

Foreword by Frank E. Graham

How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy 2011



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*A Resource for the Chaplaincy Profession and Its Defense
with Staff Chaplain Survival Guide and Audit History*

Michael G. Maness

TDCJ Senior Clinical Chaplain 20 Years

www.PreciousHeart.net/Saved





When someone does their duty,
We call them honorable.

When someone does their duty in the face of danger,
We call them heroes.

When someone goes beyond the call of duty,
We call them ... Volunteers.

Michael G. Maness, 2005
*see Appendix 6*⁶

I *pray* this book will help Prison Chaplaincy survive and aid in excellence regarding its solemn and exquisite task in that noblest enterprise of Care for the Soul as staff Chaplains facilitate super-achiever Volunteers in facilitating the greatest source for change in human history—religion.

Michael G. Maness, 2015



⁶ See Appendix 6 and www.PreciousHeart.net/poems/Volunteer-Poem-2005.jpg.



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**Foreword by Frank E. Graham Jr.
Founder and President, Chapel of Hope**

How We Saved Texas Prison Chaplaincy is an amazing story of how one TDCJ chaplain and a very few TDCJ chaplaincy volunteers passionately initiated a fight to save the Texas prison chaplaincy department from being defunded by the Texas Legislature in 2011. If the Texas budget (HB 1 at the start) had been approved without funding for chaplaincy, there would have been no chaplaincy today.



It was a miracle of God that the zero-budgeting of this obscure line item was even discovered in the proposed Texas budget for the fiscal years 2012-13. The person who took out chaplaincy is known only to God, who motivated His people, and to Satan who wanted it destroyed because of the work that chaplains and volunteers continuously do to help transform offenders' lives in a very positive God-fearing way.

God, through the Holy Spirit, inspired and helped a few of us to rally an amazing lobbying effort that succeeded and got the operational costs of TDCJ chaplaincy *fully* restored at the same level as the previous biennium.

It was a miracle. So few did so much in so little time!

As in so many miracles of God, He chose to use the weak to do His will so that His power and love could not be in doubt. God wanted to keep TDCJ chaplaincy alive and functioning into the future. Not many of the initial Volunteers had any experience in how to lobby the Texas Legislature, but God led us step-by-step just as He does when anyone called by Him steps out in faith to do His will.

I had been working to build chapels in prisons for over twenty years, and I would like to see every prison have a free-standing chapel. A chapel is a place dedicated to God, and chaplains have always led and protected the chapel. The idea that all my work and the work of so many would be set aside, nullified, very much like the Wynne Chapel had been left to rot for decades. Several outstanding pieces of architecture like the Wynne and Eastham chapels were left to deteriorate, fall apart, and nearly condemned, homes to bats in the belfry. Large holes in the roof.

I led the effort that renovated the Wynne Unit chapel, and Dr. Paul Carlin led the effort to restore the Eastham Unit chapel.

But why? Why were those chapels neglected for decades? We will never know. Yet, we know that someone always wants to kill God's work.

As a volunteer chaplain at the Michael, Murray and Coffield Units, and Hutchins and Woodman State Jails, I saw firsthand what ministry can do for hardened criminals, both men and women. I saw lives changed in the chapel.

God led me to build chapels. I have built seven and restored one, and I plan to build many more. But in 2011 the proposal was to kill chaplaincy altogether. I could hardly believe it, but I knew one chaplain who had fought before and was in this fight to his neck.

Chaplain Michael Maness and I first met at the chapel program at the Gib Lewis Unit in the early 1990s.

I approached Maness to help market this fight to save chaplaincy. He had the data on chaplains and some success in the past. I told him straight: if he would write a flyer that I would publish it, and we worked on that flyer. My experience in marketing and business complemented his vast chaplaincy experience, and I tamed his wordiness into a single page.

I published 4,000 copies of that flyer and, with the help of Suzii Paynter of the BGCT and First Baptist Austin, we got a handful of volunteers to saturate the capitol in Austin and to visit many legislators.

Every TDCJ chaplain and every chaplaincy manager owe the existence of their jobs to the efforts of a few unique individuals who rallied many to seek help from Texas senators and representatives.

The loss of chaplains in Texas prisons is hard to comprehend. What I know from my volunteering for over 30 years in many prisons, from dealing with scores of chaplains, from talking with scores of wardens, their bosses, and many legislators and many businessmen is that chaplaincy helps ministry. Chaplains need help, not deletion. They are the keys to smoothly operating ministry inside of prison. And much more.

The chaplains help prisoners in their family crises! No other staff person exists that would help prisoners and their families like chaplains. None. No one was thinking about that when they deleted chaplaincy, and that infuriated me. The staff chaplain is *there* and we volunteer chaplains help the staff chaplain with the prisoners' crises. We come and go, but the chaplains are there full time and come to know the prisoners and families and the prison operations.

I cannot stress this work in the chapel enough, but Maness gives a good overview of that critical part of the chaplain's job.

The work of our Lord Jesus in Texas prisons would be much more difficult without dedicated chaplains who understand religious devotion.

Governors and legislators have a fervent desire to faithfully manage and balance the Texas budget and tend not to add new programs in lean years. The Texas legislature meets in the odd years, and that means chaplaincy would have been removed from the operating budget in TDCJ for at least two years. The harsh reality was that if chaplaincy was defunded, it would have been almost impossible to ever get it put back in the Texas budget.

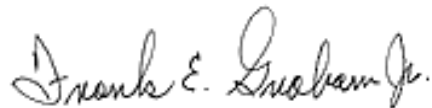
That was the cold hard reality.

God had other plans and helped us.

I praise God that He enabled me to be a part of the amazing story told in this book. I also pray that God will use this book to inspire others when they hear in their hearts the call of God to step out in faith and do the impossible that only God can do through His servants.

Amen!

Sincerely,



Frank E. Graham Jr., Founder and President

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In Fiscal Year 2011

**125 Chaplains Facilitated, Cared for 99.8% of
20,000 Volunteers in their 418,000 visits with
500,000 hours with an astounding
4,000,000 prisoners in attendance—plus
19,602 Critical Illness/Death Notices & more**

from Item 5 above³¹¹

the year they were cut and saved

Regarding this precious and immeasurably valuable record—a treasure—TDCJ staff Chaplains have been in the *center* of that miracle of human transformation for over a *century* as they help and facilitate and love Volunteers, helping all persons in the Vital Issues of life, laboring *with* the Volunteers to minister and care for *all* inside the prison, even of all faiths, with Christianity by a whopping margin, in that most exquisite of enterprises in Care for the Soul while facilitating the greatest resource for change in human history—*religion*.

Is Chaplain Professional Equity too much ask for these few humble servants?

Finis



Support www.ChapelofHope.org
an exquisite vision of faith



³¹¹ Item 5, p.72, www.PreciousHeart.net/chaplaincy/RPD-Dunbar-08-2012.pdf, the staff Chaplains facilitated and reported most of these, though not obvious, and no routing.