected until the Christian Life Commission is discarded by the Convention." That's the editor. Now that's the strongest thing from anybody in any place of leadership that I've ever had.

Ledbetter: Do you think he was right in stating that your stand was contrary to the majority of Southern Baptists?

Maston: Yes, this is what he was saying.

Ledbetter: Do you think that's an accurate . . .

Maston: Sure. It was at the time. After all, are we going to just advocate what we think the majority wants?

Ledbetter: That's the question I was coming to.

Maston: I don't think so.

Ledbetter: Do you think the leaders of the denomination . . .

Maston: Leaders are supposed to lead. They're supposed to lead. And the thing I've said in class a good many times is that I do not think in a classroom I'd be doing what I ought to do unless there was some tension between what I was teaching there in the classroom and what some of the students believed. I do not think the preacher does what he ought to do in the pulpit unless there's some tension between what he preaches and what the folks out there believe. In other words, there's no progress without some tension. I certainly do not think that we ought to listen to the multitude and decide on the basis of majority opinion. I think that applies politically as well as religiously.

Ledbetter: Very good. So you think it's your role and the role of people in leading positions to try and change.

- Maston: To do some leading, yes. Try to change where we think they need to be changed. I'm sorry if I got you off there.
- Ledbetter: No, that's very interesting. I'd like to look at those.
- Maston: Okay, you may do so.
- Ledbetter: Okay, now tell us about the formation of the Christian Life Commission and what its purpose was.
- Maston: Let's go back a little bit. I had the idea a good many years ago of trying to provide what I'd call a Christian Life Conference here on the campus. I talked to Dr. S. A. Newman, who was a colleague of mine. I talked to Dr. Head, who was president at that time. They encouraged me and then I got in correspondence with about four or five men--Dr. J. Howard Williams, who was executive secretary of the state convention at that time; Dr. W. R. White, president of Baylor; and about three or four others--trying to work out a time when some of us could get together. These were men that I considered to have this balance that I was talking about between a social liberalism and a basic conservative theology, and I hoped to work out some kind of conference where we could deal with these kind of problems.

Dr. Williams and Dr. White both replied and were willing to enter into that kind of thing. But in the meantime, Dr. Williams had a severe heart attack--I believe about the next year--he expressed concern. He had listened to the Convention and was favorably impressed with a lot of the things done at the Convention. But he was distressed at one point. There was not very much that was offered to help our people with the problems that they faced every day--something like that. He and I corresponded some, and he corresponded with others as well.

The state Convention met at El Paso. I was asked to go out there to speak, to bring an address on some aspects of the family. I remember that. But Dr. Williams, I know, was responsible for it. A committee was appointed, a committee of three, to investigate or inquire into the possibility of trying to do something in this area. Dr. Williams suggested something about his desire to have something that would be of help to the folks in their everyday relations and problems.

Ledbetter: Was there concern here with race relations in the beginning?

Maston: No.

Ledbetter: Not at all?

Maston: No, not strictly so. See, this was the thing about it. He was the executive secretary. A committee of three was appointed to study and to bring back a report during that convention. Dr. W. R. White, A. C. Miller, and myself were on the committee, and we brought back a report. We recommended the appointment of a committee of seven to make a study to bring a report to the convention the next year, which met here in Fort Worth, which I believe was 1951.

That committee of seven made a study during the year. We met several times. It was really a working committee. We made assignments to individuals to work in certain areas. Race was one of the areas. Family one of the areas. My memory is that communism, economic problems--these kind of things--were other areas. Each fellow made a study of the needs in these areas and brought back a report to the committee--we had several sessions here--and then the report was taken to the convention.

I was chairman of this committee of seven. I do not know whether you would want the personnel, but

Dr. White was one of the seven as well as one of this three. Ralph Phelps was a member of the committee. He was teaching with me at that time. A pastor over at Sherman came. Dr. Ellis was a pastor at Sherman, and he was a member of the committee. About the only other one around here now is Herbert Howard of the Park City church (Dallas). He was a member of that committee of seven.

We made the report and recommended the establishment of an agency that would deal with these everyday problems. In other words, it wasn't a lengthy report, but it was a rather pointed report. We left the naming of the commission to . . . I think it was a program committee or something like that. We didn't suggest or recommend a name.

Then it was named, and A. C. Miller, I think, had more to do with the name--Christian Life Commission. That was the establishment of the Commission here in Texas. Dr. Arthur Rutledge was the first chairman of the Commission. He was pastor at that time at Marshall and is now what we call the director of our Home Mission Board. That Commission was composed, I think . . . oh, I don't know, of about nine or twelve members and then some of the heads of the departments.

Race was one of the areas. We divided the areas into about four or five . . . about five--had family, had race, had economic life, moral issues, and these kind of things, you see.

Ledbetter: What were some of the things that the commission then did?

Maston: The most outstanding thing that I think that our Christian Life Commission did in the early days was to produce literature. We produced a whole series of pamphlets. I'm not sure that I have a complete listing of them. I did have, but most of that kind of stuff I've given to the library. You could get that whole series. In the early days we had work sessions, and we'd work over these pamphlets. In other words, one person might be asked to work the first draft of the pamphlet. Then it would be brought to the Commission, and we would meet together and work through the thing thoroughly. It did not go out under the name of any member of the Commission. It went out under the Commission.

Ledbetter: Did that Commission do pamphlets or literature on race?

Maston: Yes, yes, this is right--two or three. The Bible and Race, for example, is one. I don't remember one or two

others. The Bible and Race has been revised, I think, and brought up to date a little bit.

Ledbetter: Did you do most of the work in that area?

Maston: Yes, ma'am, I did. I, for a while, was chairman of what they called the literature committee and did the basic work on some of the family as well as on race. I was a member of that Commission altogether, I think, for seventeen years. I haven't been an active member for a good many years now.

Then I was a member of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention for six years. When I went on the Commission, it was not called the Christian Life Commission. It was the Social Service Commission. I had a little bit to do with changing the name so that we'd have the same name here in Texas that we had at the Southern Baptist Convention. I was on that for six years, and Dr. J. B. Weatherspoon of the Southern Seminary was chairman of the Commission most of the time that I was on it, not all of the time, but most of the time that I was on it.

Ledbetter: What was that Commission's major concern? The same thing?

Maston: Well, about much the same thing--the whole area of applied Christianity. I remember in some of the early meetings that we had at Ridgecrest in the days when I was on the Commission, we'd have our Commission meetings at Ridgecrest but have a program in connection with it. On one or two occasions I remember that the program was on race. We had at one time Doctor . . . oh, the president of the Morehouse College in Atlanta, a great Negro educator and statesman. I can't recall his name right now. But we had him up there, I remember. Unfortunately, at that time . . . I felt that it was tragic at the time--and some others did, too--that he was speaking to us at Ridgecrest, but at that time he couldn't stay at Ridgecrest. They had to take him somewhere else to stay because they had a strong racial prejudice and the fact that the Sunday School Board wasn't willing, at least at that time, to change the policy.

Ledbetter: What do you think the role of the church should be?

Maston: I think two-fold. I think two-fold to some degree. It depends a little bit, I think, on one's perspective as to where the emphasis should be given. I think the church should get involved personally--I mean, as a

church. I mean, as a church it should get involved. My viewpoint is that the very nature of the church means that it must get involved because I think of a church as being a divine-human institution. Now it can be described in various ways, but the one that's helped me more than any other in this whole area is to think of it as a divine-human institution. Founded by the Lord, its commission comes from the Lord; its mission comes from the Lord. But it's in a particular environment serving particular people at a particular time. It cannot escape its humanity. In other words, the church . . . a church in Dallas or Fort Worth cannot get away from the fact that it has this particular location with some distinctive problems.

I think this is implied at least in Paul's letters to the Corinthian congregation. We have at least two letters to the Corinthian congregation. We have two letters in the New Testament that he wrote. He supposedly wrote another one or two, but anyway, we have these two. In both cases he addresses the letter to the Church of God at Corinth. This symbolizes to me what I'm talking about. It was a church at

Corinth and could never escape the fact that it was at Corinth, but it should be the Church of God at Corinth.

The viewpoint that I've expressed over and over again in speaking to groups is that this ought to be true of our church, and we ought to remember that we're a church of God. How can any church claim to be the church of God and close its doors to any person because of color or culture or anything like that? Or close its membership to anyone?

I do think the church needs to get involved personally, but I think also that it is true that the church . . . one of the main things the church does is through the proclamation of the Gospel and what it does for the members of that congregation in trying to help them to carry over the Christian spirit into their relations with those of other cultures and colors.

Incidentally, this whole area, I think, is about as much cultural as it is color. We have an awful lot of culture consciousness in churches. Certain types of people--even white people--don't feel at home in some white churches. So it's not just a matter of color.

Ledbetter: Do you think this helps to explain the failure of local churches to integrate?

Maston: Yes, ma'am, I do. I think this helps to explain that certain types of people do not feel at home in a particular church. Incidentally, it may not always be the attitude of this person who comes into a church and does not feel at home . . . does not feel welcome there. But I do think that it is true that many folks in our churches are not sympathetic, not understanding, and will not welcome certain kinds of people into a church. This ought not to be true, but I think it is true. Color is part of it, of course.

Now I happen to belong to a church that is about as free of that as any church I know. We have a deacon who's Chinese. We have a Negro man who's a deacon in our church. It's the only Negro family we have, but he's a deacon. I mean, he serves as a deacon. He helps take up the offering and helps serve the Lord's Supper.

Ledbetter: Do you feel the people in the church have treated him well?

Maston: Accepted him? Yes. There's no problem as far as I know. Now I say as I know. I did hear recently that

there was a little bit of a problem. Somebody had spoken some words of prejudice, and it kind of hurt the wife a little bit. She had heard it. So we do have some but not too much.

Ledbetter: Well, do you think perhaps your presence in the church has helped in any way?

Maston: No (chuckle). I don't know. I did introduce these folks in our church--rather an interesting experience. I had a call from the husband and father. He identified himself and he said, "Now I'm a Baptist. I've been in the military. I'm coming here to locate my family. I'm going to Korea for about thirteen months. When I come back I retire from the Air Force. I've been down to Del Rio, and one of your former students was pastor of that church, and he suggested I get in touch with you." Then he identified himself. He said, "I'm black. My family's black." He said, "We're looking for a church." I said, "Well, I think you'd be welcome at our church if you want to come."

It was on Wednesday, and I said, "I'm going to go to prayer meeting after awhile." He said, "Well, we've been talking about going to prayer meeting." I said, "Well, do you want to come up to our church?"

He said, "Yes." I said, "I'll wait outside and meet you at the door." So I waited outside. In the meantime I called the pastor and told the pastor they'd be there. The pastor . . . I know that was the reason for him doing it.

After he had gotten through pretty much with prayer meeting, he said, "I know we have some visitors. If you have a visitor, will you introduce them?" So I got up and introduced these folks. I was never prouder of my church in my life. I think practically every deacon there came by and spoke to them. Before they got through speaking, why, I found out that he was a deacon, too. I would say that this man was a deacon and this man was a deacon, and he said, "Well, I'm a deacon, too."

So they joined the church the next Sunday. They have two children, two lovely children. Some are concerned a little bit about what'll happen when the children get up to the dating stage. What's going to happen, I don't know. My viewpoint is that you've got to let these kind of problems take care of themselves when they come. We also have a student and his wife here--a black student that married a white girl who is a member of our church.

Ledbetter: What was your reaction to that?

Maston: Folks didn't like it, didn't think it was wise. I didn't myself, but they were accepted. Folks didn't turn their backs on them. They had said something to the pastor about performing the marriage ceremony. He would have done so, but he told them, he said, "There's certain conditions now." One of the conditions was that they come and talk to me. So I talked to them a couple of times and tried to help them see the potential problems because there are problems. I told them, "You can't find a thing in the world in the Scripture directly against it, but there are some very real problems that you ought to face up to." They said they faced up to them, but I'm not sure they did. They went ahead and got married. He went to a church in Arkansas to work on some mission work, but it was a white church. He's already out of there, and I don't know what's going to happen. He was from Nicaragua. He's not a native. But he's black and his father is a pastor down there. She is white, and I mean decidedly white. They have a child now. I haven't seen the child. This is one of the things I tried to get them to face up to--what about the children?

Ledbetter: Were they accepted?

Maston: Yes. In some cases they will not be accepted by either blacks or whites. So there are some real problems in our culture. This is the way I tried to say it to them. Of course, a good many folks that have attacked me think that I am in favor of intermarriage. I have a little pamphlet over there that I wrote for the Christian Life Commission on interracial intermarriage. I've gotten some attacks on that. I very plainly state that in our culture I don't think it's wise, not common sense. But from a scriptural viewpoint you can't make out a case against it.

Ledbetter: Let's get back to some of the specific Baptist reactions to the racial problem. I guess probably the most dramatic experience from a Southern point of view is the Supreme Court decision in 1954 about school integration. From your observations what were the Baptist reactions to that?

Maston: Well, very fortunately--and I judge that you have not run into this yet--very fortunately the Southern Baptist Convention, immediately following that--I mean the very next month--took a very positive position.

Ledbetter: The official position.

Maston: Yes, the official position. Now there was a lot of debate and argument about it, but they did take a very positive position. I went down and got the Southern Baptist Convention minutes so that I'd have them. I do not think you want me to read all of it, but at the close of the report of the Christian Life Commission . . . now this was when A. C. Miller was head of the Christian Life Commission. See, A. C. Miller had been the head of the Christian Life Commission in Texas . . . moved from Texas to Nashville to head the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. He was the second executive secretary it had. Then when he reached retirement, Foy Valentine moved from Texas to Nashville to head Christian Life Commission at the time of the Supreme Court decision. In the report that the Christian Life Commission brought, they mentioned the decision. "Don't Blame the Supreme Court" is one of the headings in the report.

Then, at times at least, they bring specific recommendations. So they brought a specific recommendation on juvenile delinquency, on interstate advertising, on alcoholic beverages, and then concerning the Supreme Court decision on public education.

There was a motion made to delete this third recommendation--the one that had to do with the Supreme Court decision. That motion was defeated. Then there was a motion made to vote on these one at a time--not to vote on the complete three recommendations. That was passed. Now my memory is that a good many folks had the feeling that the only thing that saved this at Kansas City, I believe it was, was an address of J. B. Weatherspoon . . . not an address, just a speech that he made. He was chairman of the Commission and highly respected, but also a very courageous man. He spoke defending. I judge that you would not care for this because it has five different points.

Ledbetter: What are the points? Could you just mention the points?

Maston: Well, I can't without reading practically all of them. This is concerning the Supreme Court decision on public education. This is for the Convention in 1954, you see, just a month after the decision was made. Rather interesting from my viewpoint is the fact that I was in Washington when the decision was made, with a church there for Christian home-type

emphasis. The members of the church asked me on Friday night if I would speak concerning the Supreme Court decision. So I did that the very week the decision was made.

But this is the recommendation: "In the light of the recent decision handed down by the Supreme Court of our nation declaring segregation of the races to be unconstitutional, and in view of the composition of the Convention and adhering to the basic moral principles of our religion as they apply in race relations, we recommend (1) That we recognize the fact that this Supreme Court decision is in harmony with the constitutional guarantee of equal freedom to all citizens and with the Christian principles of equal justice and love for all men. (2) That we commend the Supreme Court for deferring the application of the principle, both as to time and procedure, until the nation shall have had time to work out methods by which transition from the present practice may be effected. (3) That we urge our people and all Christians to conduct themselves in this period of adjustment in the spirit of Christ, and we pray that God may guide us in our thinking and our attitudes to

the end that we may help and not hinder the progress of justice and brotherly love, that we may exercise patience and good will in the discussions that must take place, and give a good testimony to the meaning of Christian faith and discipleship. (4) That we express our belief in the public school system of our nation as one of the greatest factors in American history for the maintenance of democracy and our common culture. We express the hope that in the working out of the necessary adjustments its place in our educational program shall not be impaired. (5) That we urge Christian statesmen and leaders in our churches to use their leadership and positive thought and planning to the end that this crisis in our national history shall not be made occasion for new and bitter prejudices but a movement toward a united nation in body and proclaiming a democracy that will commend freedom to all peoples."

I think personally this was a pretty courageous thing to do at that time.

Ledbetter: Considering the feeling of the constituency.

Maston: Yes, this is right.

- Ledbetter: One thing that occurred to me as you were reading this . . . this does mark a significant change in the official Baptist stand since the 1920's.
- Maston: Yes, but there's some background for it.
- Ledbetter: Do you think the Christian Life Commissions were . . .
- Maston: To some degree, yes, and the leadership of some of the men in the Convention. There was a report . . . I do not remember exactly when it was. I'm not sure that I have it anywhere here, but there was a report that was made to the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1940's, '47 or '48, which was a well worked out thing on race and quite progressive.
- Ledbetter: Is that when you feel that the change began to take place then--in the 1940's?
- Maston: Well, there's always a considerable background for that kind of a change. It's a process. I don't think that you can just pinpoint a date and say this is when it started because I think it has been taking place over a long period of time, particularly on the part of the leadership, you see? This is one of the differences, as I see it, that I've had to some folks in certain areas, where they've had a real struggle because as I said awhile ago I never felt threatened.

I've never felt threatened partly because the vast majority of leadership of Southern Baptists have been with me in their attitudes.

Ledbetter: You're ahead of the people.

Maston: Yes. This is right. Now they don't always express it, you see, and hence they don't get in trouble. Some of them are in places of leadership where it would be difficult for them. But a teacher has a freedom here that a good many folks do not have.

Ledbetter: I can see that you have more freedom than even the pastor of a church.

Maston: Yes, that's right. I've told the students this many times. This is correct.

Ledbetter: So you're in a kind of unique position.

Maston: You take the presidents that I've served under, and I've served under all of them except the first one, Dr. Carroll. I think I'm right when I say I've been called in by all the presidents except the present one. I was called in one time each by Dr. Scarborough, Dr. Head, Dr. Williams. Each time these men called me in just to report to me. Something had been brought to them, or they had received a letter about me. They never said anything yea or nay about whether the critic was right or wrong. They said, "I just want you to

know." Dr. Scarborough's report, incidentally, was from a former student of the seminary, that he'd been talking with, who thought of me as not only being a socialist, but maybe a communist as well.

Ledbetter: When was that?

Maston: Well, this was . . . Dr. Scarborough retired in 1941 or '42, so it was back in the '30's somewhere. I don't remember exactly when.

Ledbetter: How influential do you think was the stand of the officials, such as the one that you were citing there? How influential do you think that's been in changing the Baptist rank-and-file?

Maston: Yes, I think it has. I think it gradually filters down. I think the men who have gone through the seminaries have had a lot of influence in this area. Now this does not mean that all of them agree, and they do not. Unfortunately, some of them lose a lot of their idealism just a few years after they get out. One of the most discouraging things about being a teacher is that you know a lot of these high ideals that they have while they're students . . . they get out there and get under the pressures, and they will lose them in five or ten years. I told them that a

lot of times. This is one of the real problems.
But this is part of it--your seminary-trained men.

I think also gradually we've gotten it into the literature. This helps some. I think the fact that most of the leadership, in more recent years at least, has taken a very positive position, and this has helped a great deal. But we've still got a long way to go.

Ledbetter: That's what I was going to ask you next. What do you think the overall status is on race relations? Not just in the churches, but overall.

Maston: I think overall we've made some progress--considerable progress--over where we were five, ten, particularly fifteen or twenty years ago. But we also have some rather distinct problems in the contemporary period. A particular problem is with communication. There's not much communication across racial lines. If you don't mind, I think we'll pick it up tomorrow.

Oral History Collection

Thomas B. Maston

Interviewer: Pat Ledbetter

Place of Interview: Fort Worth, Texas

Date: July 31, 1974

Ms. Ledbetter: This is Pat Ledbetter interviewing Dr. Thomas Maston for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 31, 1974. This is a continuation of the interview begun yesterday.

Alright, Dr. Maston, we were discussing the current situation in race relations. I was wondering how much progress you think has been made in integrating the churches especially in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Maston: I think there's been considerable progress, certainly not as much as many of us would like to see, but I've seen some recent reports that I think are encouraging, at least to a degree. Our Home Mission Board recently made a study and came out with a figure of 191 black churches that are in the Southern Baptist Convention. Now these are churches . . . most of them are duly or doubly aligned. In other words, they are affiliated

with the Southern Baptist Convention, but also with one of the national Baptist conventions--the black conventions. Twenty-eight of these 191 are in Texas. There are only about seven, I believe, in the southeastern states, in the old South, where we'd expect the least progress in this area. This same study also estimated that there were 75,000 blacks who were members of Southern Baptist churches. Now some of those would be, and possibly most of them, in these 191 black churches. But there are a great many of our predominantly white churches that have some black members. This is a gradual trend, but it is definitely a trend for increasing numbers of them to open their church membership.

My viewpoint has always been that you're not going to have a great many of them come into our churches because in most cases they prefer their own particular type of worship service. There are some that prefer the type of thing that we have in our churches. I believe I mentioned the fact that we had one family in the church where I belonged.

Ledbetter: Do you have any churches or any incidents that you can think of of a black minister in a white church, predominantly white church?

Maston: Yes, we have one or two, but we do not have this in the South. In other words, you know the Southern Baptist Convention now is spread all over the nation. I think I am correct that there is a church in Michigan, for example, predominately white church, that has a black pastor. There are a few churches, and very few, where you have an associate pastor that is black and a white pastor.

We do have in some of our cities like in Fort Worth and Dallas--and I know of a church in Atlanta--that has tried to stay as the communities change from a predominately white community to a black community and has tried to minister to both groups in a relatively equal number. It remains to be seen whether this can be done very effectively or not. The church that I'm acquainted with is a church here that at one time was about 50 per cent white and about 50 per cent black. The blacks were teachers and deacons and so forth. But they're having a terrifically hard time financially. At one time at least three or four of our white churches were helping them. The church when it was white had built a building, and then when the blacks started moving in, as usually happens, a lot of the whites moved out.

Many of the whites that remained were the older people--the people who did not have the money to go out and buy them a home somewhere else. Hence, you had those that were the most able financially to support the church had moved and did not have comparable blacks to move in to take over the financial responsibilities. So they had a real struggle. I think the same thing is true of a church or two in Dallas, that they had had a real struggle financially.

Ledbetter: The intercity churches.

Maston: This is right.

Ledbetter: I've noticed that several of the leaders you mentioned in the Southern Baptist movement for racial integration came from Texas, and you mentioned that a fairly large number of Texas churches--black churches--became associated with the Southern Baptists. I was wondering why this sort of thing's easier in Texas.

Maston: I think there are two or three reasons. I think one of the main things, of course, is that we do not have as large a percentage of blacks as the states of the Old South. As you know, the larger the percentage of a minority group, usually the more acute the problems are and the deeper is the prejudice. This is one

thing. Another thing we do not have are really the traditions of the Old South here in Texas much. Particularly this is true in West Texas. I think of East Texas belonging to the Old South more than West Texas. The very spirit of the people, I think, in particularly the western part of the state, I think, contributes to it to some degree, too.

Ledbetter: Are most of those black churches that are associated with Southern Baptists . . . what part of the state are they in?

Maston: Well, they are all over the state--Corpus Christi, for example, and Austin. I know of a church in Austin. I know of a church or two in Houston. They, of course, affiliate, as you understand, first of all with an association. Then they are accepted in the state convention. Of course, that means they are accepted from the viewpoint of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Ledbetter: Most of them would be city churches then?

Maston: Yes. Truth of the business is, I do not know any other than city churches.

Ledbetter: Why is that?

Maston: I do not know all the . . . well, I think your folks in your urban areas are more adjustable to change of

all kinds than those out in our rural areas and small villages. Of course, there is also more pressure there because of the concentration of your blacks in the cities. You'd be interested to know, I think--if you do not--that the second vice-president of the Texas Baptist Convention is a black man. He was previously the moderator of the association down at Corpus Christi.

Ledbetter: Where is he from?

Maston: He's from Corpus Christi. His church is in Corpus Christi. Now we have another black pastor who is a graduate of this institution. He graduated from Oberlin, came here, and graduated from here. He used to be pastor at Waco. He's pastor of a church in Austin now. He is a member of the Christian Life Commission of Texas. His church is _____ church. There are two of the Branch brothers. One of them is a member of the executive board of the Texas Baptist Convention.

So we do have some that are getting in places of leadership. I judge that you know that the Southern Baptist Convention had its most recent meeting in Dallas, and elected a black man from Kentucky as the second vice-president of the convention. This is the first time that's happened for the Southern Baptist Convention.

Now my viewpoint is that this represents progress in one sense of the word, but down deep underneath it really doesn't mean as much as it seems like because my viewpoint is that we've never arrived at the right basis of racial relations until a man is elected regardless of color. He's not elected because he's black, but he's elected because he's the best man to fill a particular position. A lot of it has to be labeled as tokenism. In other words, this is a kind of tokenism or appeasement but at least it does represent from one viewpoint some progress.

Ledbetter: You've made a distinction in some of your writings between desegregation and integration. Is this what . . .

Maston: Well, yes, I think this distinction needs to be made just as I think that there's a distinction that needed to be made--at least in the past, maybe more than in the present--between separation and segregation. One of the arguments for segregation that a good many folks used was that folks of different racial groups prefer to be separate. But there's a difference between separation, which is voluntary, and segregation, which is compulsory. Well, now desegregation can be achieved by

law. In other words, we can eliminate segregation-- legal segregation--by law. This is somewhat formal and can be done. I think of integration as being something that's much deeper and much more meaningful. It involves the actual acceptance of this person as a person. You can desegregate without having any meaningful integration. You can desegregate your schools. In one sense of the word, you can integrate them because they are integrated, but in the deeper and the more meaningful sense, they may not be integrated at all. So that actually your desegregation can be quite cruel, as I see it, if there's not real meaningful integration.

Ledbetter: How can that be achieved?

Maston: Well, let me make this other statement first. You take a church, for example. A church can open its doors and can accept blacks as members and yet never give them places of leadership that their ability and training would justify. This is not real integration, as I see it. You've got real integration if this black woman over here is a good teacher when she's utilized just like she would be if she were white. This young woman has a good voice. She's utilized in

the choir just like she would be if she were white. This is real integration when they're accepted as persons with all the capacities that they have, and utilized. Like I mentioned in our church, we at least have done that with this deacon friend. He is a deacon. He's recognized by the church as an active deacon. The church didn't have to do this. It did. He performs, I think, all the functions that most of the other deacons . . . now I do recognize that there's a problem. There's a problem of visitation, for example. I'm not real sure how effectively he can go out and visit white people and invite them to church--some of the white people. Now he does some visiting, and he's a personal worker, good personal worker. This, as I see it, is real integration.

Ledbetter: Well, what can the churches do now to achieve this real integration? What is left to be done, do you think?

Maston: Well, of course, some of the churches . . . like I think ours has done fairly well . . . not entirely because I think I did indicate that his wife had run into a little bit of prejudice and a little bit of a problem at one place, so much so that she said, "I'm not going to that Sunday School class (chuckle),"

until something was done. But I do think that the best thing . . . well, the only thing that we can do is to try to help the people to recognize--church members to recognize--that if you're going to accept somebody into the church, this means to accept them into the total life of the church. That doesn't mean just accept them theoretically and you kind of set them aside over here, but actually into the total life of the church.

Ledbetter: Do you see this as the pastor's role?

Maston: Yes, I think the pastor has a great deal to do with this, a great deal to do with it. The leadership in general, I think, has a great deal to do with this. If you have a minister of education or your Sunday School superintendent or director or whatever you call them . . . they then utilize people where they can really fill in.

Ledbetter: Indirectly then, that influence comes from the seminaries.

Maston: This is right. This is right to some degree. Now this couple, for example, they hesitate to take some places of leadership because they recognize what the problems are. At least, I think this is true. They

were asked, for example, to take over a department, jointly to direct the department for adults. I never asked them if this entered into it, but they decided that they'd better not do it. My judgement is that this was one factor--that they just had some questions whether some of the whites would respond to their leadership. But I was grateful that they were asked, that the nominating committee asked them to do it, which meant that the pastor and minister of education had approved this.

Ledbetter: What are the seminaries doing to help shape attitudes?

Maston: Well, they have done quite a bit--the seminaries have--from the very first. Our younger seminaries, of course, never had any restriction concerning the attendance of blacks. The older ones--Southern Seminary and here at Southwestern and I think at New Orleans . . . but I know that these two did have. Now we here in Fort Worth at Southwestern and also at Southern removed restrictions in 1951 and opened the doors to blacks as far as anyone else. Now it wasn't quite as full as it should have been. You take, for example, here. There was one restriction for awhile, which was unfortunate, and that was no housing. In other words, they were accepted as students

in the classroom, but as far as we could go seemingly with the trustees was that they would be admitted, but we would not provide housing. We would not have black girls rooming with white girls over here, black boys and so forth and so on. I don't remember how long that continued. It didn't continue very long. Now you see that was before the Supreme Court decision.

It is also true that the seminaries, including ours, had provided some specialized training for blacks all along. In other words, we had night school worked out here. I taught in the night school on several occasions. At Southern Seminary, I remember, they took one student through a whole graduate program with a doctor's degree by just having conferences with him in professors' offices.

Ledbetter: But not allowing him to attend any class.

Maston: He did not attend class because there was at that time a law in Kentucky that forbade it. But these seminaries have tried to do something.

Ledbetter: You also taught courses much earlier than actual integration.

Maston: Yes, this is right, and much earlier than any of the colleges that I know anything about, I mean private schools.

Ledbetter: When did you begin teaching courses in race relations?

Maston: When? Here?

Ledbetter: Yes.

Maston: I started a course here in the fall of 1937 or '38 on what we called "Problems of the South" in which I gave half of the time to the racial problem. I taught that about--I don't know--two or three years and then divided it and had a separate course on the rural South and then a separate course on race problems of the South. That was about . . . I guess about 1940. Now there was a lot of resistance back then.

Ledbetter: Right. Well, do you think this is perhaps one reason that the leaders of the Baptist denomination were so far ahead of the people--because these changes had come so early in the seminaries?

Maston: Well, I would think that would have something to do with it, yes. I would think so. You never know for sure, of course, how much impact those make. As I indicated, there was considerable resistance on the part of a good many students.

Ledbetter: From the students?

Maston: Oh, my, yes.

Ledbetter: Did you get opposition in your classes?

Maston: Oh, yes. Yes, I did in the early days. Now you could see it gradually changing for the better.

Ledbetter: It must have been an interesting position to be in.

Maston: It was very interesting.

Ledbetter: You've also mentioned the nationalist movement within the racial community.

Maston: That has become, I think, more prevalent in recent days. Part of the reasoning back of it is the fear that in the integration movement or desegregation movement that the effort will be and is to make these minority groups conform to the pattern of the majority, and hence, the minority, whether it's black or some other minority, will tend to lose the distinctive cultural contributions that they can make. Whether it's a contribution or not, they tend to lose their distinctive culture and values. They do not want to do this. Now this is about as strong among the Latins in the Southwest as it is among the blacks. We have, for example, among the Texas Baptists . . . we have a . . . I don't remember the Spanish name for it, but it's an alliance of Baptist Mexicans in which they take a very definite position about cultivating a respect for their culture and so forth.

Ledbetter: What's your feeling about that? Do you think that will retard integration?

Maston: I think it will. I think it will retard integration to some degree, but I can hope that it would mean that the integration we had would be on what I would term a higher level and there would tend to grow out of it possibly a greater respect by the white majority for the distinctive cultural contributions of these other groups. So whatever integration you have will be an integration more of equals rather than a majority group-minority group, or using the terms we don't like to use nowadays, a superior group to an inferior group and so forth. It will be more on the basis of equality.

Ledbetter: So you don't object to this nationalistic movement?

Maston: No, as long as it does not become too extreme. But I think it has contributed to some difficulty on the part of whites because a good many whites cannot quite understand that here the blacks were advocating desegregation a few years ago. You get them in the school with the whites, and what do they start advocating? They start advocating a special dormitory for blacks, special courses for blacks, and so forth and so on.

Ledbetter: The "Black is Beautiful" movement.

Maston: Yes. Now that is not altogether the nationalist movement, I don't think, because I don't think it's just in the colleges. I think there's some elements of that that may be a little unfortunate because I think it may mean that some of these black students kind of feel inferior in the presence of whites. They do not have as good a preparation, as good a background. They find it extremely difficult to compete with them. This has been a factor, I think, on the college campus, but this nationalist movement is not just college. It's everywhere to some degree. Of course, I'm not real sure that that term nationalist is the best term for the movement, but that's the term that's usually used.

Ledbetter: Maybe cultural consciousness or something like that would be better.

Maston: Yes, something like that.

Ledbetter: Are there any other observations you'd like to make before we go on about the racial situation?

Maston: Well, I don't know that there is right offhand.

Ledbetter: Another one of your interests, Dr. Maston, has been on world affairs. Would you give us please what you think should be the relationship of the church to the world?

Maston: Well, generally speaking, I think, of course, that the church ought to be concerned over the totality of life. My viewpoint is that God is the sovereign of the universe, which means that he is concerned with the total life of the individual and the total life of the nation and the nations. He is concerned about all that goes on in the world. I assume that you have in mind the broader aspects. You have in mind the relations of the nations--international relations and so forth. Yes, I think the church ought to be concerned because of the very nature of God himself.

Ledbetter: Do you mean by this not just in trying to Christianize the world, but in helping solve some of the world's problems?

Maston: Yes, I certainly think that they ought to have a concern about the problems. My viewpoint again, underscoring something that I just said, is that God is concerned for the totality of life, and he is not concerned just with one little segment of life, not with the so-called "spiritual." He's concerned about what goes on in the business world, political world. He's concerned about what goes on

within my church, yes, but also what goes on within the public schools and within the walls of our homes. At least this has always been my perspective, which means that a church ought to have a similar concern. Now it's limited in how much it can do--there's no question about that--and whether it ought to help the members of the church to have a world perspective and to be alert to the problems and the intelligent regarding of the problems of the world.

Ledbetter: So you think it's in part the role of the pastor and Baptist associations to help educate people about world affairs?

Maston: Yes, I do. I definitely think that they have some responsibility in connection with that, not only the pastor, but other leaders as well. Sunday School teachers and workers and so forth have a responsibility to try to get the people to be intelligent and alert about the problems of the world.

Ledbetter: Does the seminary attempt to do this in training the workers?

Maston: Yes, to some degree at least. Now it's a limited degree because you're limited to how much you can do. But if you teach the Scriptures as I see it,

if you interpret the Scriptures as I think they ought to be interpreted, I think this itself will be a help here for folks to have this kind of world perspective. Then in our Department of Christian Ethics we tried to have some courses that would help folks along these lines. Not just in some of the areas that we've mentioned like the family, race, but we also have at different times had courses on communism and the other 'isms. We've had courses on the world crisis and these kind of courses that we hope will help students to be alert to these things and that hence they in turn can help, say, folks in the churches where they serve, to be alert to them.

Ledbetter: Communism has been a long time concern of the church, it seems. How serious do you feel that the communist threat is today?

Maston: I do not think of it as being as serious a threat now as it was a few years ago. I was quite concerned a number of years ago that the communists of the U.S.S.R. and the communists of the Far East in China . . . if these two nations could really get together, they could practically control the world. But it looks like that the nationalistic spirit is usually stronger than the

communistic spirit. That's been true in most of these nations and not just true in China and the U.S.S.R., but I think in Czechoslovakia and other places where it's quite evident that international communism is having, I think, some real problems. Now I do not think the communists have changed in their basic goals, but they find it extremely difficult, it seems to me, to achieve that goal of dominating the world.

Ledbetter: That nationalistic aspect of the communist movement is something we didn't . . .

Maston: Didn't foresee years ago. No, this is right.

Ledbetter: How do you feel about the softening up of relations with communist nations?

Maston: I think it's personally a good thing for us to do it if we'll keep on the alert. Now we do need to remember two or three things. We do need to remember that communism never changes its ultimate goal. Another thing a lot of our American people do not realize is that anything that will help to forward the communist cause is justified. They don't have the sense of right or wrong. Right for them is anything that will advance communism, so you cannot trust their promises.

Ledbetter: There's been a considerable concern on the part of some of the fundamentalist preachers and groups that communism is infiltrating the churches.

Maston: I don't think there's much of that. I don't see it at all. Of course, one reason I guess that I don't feel that way about it is because I've been accused of being connected myself, and I think the fundamentalists largely base that on what some folks advocate. They advocate some basic social changes, and because the fundamentalists are opposed to those changes, they tend to label the folks. You know, you label somebody particularly if you cannot answer him. You call him a name--a bad name.

Ledbetter: You think it's just a name-calling type of thing?

Maston: It's a name-calling type of thing. Primarily, I think this is correct. Now I think in fairness we ought to say that there are a good many things in communism that we need to consider pretty seriously. In other words, there's some things that communism has advocated that I think we ought to look at objectively. I'm not really sure but what from the economic viewpoint that a communist system is just as Christian as the captialistic system. I think the

place where I part company with the communists is when they get over to their basic philosophy which I think is anti-Christian and anti-human, really.

Ledbetter: But you don't think that Christianity necessarily has to be capitalistic?

Maston: No, I don't. No, I don't. I do not.

Ledbetter: Many people seem to think that there's two sides to the same coin?

Maston: Yes, and you can get in trouble with a lot of folks by attacking the capitalistic system quicker than you can about most anything else. I do not think of it as being anything sacred about the capitalistic system. I do not think we ought to be afraid of names, of labels. I do not think we ought to be afraid of the word socialism. I think we ought to be concerned about what these different so-called systems do to people. This ought to be the basis on which we judge. So if there are some things about communism that are good, let's frankly admit that there's some things here that may be valid, that may be good. We'll not just throw out everything because we disagree with the basic philosophy or the basic foundation.

Now I think a distinction that possibly needs to be made, that I do not think very many folks make,

is between Marxism and Communism and Socialism. Take, for example . . . this came out, I think, quite a little bit in the Allende rule down in Chile. He's a Marxist. I don't suppose there's any question about that. Maybe he was a communist. I don't know about that. But as you know, one can be a Marxist and not be a communist because your socialists base their position on the work of Marx as much as the communists do. They're Marxists but their strategy is entirely different. They would achieve their goals peacefully. They do not-- at least most socialists, or most of them that I know anything about--advocate violent overthrow or anything like that which the communists, of course, would justify.

Ledbetter: And you think it would be possible to have a Christian-socialist state, then?

Maston: Yes, I think so. The truth of the business is you have it in one sense of the word in a country like Great Britain right now, when the Labor Party is a socialist party. It's not called socialist, but it is a socialist party. They advocate taking over a good many of the industries and so forth. You have some of the other countries that have had at

different times socialist parties in control. We've had them in a good many places in the world. So there isn't any necessary conflict between socialism and Christianity. The truth of the business is that you have certain types of socialism that are definitely Christian in their origin. You have quite a bit of socialism, I think, in original Christianity. You have a real problem--some folks do--with the experience of the Church of Jerusalem, where they sold what they had and gave to the poor, and distribution was made.

Ledbetter: This is socialism.

Maston: This is communism. At least it's community property. But, of course, it was voluntary. It may be, as someone suggested, that it was to meet an emergency. But nevertheless, it's there, which I think is something that . . . I think there is at least a permanent lesson for us there, and that is that when there's a real need, Christians ought to be willing to share with one another. Whether you call it communism or socialism or whatnot, this, I think, is Christianity. But we haven't taken that very seriously.

Ledbetter: Do you think that's possibly because we do tend to label anything that's an attack on the capitalist system as an attack on . . .

Maston: Yes, I think this is part of it. Yes, I do. But the main thrust, I think, ought to be that we try to help people to see that there isn't anything sacred about any particular label for an economic system. Now, of course, nowadays the defenders of the capitalistic system are using--they have used for a good while--primarily, the "free enterprise system" which I think is an attempt at least by some to combat the criticisms of the capitalistic system and to tie the capitalistic system in with democracy, which is a very sacred thing to Americans--free enterprise. That sounds like that that's democracy.

My viewpoint is that your order of dependence is the reverse of what some folks have thought. I do not think that you can have a real democracy, a valid democracy . . . I'm not real sure that that's the best term, but I do not think that you can have a continuing democracy politically unless you have a rather strong vital Christian movement. I'm not talking about any particular label--Catholic, Protestant, or whatnot. I do not believe that you can have the so-called free enterprise system or

capitalistic system healthy and strong without this democratic political system. I'm not sure that I stated that very well, but I think you get the order of dependence that I'm talking about.

Ledbetter: Another area that you've done a good deal of writing about is the church's attitude toward war, or your attitude toward war. What do you think . . .

Maston: It's more my attitude, not the attitude of our Baptist folks. As you know, conservative groups like Southern Baptists, which are in the main a conservative group, tend to be pretty much defendants of the status quo. They're not strong for any kind of change. Included in this, of course, is an attitude toward war. They, in the main, are the defenders of war. I came to the conclusion a long time ago--between World War I and World War II--that there was something incompatible between war and the Christian spirit. Not so much specific teachings. but the general spirit that we find, particularly in the New Testament, and you even find it in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, you have a two-fold perspective concerning God and war. One is that he was a God of war. He fought on the side of the people and so forth

. . . of his own people. But you get another glimpse. I never will forget when this started hitting me. David, for example, wanted to build a temple to God, but God didn't permit him to build a temple. Why? Because he was a man of war and had shed much blood, which to me suggested that God really disapproved of war. He used war to punish his people. He used war to achieve his ends because the people were not ready for anything else. Here is something that reveals that after all God disapproved of war. I think it's contrary to the spirit that we find in the teachings of Jesus.

Now my viewpoint ultimately is this, and I outlined this between World War I and II and have tried to hold onto it consistently. When we approached World War II, I was still . . . could have been drafted. I was getting along in years, but I could have been drafted. I'm not an ordained minister, you see. I don't remember the classification they gave me, but I wrote the draft board and outlined my position. I would be what most would call a limited conscientious objector, not an absolutist, because I do not think you can escape involvement in the world

as long as you live in the world. . . . But there are certain points where one cannot go beyond that point and maintain his integrity as a Christian. The point where I could not go beyond is the point of taking human life. Giving life, okay. I could have served in the Medical Corps. I could have served in some non-combattant type of service, but not taking human life. Now this is my position and a position that I try to maintain consistently. It was pretty difficult during World War II, in the seminaries as well as elsewhere.

Ledbetter: Did you experience objections to that stand?

Maston: Oh, yes, quite a bit . . . quite a bit of objection. Although the interesting thing is that I held retreats for chaplains in the Orient and Navy chaplains here at Norfolk and Pensacola. I've never had any problems with the chaplains in discussing this because my viewpoint is that we need to respect one another. If this fellow in good conscience can participate in war up to the limit of taking human life, I respect his right of conscience, but I expect him to respect my right of conscience, too.

Ledbetter: Do you think an individual has a right to refuse?

Maston: Yes, I do. Now in more recent times we've had a very real problem which I do not think we have resolved yet. That's a matter of conscientious objection to a particular war like the Viet Nam conflict.

Ledbetter: Right.

Maston: The government has not . . . and the courts have not . . . and our denomination . . . the truth of the business is that our denomination has no position. I had some things to say about that during World War II because we had a few conscientious objectors. We had a few that went to conscientious objector camps. The viewpoint that I expressed then, and still is my viewpoint, is that to be consistent as a Baptist we ought to defend the right of a conscientious objector. We defend the right of a person to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. The only decision we ought to have to make about this fellow is whether or not he's a real conscientious objector or whether he's just trying to get out of going to war. If he's a real conscientious objector, then we ought to support his right.

As you know, during World War II, these men who went to conscientious objector camps had to

provide for their own upkeep, their own expenses, which I do not think is right. In other words, my viewpoint is that if the government is going to put a fellow in a conscientious objector camp, then they ought to provide for his care. A good many of these men who were in conscientious objector camps rendered a rather valuable service. Some of them were guinea pigs for different types of things. Some of them were also involved in construction work and this kind of thing. Now I think that if the government would not do it, then the denomination should have provided for them, but we did not. I had one former student who went to conscientious objector camp, and one of the Bretheren groups provided for his expenses. But I tried to reason with him. I tried to get him to accept some non-combattant type of service. I tried to help him see the potential problems that he might have of ever getting back into Southern Baptist life, which turned out to be true. He never was able to get back into Southern Baptist life.

Ledbetter: Did he intend to be a preacher?

Maston: No, he was one of the very best students that we had in the School of Religious Education, an excellent

student. Later he did a Ph.D. in Columbia. He was doing student work on a university campus and was drafted or called, and he chose to go to a conscientious objector camp.

Ledbetter: And the Baptists would never accept him back into . . .

Maston: No, no. I think on the specialized type of thing, on the selective conscientious objector, I hope at least that we can make some progress in working out a position here.

Ledbetter: Do the Baptists take any stand about the people who objected to the Viet Nam war?

Maston: I do not remember of any kind of an official position. I'm sure . . . well, I know that some individual Baptists did, but I don't think of any official positions at all. Now I think there that they should have defended the right of conscientious objection. I am not--you may be surprised at this--I'm not quite as liberal as you might think about these men who went to Canada and Sweden and elsewhere because my viewpoint is if it is a real matter of conscientious objection, then the conscientious objector would be willing to pay the price for his conscientious objection. If it means to go to prison, go to prison--see what I mean?--rather

than run off to Canada or Sweden or somewhere else. I think this is one mistake a good many . . . well, a lot of them made. I do not know what is the answer to it. I really think that these fellows, if they're real conscientious objectors, ought to be willing to come back and say, "Okay, I'll render two or three years' service to the country," or something like that.

Ledbetter: But you don't think then they should be given amnesty?

Maston: I haven't been convinced so far that they should because I think that a fellow who is a real conscientious objector ought to be willing to pay some price for it.

Ledbetter: Did you approve of the stand in objection to that one war, Viet Nam, or do you think as conscientious objectors they should object to all war?

Maston: Well, no, I think it's either one. It's not necessary for both. I think it's either one. In other words, if one is a consistent conscientious objector to war period, that's one thing. Now I do think that the individual has the right to determine whether this particular war is justified. So he has a right to decide that in good

conscience he can't participate in this particular war. So I think there are some that go all the way, and then some others . . . now, of course, I got a lot of criticism from some folks that thought that I was not being consistent because I'm not an unlimited conscientious objector. My viewpoint is-- and I tried to reason with some during the war-- that you cannot live in the world without being involved to some degree. You're involved when you pay your taxes.

Ledbetter: But you do think, though, that war is basically an un-Christian activity.

Maston: Oh, yes. Yes, I do.

Ledbetter: It's interesting, I think, that the United States has so frequently connected their wars with defending Christianity and democracy.

Maston: Yes. Now this was done a great deal, as you know, in World War I. I was in it for about eighty days, just at the close of it, but the slogans that they used there were, "Saving the World for Democracy," and it was practically made a Christian crusade. But not so much in World War II. If I interpret correctly, most of the fellows that entered into World War II

felt of it as a kind of a dirty job that needed to be done, and to their very best they'd go ahead and get it done as quick as possible and get back home. Part of the reason for that, I think, was that World War I was a disillusioning thing to an awful lot of fellows when they came back. I had many friends that went over . . . and some of them didn't come back and some of them did come back. Some of them, I remember saying, "Well, we went over there and fought the wrong folks."

Ledbetter: In World War I?

Maston: Yes, yes. Some of them had a lot more respect for the Germans than they had for the French, for example.

Ledbetter: Really?

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Okay, let's talk a little bit more about some other contemporary issues.

Maston: By the way, I think you might be interested to know that some of the opposition to my attitude toward war came from within the faculty itself here.

Ledbetter: Oh, really?

Maston: Yes. I will not call any names, but an older man made a statement one time . . . I'm not sure that

he was trying to take a slap at me, but I remember he making a statement like this: that in regard to war he guessed he was half-Christian and half-Irish. Well, I will identify Dr. Scarborough saying one time that . . . he was not speaking to me particularly. I don't think it was particularly critical of me, but he made a statement with which I would disagree because I do not think he had an understanding of the problem. He didn't think much of a fellow who was not willing to give his life for his country. This is not the problem with conscientious objectors. It's not giving life--it's taking life. I do think there were a good many that did not make that kind of distinction, because the point of a real conscientious objector is that he just cannot see himself taking human life.

Ledbetter: And that, you think, should be the Christian position.

Maston: Yes.

Ledbetter: Not so much actually fighting and dying yourself, but taking the lives of others.

Maston: Oh, that's right. There were a good many conscientious objectors, of course, who actually did enter into some type of service that was really dangerous. Lew Ayers,

for example, a well-known conscientious objector in World War II, was in the Medical Corps, I believe, and evidently was quite brave and risked his own life numbers of times. This is true of others, I'm sure, that were not so well-known.

Ledbetter: Well, do you think then that a Christian can fight and take life?

Maston: Some can. You see, this is the point I was trying to make. It's a matter of individual conscience. One of the chaplains in one of the retreats I had helped me at that point. He called them "conscientious participants." We talk about conscientious objector-- conscientious participants. That's alright if they can do it. It's an individual matter for every individual to decide for himself. But we ought to respect each other when we make the decision.

Ledbetter: Okay, let's discuss some other contemporary issues before we close. The current political situation, for example . . . you made a statement in 1954 that interests me in one of your earlier books. It was, "The heart of the crises in the United States is not economic or political but moral and spiritual." Do you think that applies to the current situation as well?

Maston: I certainly do. I certainly do. I think that the current situation kind of underscores the truthfulness of that. Our contemporary crisis in America is, I think, definitely moral and spiritual. I think it's partly a separation that I'm not real sure we've mentioned before between what I term an individual or personal morality and a social morality. I think beginning with Franklin Delano Roosevelt we've had a great deal of emphasis on social morality and some conditions that needed to be improved in the social realm, but not a comparable emphasis on individual or personal morality. I think this is evident in contemporary problems we have in Washington at the present time, maybe not as much on the social as there ought to be, but certainly a neglect of the individual, which I am concerned about in my own denomination here.

Ledbetter: Why is that?

Maston: I think there's a danger that as we move up the economic ladder and as we become more what Treitsch calls a "churchly type" of denomination, we become more and more exclusively concerned about the social element and less and less about the individual. He makes a

two-fold distinction between a "churchly type" of church or denomination and a "sect type." A "sect type" tends to separate itself from the world. It emphasizes negative aspects of the Christian ethic and the Christian life--the Thou shalt not's. Its emphasis is on individual morality. The "churchly type" emphasizes social morality. Now as we become more and more "churchly type" we will tend--I think--I'm afraid that we'll tend to neglect the individual emphasis, the individual morality. Not that we give too much emphasis over here, but we need a balanced emphasis on individual morality and social morality.

Ledbetter: And you think we can do both?

Maston: I think we can do both. I don't think it has to be inevitable that we move away from an individual type. But there's a tendency to do it, and even on a part of some to ridicule some of the individual emphasis that we've given in times past. Now your church--Methodist Church, you see--is a "churchly type." Episcopalians are a "churchly type." Presbyterians are a "churchly type." Baptists increasingly are becoming a "churchly type."

Ledbetter: One abiding social problem that we seem to have in the United States is poverty. Do you think that this

fade out

would relate to what you're talking about--the
"churchly type" and the concern for social standing?

Maston: Well, yes, we certainly should have a concern. As you know, Southern Baptists formerly had an unusually large percentage of the poor people in the churches. In other words, about seventy-five years ago Southern Baptist churches were about where we think of Assembly of God and Church of God folks being at the present time. But we have moved up the economic ladder.

Now part of my concern there is that as we move up the economic ladder, if we're not very careful, we will forget from whence we came, and we'll tend to neglect the poor people. Too many of our folks listen to men like Paul Harvey and others and will call attention to what I think of as some exceptional cases. Here's a woman that's never married. She has five children, and she's getting so-and-so-and-so-and-so. We think of that as being typical. Hence, we tend to turn thumbs down on the poor and the whole program to try and relieve the poverty of the people. Now there's entirely too much of that. I certainly don't say that this is typical of all Southern Baptists, but I think there's too much of it. Not just among Southern Baptists--but among others as well.

Ledbetter: Do you think that now the Baptists have tended to become prejudiced against the poor?

Maston: I think there's a tendency to this, yes. I think we've become more and more a kind of a middle class movement. Now this is not true of all of our churches. We still have plenty of churches in pockets of poverty everywhere around the cities and even down in the ghettos. We have churches down there. But what I'm talking about is that the general trend is in that direction. I think there is a real danger here that we'll tend to move away from . . . now move up the ladder, that looks like it's inevitable. To move away from the common people--I think not. I think it's very unfortunate because my viewpoint is that your great world changing movements come from the masses up. They're not created up here, but they come from the masses up. If you want to have a voice in shaping the future, you'd better continue to have an effective minister to the masses of the people.

Ledbetter: What do you think the churches could do to help solve the problems of poverty?

Maston: I think one of the distinctive things that we ought to try to do--and I think it's done in a great many

Ledbetter:

cases--is try to build a fire within the minds and souls of the children particularly growing up in poverty that in the vast majority of cases they can come up out of it. This, of course, was done generations ago. I told you this about my own family. We were so poor that we were pour, as I sometimes say. I know what it is to be really poor. But this was always drilled into us that we could have it better. Also, a deep sense of independence. I know it can be carried too far, but I do think that there are entirely too many people who are poor who become too dependent on somebody else to provide for them.

Ledbetter:

Do you think there's a distinctive difference in the kind of poverty you knew as rural poverty?

Maston:

No question about that at all. I have written a time or two a little bit about that, that . . . for example, we were quite poor, but we had our garden and we had our chickens and we had our cows and we had our hogs and so forth. In other words, we had most of our living. That's quite different from being poor in a city. No question about that at all.

Ledbetter:

This sense in independence may be easier to achieve among the rural folks.

Maston: This is right, but I do think that this is one of the distinctive things that the churches that minister to the poor ought to try to do. They ought to try to build some of this sense of independence and the fact that they can improve themselves, that there's something that they can do. These youngsters do not have to just settle down to the same kind of life that the parents have. In other words, it's most unfortunate in some of your cities that you have third and fourth generations, you see, that are still living . . .

Ledbetter: A life of poverty.

Maston: Yes, this becomes a way of life. I think of this as being one of the distinctive things that the churches can at least attempt to do. I think that some of your black churches have done this for the blacks. One of the encouraging things is that a good many of your black young people have the idea that they can come up out of what they've been in, you see?

Ledbetter: Another current social problem that we might discuss, since you are a person who has achieved a great deal since retirement . . . I'd like to have

your thoughts about problems of aging and retirement in our society.

Maston: Well, as you know, of course, the percentage of the aging is tremendously increased and will for a good while. My judgement is that in the next so-called revolution--we've had revolution among the young people and among the women more recently--I think the next vocal group is going to be your aging. I think folks had better look out for this aging group to get organized and make a considerable impact, politically and otherwise. I think this is correct. Now this is part of the picture.

I also think that in our society that we've been a little too arbitrary about retirement. I do not think that everybody ought to retire, for example, at sixty-five or sixty or whatever age it is. I think there ought to be some way to make some exceptions. I would also like to think that our social security system will make it possible for retired folks to work and make a little more than they do at the present time. Of course, as you know, there's certain restrictions, and I mean that they ought to be liberalized, as they have been to some degree, but they need to be liberalized more.

Now from the viewpoint of the older person it's tremendously important the people prepare for retirement. I do not think that very many folks do. They just let it come. If we do not prepare for retirement and know what we're going to do and have something definite to do, we tend to deteriorate pretty rapidly.

Ledbetter: You don't mean just prepare in terms of money then?

Maston: No. I mean to certainly do that because that's one important phase of retirement, but also what we're going to do. It can be hobbies or it can be church. It can be community service. There are plenty of opportunities for community service for older people. I think our churches tend to make a mistake. I think the greatest untapped resource for leadership in a good many churches are your retired people. They have the time, and some of them have the talent and the training and the background. But after retirement the general tendency is to kind of put them on the shelf, which I think is a big, big mistake.

Now we do have in a good many of our churches--an increasing number of churches--a program for the older people, but it's a program for them, to entertain them and so forth. Well, this is good for some,

but the church needs to do more to get them involved and actually doing something for the church and for other people and for the community. So we ought to keep busy.

Ledbetter: How about the older people working with the younger people?

Maston: Oh, this is very good, and the reverse, also. You know, the younger people working with the older people. Yes, this is very good. I've just recently had three sessions with a group of high school age youngsters in one of the churches here. I wasn't real sure that I'd be able to communicate with them. I knew I used to be able to do so, but I wasn't real sure. We got along real well. They were senior high school kids. They were Bible studies. Yes, I think that's very good.

I think it's extremely important that as older people we do not become self-conscious about our limitations, our problems, our aches, our pains. We'd better keep interested in other people and trying to do something for them. You might be interested to know that half of the books that I have had published have been published since I've retired. Now

they were not all . . . half of them written since I retired. One or two of them had been written before that, but half of them have been published since I've retired.

Ledbetter: Very good. That's very interesting.

Maston: I have one with a publisher right now. I have another one that I'm working on that I hope that I can get published. I have one here that was just recently released . . . just released in January. That's a small one. This other one's a major book that Thomas Nelson's going to bring out.

Ledbetter: What's the subject?

Maston: Well, the subject that I had was The Christian Life--an Approach to Christian Ethics. They want to change it, which I do not think is as good a title, but I guess they'll have the final say on Why Live the Christian Life. They think it'll make it a little more appealing.

Ledbetter: And what publisher, did you say?

Maston: Thomas Nelson.

Ledbetter: Okay, you mentioned earlier the various movements for freedom or independence, as we say it. How do you feel about those movements like the Women's Lib Movement?

Maston: I think there has been quite a bit of good that has come from it. I will not agree with some of the extreme expressions of it. I do think that one of the things that we need to recognize is that although men and women are equal in the sight of God--no question about that in my mind--that they do have distinctive functions to perform. We are to complement, to supplement, one another. I do think that some of the problems that we have in our society are due to the fact that we have not been satisfied to perform our distinctive functions. We get more in each other's way. I think overall that it has been very good.

I think, for example, that there isn't any question in my mind but that a woman doing a certain job ought to be paid just the same as a man. Now you know, of course, that the reason for the wage differential or salary differential has been in times past that it was thought the man's the head of the house, and he's got family responsibilities, so therefore . . . well, now as you know many women are the head of the house and have a family, so you cannot justify that.

I think in our churches the ultimate results are going to be good. My viewpoint, with which many

disagree, is that women in most churches provide more than half the membership, but in most churches they do not have as effective a voice as they ought to have in determining policies and programs. I could hope that they will have more of a voice in years to come. Now whether this means through ordination as deacons and deaconesses or stewards and stewardesses or whatever you have, or to the ministry, I do not think this makes a great deal of difference. I do think that they ought to have more of a voice in determining policies. I've said this in my own church. I'm not just saying it to you. I really think this is correct.

Ledbetter: How do you feel about abortion?

Maston: I think it's one of the most crucial problems that we have in the contemporary period. I think of it as having two aspects that are somewhat separate. In other words, the legal aspect is one thing, and the moral is something that I think is quite different from the legal. I'm not real sure the Supreme Court had any business trying to get into it. One of the reasons why I'm not . . . I'm not sure that they have, or anybody else as far as that's concerned, has the

knowledge to know really when life begins or when this individual . . . when this fetus becomes a person.

You know, of course, that the Roman Catholic Church takes one viewpoint, but not just the Roman Catholic Church. This is one of the unfortunate things, as I see it, among some Protestants--that the impression is left that you've got the Roman Catholic Church over here on one side and everybody else on the other side. This just isn't so because there are many others that agree very much with the Roman Catholic viewpoint--that as soon as those cells unite that life begins.

Just two or three general things. I know we can't take time to discuss it at any length. One thing is that I do not believe that we've had as careful a study as we ought to have about the effect of an abortion on the woman. We talked a great deal about the effect of the pregnancy on the woman. Here is the psychological as well as the physical. Now what about the effect of an abortion? I do not think that this has been studied maybe as carefully as it should be.

Now I'm inclined to believe that the more religious the woman is--that the more vital her religious faith is--the more likelihood that it's going to create some problems for her if she has an abortion. I think that there's a good possibility that it's true. But there's not a way to prove this is true because that has not been done.

The other thing that I am very much concerned about, and that is that we respect human life. My viewpoint is that if we're going to justify an abortion--I'm talking about it from the moral viewpoint--if we're going to justify abortion that we must justify it only as the lesser of two evils, not as a good within itself. The lesser of two evils, as you know, is a term that was used or popularized, I guess, by Reinhold Niebuhr but not just by Niebuhr. Many others used the same terms.

My viewpoint is that many of our decisions are not between a black over here and a white over here, but many of our decisions are the gray area. In the gray area here, where you cannot make a decision--this is right; this is wrong. But over here in the gray area, we try to decide what is best under all

the conditions--which one of these decisions that I've got to make here . . . which one will involve the lesser of evil or the more of good.

So an abortion, from my viewpoint should at the best be considered the lesser of two evils. I can see some grounds where I could justify it, but I wouldn't go as far as this model law that has been considered. I have a particular problem at this point of having an abortion where a child is likely to be seriously handicapped, you know, physically or mentally. Who's going to decide how seriously? Who's going to decide whether it's really best or not? What does this do--not just to the person--but what does this do to society if we start to abort all of those that we think will be seriously handicapped?

Part of that stems from my own personal experience, I know, because we have a boy injured at birth, and he's been in a wheelchair all of his life. That can't help but effect your attitude. I know what he has done to me. I know what he's done to a good many others--the contribution he's made.

Pearl Buck made a statement one time that relates to this. If I remember correctly, I think she

had a retarded daughter. She said that the handicapped has his own distinctive contribution to make. If we're going to justify abortion . . . this is another thing that kind of bothers me a little bit . . . if we justify abortion, and, of course, we haven't gone into the techniques of the first three months and the next three months and so forth, as you know, but if we justify abortion, is the next logical step to justify euthanasia at the other end of the line? What will this do to society? My viewpoint is that one of the bright spots in our society has been what we have done, for example, for the handicapped child, you see.

That gives you a general . . . and incidentally, I think maybe you'd be interested to know that here's one point where I disagree with some of my colleagues that I've helped to train. Some of these boys are a whole lot more favorable to abortion than I am. I think we need to study it a whole lot more carefully than we have.

Ledbetter: Do you think the real danger may be losing respect for the value of human life?

Maston: Yes, for human life. I can't help but be a little bit influenced . . . not influenced, but sympathetic

with Albert Schweitzer, who had a respect for life, period. I don't know that this is related, but I do not get any kick at all out of going out and-- never have--just going out to hunt to kill. Hunt to get something to eat, yes, but not to kill.

Ledbetter: One other contemporary problem I'd like to get your thinking on is the problem of capital punishment.

Maston: For a long time I have been opposed to capital punishment. I do not think you can defend it from a Christian perspective. I do not think of it as being a deterrent like a lot of folks think.

Most Christians that defend capital punishment defend it on the basis of the Old Testament. You do find it in the Old Testament, no question about that. But I really think that those that would defend it on the basis of the Old Testament, if they're going to be consistent, would have to defend it on the bases that we find there. We find at least ten or twelve crimes or wrongs that would be punishable by death. I do not know anybody that would justify, for example, the punishment by death for a child that would curse his parents. That's in the Old Testament. So I would think really to be consistent they would have to say,

"Okay, we accept the Old Testament, and we accept all of the reasons that are given there for capital punishment."

I think of capital punishment as being out of harmony with the spirit that we find in the New Testament. This is one place where I would have to disagree with men like Billy Graham and a good many other folks. Truth of the business is that this would I think I would be in disagreement with most Southern Baptists at this point. I think most of them are defenders of capital punishment. I am not, and have not been, for years.

Ledbetter: Do you think that we will do completely away with capital punishment, or do you think the movement seems to be back in that direction?

Maston: I think right now the movement's back in that direction, but I do think that ultimately we'll . . . there are a good many countries that have abolished capital punishment. My understanding is that there has not been a marked increase of certain types of crimes. We have some states that have abolished capital punishment. Our murder rates and other capital offenses have not noticeably gone up compared to the states close by. At least this was true at one time when I made a study on it.

Ledbetter: In what general direction do you think the Southern Baptists are heading now? Do you think there's going to be concern with the things that you've taught throughout your career?

Maston: Well, it's hard to say. I think right now, right at this period, that there is a movement, if in any direction, a movement away from the social emphasis we try to give. But I think of this as being temporary. I think overall Southern Baptists will almost inevitably have an increasing interest in this area. Part of it relates to what we were talking about awhile ago--the fact that we're becoming more and more a "churchly type." As you become a "churchly type," I think it's just inevitable that you will have a deepening concern for society and for the culture in which we find ourselves--making this peace with society, but at the same time having a deepening concern about society. I think this is correct. I do not have any deep concern about the long-range direction in which we will go, except at the point that I mentioned a minute ago that we may tend to neglect what I think of as very important--individual or personal morality. That is so essential as I see it.

Ledbetter: Right now do you think that the movement that you mentioned earlier, the neo-evangelical movement . . .

Maston: It has quite a bit of influence upon Southern Baptists.

Ledbetter: That's one thing that's influencing them away from concern?

Maston: Yes, yes, I think that's correct.

Ledbetter: Why do you think that is true?

Maston: Well, of course, the emphasis there is on evangelism and on bringing individuals to this initial decision which makes them Christians. This is part of it.

There's a book written by a fellow who represents the National Council on why conservative churches are growing or something like that. I'm not sure about the exact title, and I cannot remember the author's name right now. This has been latched onto a great deal by a good many of our folks. Another influence has been the fact that Southern Baptists and a few others have continued to grow while the churches that they think of as being liberal in their theology have declined or remained static. This, I think, is one of the factors that . . . if you get too far over in this direction of social concern, well, this is what will be the result. You start to decline because a lot of

these folks still identify social concern with liberal theology.

Ledbetter: That was the distinction I intended to ask you to make in discussing the 1920's and later, too, between the so-called fundamentalist theology and the modernist theology or liberal theology. Define the liberal theology.

Maston: Well, your liberal . . . the so-called liberal . . . I don't know very many real liberals in their theological position. They can be liberal in regard to the Scriptures, for example. They can use to the extreme the critical approach to the Scriptures. When you do that you rule out most of the things that Jesus had to say, for example. You can rule most of those things out. If you do not believe in the Bible, then you do not have any source of real authority in the religious life. This is part of it.

An extreme liberal largely explains away some of the things that are very sacred to consider concerning Jesus, such as the Virgin Birth, you see, this type of thing. Some would go so far as to say that after all that Jesus was just a man and God, in some unusual way, came into his life, but nothing particularly miraculous--

that he was not the Son of God in the sense that your conservatives suggest.

These are just two or three examples of the type of thing. I think that most folks would consider it as being liberal. You know, of course, that some of your evangelicals, the fundamentalists particularly, magnify so much one or two doctrines. This is the thing that I think creates problems for them. They'll emphasize so much the second coming of Christ so that they think a person who does not agree with their particular position on the second coming of Christ is, "He's a liberal," although he may be basically conservative on everything else.

Ledbetter: So then again, it may be a problem of labeling.

Maston: This is right. It's a matter of labeling. A lot of it is.

Ledbetter: Well, I really can't think of any other questions. Is there anything else that you'd like to add to our discussion?

Maston: I don't think so. I can't think of it now. I'm sure I will later.